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An Integrated Approach to the Role of Control in Child Maltreatment and Delinquency

By

Heather Kinnett

Thesis Approved:

Chair, Advisory Committee

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An Integrated Approach to the Role of Control in Child Maltreatment and Delinquency

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Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
Eastern Kentucky University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
December, 2010

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family
for their unwavering support.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my major professor, Dr. Kevin Minor, for his guidance and patience. I would also like to thank the other committee members, Dr. James Wells and Dr. Betsy Matthews, for their comments and assistance over the past two years. This would never have been accomplished without the guidance of my Lord, for which I am eternally thankful. I would also like to express my thanks to my husband, John, and my children, for their patience and faith that this would eventually be worth the effort. I would also like to thank my parents, George and Teresa Page, who made this thesis possible through their love and support.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to integrate the labeling perspective and social support perspective into the central causal process of Charles Tittle's control balance theory. This will explain the linkages between child maltreatment and delinquency. The child maltreatment experience and the consequent label of victim affect a youth's self concept which in turn affects how a provoking event will be interpreted. The child maltreatment experience lessens the amount of control imbalance necessary for a provoking event to be interpreted as humiliating. The victim label also affects motivation for deviance indirectly through its effects on the control ratio and opportunity for deviance as described in control balance theory. The presence of social support works to reverse the affects of stigmatization due to labeling. Consequently, social support becomes a mediating variable in the link between child maltreatment and delinquency. A discussion of all these theories is included along with a review of pertinent literature on the theories. Application of the control balancing process to staff and youth interactions in residential settings is also included.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Theoretical Perspective	1
Introduction.....	1
Significance of Child Maltreatment and Delinquency Link	2
Statement of Problem and Purpose	5
II. Literature Review	10
Introduction.....	10
Maltreatment as a Risk Factor for Delinquency	10
Mediating Factors between Maltreatment and Delinquency	14
Treatment Efficacy.....	16
III. Theoretical Foundation	20
Introduction.....	20
Description of Control Balance Theory 1995	20
Description of Control Balance Theory 2004.....	29
Review of Research on Control Balance Theory.....	33
Description of the Labeling Perspective	39
Review of Research on Labeling Perspective.....	46
Description of the Social Support Perspective.....	53
Maltreatment Research Supporting Social Support Perspective ...	54
IV. Theoretical Integration	56
Introduction.....	56
Integration	56
Informal and Formal Labeling	61
Internalizing the Labels from Maltreatment Experience	63
Victim Label Affects Provocation and Motivation.....	65
Victim Label Affects Control Ratio.....	66
Victim Label Affects Opportunity	67
Victim Label Affects Constraint.....	69
Victim Label Affects Self Control.....	71
Model Examples of Maltreated Youth.....	73
V. Summary	82
Discussion	82
Maltreatment and Violent Delinquency	83
Maltreatment's Link to Recidivism	85
Frequent and Multiple Forms of Maltreatment.....	86
Policy Implications	88
Empirical Testing of Model	93
List of References	95

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Type of Deviance	28
2. Control Balancing Process	33
3. Integrated Control Balancing Process.....	59

Chapter 1

Theoretical Perspective

Introduction:

The prevention of delinquency is an important concern for social control agents. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention stated that in 2008 juveniles accounted for 16% of all violent crime arrests and 26% of all property crime arrests. In order to prevent delinquency, the pathways that lead youth to crime must first be understood. While there has been a substantial amount of research that links child maltreatment with delinquency (Baron, 2003; Moore, Armsden & Gogerty, 1998; Ryan, 2006; Widom, 1991, 1996), the ways that maltreatment impacts the individual's path to delinquency are not well understood. In addition, there are few studies that address the child maltreatment delinquency link from a particular theoretical perspective (Maas, Herrenkohl & Sousa, 2008). It is the purpose of this thesis to integrate control balance theory, the labeling perspective and the social support perspective to explain individual variations in the maltreatment and delinquency link.

The first part of this chapter discusses the prevalence and significance of child maltreatment. Next, the way that youth enter the court system is discussed along with the implications for labeling youth as delinquent or maltreated. In the final section of this chapter the purpose of the thesis and the strengths and drawbacks associated with integration of theories are discussed.

Significance of Child Maltreatment and Delinquency Link:

According to the U.S. Department for Health and Human Services report *Child Maltreatment 2008*, 772,000 children were victims of maltreatment during the 2008 federal fiscal year. The most prevalent type of maltreatment is neglect (71.1%), followed by physical abuse (16.1%) and sexual abuse (9.1%). The percentage of children who are physically and sexually abused increases with the age of the victim. However, the largest percentages of victims were under four years of age (33%). There were 23.6% of victims in the 4-7 year age range, and 18.9% in the 8-11 year age range. This makes sense when considering that the most prevalent type of maltreatment is neglect, which tends to happen to younger children. The gender differences in victims were small, with 48.3% of victims being male and 51.3% of victims being female. In most cases, the perpetrator was a parent, with 38.3% of victims being maltreated by their mothers, and 18.1% being maltreated by their fathers. In 17.9% of instances the victim was maltreated by both parents.

Child maltreatment is an important consideration when addressing risk factors for delinquency. In particular maltreated youth may have unique treatment needs that can impact the likelihood for recidivism after treatment. Ryan (2006) found that maltreated youth who completed a positive peer culture program had greater incidences of recidivism than youth without a record of maltreatment. From a treatment perspective, these differences need to be understood in order to meet the needs of maltreated youth and reduce their risk for recidivism.

The beginning of the pathway toward delinquency for maltreated youth needs to be traced back to include the child's initial exposure to the social service and juvenile justice system. This is important because the way the youth enter the juvenile court system can affect the labels that will be placed upon them and the services made available to them. While maltreatment can be a contributing factor to delinquency, this relationship does not hold true for every victim (Widom, 1996).

To illustrate service differentials, in the state of Kentucky, a child comes to the attention of child protective services when someone makes a report of abuse, neglect or dependency, or in some counties, when a youth is found to be in violation of a status offense law (www.ky.gov/dcbs/dpp). Depending upon the outcome of a child protective services investigation, a family may receive a wide range of services in the form of formal social support or may be deemed in need of no services. The services offered can range from in home services to the family and referrals to community agencies, to dependency actions in the juvenile court system. In severe cases, the child may be removed from the home and placed in an alternative setting such as foster care or residential treatment (www.ky.gov/dcbs/dpp).

A child can come to the attention of Kentucky's juvenile justice system when a criminal or status charge has been filed against the juvenile (www.djj.ky.gov/programs). In the juvenile justice system there can again be a wide range of formal social supports, ranging from diversion to foster care placement, to placement in a residential facility. However, in severe cases, the youth may be waived into the adult court system. The services offered to youth in the juvenile justice system depend in large part on the

severity of the youth's crime and prior involvement with the court system (www.djj.ky.gov/programs).

Both of these pathways (maltreatment and illegal conduct) can lead to the placement of the youth outside the family of origin. When the youth is placed outside the home by the court system, the youth is often committed to the state of Kentucky as either a dependent child, a status offender, or as a public or youthful offender (www.ky.gov/dcbs/dpp). When a child is committed as a dependent child or status offender, the state agency responsible for the care of the child is the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS). When the child is committed as a public or youthful offender, the responsible state agency is the Department for Juvenile Justice (DJJ). While it is more likely that a youth committed to DCBS will have a history of child maltreatment, it is entirely possible that a youth committed to DJJ will have a history of child maltreatment as well. In fact, there are youth in the state of Kentucky who are dually committed to both agencies.

One significant difference in the types of commitment a youth receives is in the label that is assigned. A youth committed to DCBS as a dependent child is seen as a victim in need of the state's protection and thus deserving of formal social support. By contrast, a youth committed to DJJ as a public offender is seen as a child deserving accountability and punishment, not as a victim, even though both youth may have a history of child maltreatment.

As stated before, not all youth who have been maltreated become delinquent, nor are all delinquent youth maltreated (Ryan, 2006; Widom, 1996). A significant difference

in the pathways of maltreated youth to either delinquency or conformity can be found in the amount of social support available to the youth. It is in studying the differences in these youth that we can learn more about the pathways many maltreated youth take to delinquency and the protective factors necessary to prevent that outcome. Utilizing a theoretical perspective is an appropriate method for accomplishing this task. Even though there has been an abundance of research on the maltreatment/delinquency link, there has been minimal development of a theoretical explanation for these linkages. This was cited by Maas et al. (2008) as a weakness in the child maltreatment research.

Statement of Problem and Purpose:

The labeling perspective addresses the formal and informal stigmatization processes that can happen in the court system (Akers & Sellers, 2004; Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1951). The perspective contends that laws are created by more powerful groups to control less powerful groups. Once a member of a less powerful group is stigmatized by an official label, they may then internalize that label (Akers & Sellers, 2004; Lemert, 1951). Once a person has internalized the label of criminal they may commit more criminal acts because of the new criminal self image and reorganization of life activities (Akers & Sellers, 2004; Lemert, 1951). Attaching a label does not necessarily lead to deviance. The label must be internalized by the individual and become part of the person's self image. It is at that point that the label may lead to secondary deviance (Lemert, 1951). This process may play an important role in the pathway to adult criminal behavior for juveniles. The labels attached to the juvenile based on commitment status are significantly different. These labels (victim versus offender) can play a significant

role in the youth's self perception and possibly in the social supports available to the youth.

Cullen (1994) felt that social support could be seen as the antithesis of the stigmatization that occurs through the labeling process. Socially supportive interactions imply definitions and meanings which can then influence the self image. Consequently, while labeling may lead to secondary deviance, experiencing socially supportive interactions would decrease deviance (Cullen, 1994). Social support and labeling have an inverse relationship, so that as social supports increase, stigmatization from labeling decreases.

A central concept in the labeling perspective is the idea that labels are a means of social control developed through social interactions (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1951). While not a labeling theorist, Charles Tittle (2004) also discusses the issue of control on a more individual level in his revised control balance theory. According to Tittle, a person is motivated to commit deviant acts when the amount of control they experience in their environment is unbalanced. They can have too much control over their environment relative to the control to which they are subjected, or conversely, too little control over the environment relative to that which they are subjected. Tittle refers to this as the control ratio. When a person experiences a provoking event that reminds them of their control imbalance, they may be motivated to change this imbalance by acting deviantly. Both child maltreatment and the official labels designated by the court system could alter the control ratio experienced by an individual. The presence of social support also alters

the control ratio by reducing the stigmatization that may occur due to the maltreatment experience and thus provides the individual with a more balanced control ratio

As noted previously, in Kentucky a child can be placed in an out-of-home care setting by either DCBS or DJJ, and the situation is comparable in most other states. Consequently, many of the services that a child receives in out-of-home care are similar regardless of the type of commitment. If the child is placed in foster care, the child will most likely receive outpatient counseling services or behavior management services that are provided by the foster parents. If the child is placed in a residential setting, the child will likely receive both individual and group counseling services at the facility. While these services are individualized to the child's specific treatment needs, there is considerable overlap in their method of delivery. Because many of the treatment options available to these youth are similar, regardless of the type of commitment, it is important to understand how these youth may differ from each other for treatment purposes. This is particularly important in residential treatment settings where maltreatment experiences may affect the youth's motivation for deviance within the group setting and the efficacy of treatment.

While control balance theory explains how individuals seek to balance their control ratios, it does not explain the internal cognitions that motivate a person to commit deviance. The labeling perspective can partly address this issue by explaining how individuals begin to accept societal labels. The social support perspective can further address this void by explaining why some individuals do not become negatively labeled by the maltreatment experience. Thus, by integrating control balance theory, the labeling

perspective, and the social support perspective, the motivation for deviance can be better explained.

The purpose of this thesis is to integrate control balance theory (Tittle, 2004), with the labeling perspective (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1951) and the social support perspective (Cullen, 1994) to better explain the connection between child maltreatment and delinquency. Akers & Sellers (2004) state that the goal for theoretical integration is to produce a theory that is stronger and more comprehensive than either theory on its own. A problem inherent in this approach is the danger of ignoring basic incompatibilities between the theories to be integrated, resulting in a far weaker theoretical product (Akers & Sellers, 2004). While control balance and labeling theories are often seen as addressing deviance from quite different theoretical perspectives, they are not completely incompatible. Tittle (1975) stated that both the labeling perspective and control theories in general, are interested in society's responses to an individual's behavior and the resulting consequences from society's interactions. Tittle (1975) further noted that control theories would benefit from the behavioral insights that the labeling perspective can provide, while the labeling perspective would benefit from the empirical research of control theories. Cullen (1994) stated that social support could be seen as the unifying concept in criminology and is inherent in many criminology theories. As a unifying concept, the social support perspective is ideal for theoretical integration. Tittle's control balance theory is based on this idea of theoretical integration. By assimilating labeling theory and the social support perspective into the control balancing process, maltreatment's linkages to both conformity and delinquency can be better explained.

In the next chapter the research on the child maltreatment and delinquency link is reviewed. While Chapter two draws on research into the relationship between maltreatment, specific forms of delinquency and on gender differences in maltreatment's effects on delinquency, theorizing those linkages are outside the scope of this thesis. Chapter three will review the literature on control balance theory, the labeling perspective and the social support perspective and discuss the evaluations of those theories. Chapter four explains the key findings from the child maltreatment and delinquency literature review by integrating control balance theory with the labeling perspective and the social support perspective. A model for theoretical application is also discussed in chapter four. In chapter five a summary of key points is given along with ideas for future integration and application of the theory.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction:

In this chapter the literature on the link between maltreatment and delinquency is reviewed. In order to incorporate the broad scope of research on child maltreatment, some studies examining specific types of delinquency, such as youth violence or gang involvement are examined. The link between maltreatment and specific forms of delinquency is outside the scope of this paper, as are gender differences in the maltreatment/delinquency link. Research on specific forms of delinquency and gender differences are included in this chapter to give the reader a broader insight into some of the ways that maltreatment may lead to delinquency in general. Both risk and mediating factors for child maltreatment's impact on delinquency are also discussed in this chapter. The final section includes a discussion of the impact of maltreatment on the efficacy of treatment for delinquent youth.

Maltreatment as a Risk Factor for Delinquency:

The relationship between maltreatment and various types of delinquency has been examined by many scholars (Baron, 2003; Maas et al., 2008; Ryan, 2006; Wall, Barth & NSCAW Research Group, 2005; Widom, 1991). Maas et al. (2008) conducted a review of longitudinal research on the link between child maltreatment and youth violence (which can be considered a specific form of delinquency). Their review found that physical abuse was the strongest predictor of youth violence. In addition, compound

forms of abuse, such as physical abuse occurring with sexual abuse or neglect, and more severe instances of abuse also increased the risk for later violence in youth. However, even less severe forms of physical abuse were found to increase the risk of violent behavior for some youth. Baron (2003) found similar results in his review of the literature surrounding street (homeless) youth. Histories of physical and sexual abuse were linked to the youth's decision to live on the street. Once there, youth who had been physically abused were more likely to engage in violent behavior, and be victims of violent assaults. Maschi, Bradley and Morgen (2008) found similar linkages between exposure to trauma, which included physically abusive punishment as part of the trauma variable, and delinquency. In their longitudinal study, being exposed to violence and experiencing stressful life events predicted anger, depression and delinquent peer exposure. When looking at property offending, the link between trauma and delinquency was completely mediated by having delinquent peers. Both anger and delinquent peer exposure partially mediated the link between trauma and violent offending. While physical abuse was only part of the trauma variable, which included exposure to other forms of violence and stressful life events such as divorce, this study does underscore the way that trauma can be linked to delinquency. Cernkovich, Lanctôt & Giordano (2008) found early childhood and adolescent maltreatment were strong predictors of adult criminality, but not of delinquency for females. Their longitudinal study examined high risk female delinquents who were previously institutionalized. Both physical abuse and sexual abuse histories distinguished between high offending and lesser offending females as adults, but not between high offending and lesser offending females as delinquents. Cernkovich et al. (2008) suggest that maltreatment may have a lagged effect on female offending patterns.

This could be a cumulative result of negative labels which alter the self concept and the control ratio. Because labeling is a process which happens over time, the effect on female offending patterns and the control ratio might not be immediately apparent.

Widom (1996) also found physical abuse to be a risk factor for delinquency. In her study of individuals with a child maltreatment history prior to age 12, physical abuse was the best predictor of violent offending in adulthood, with neglect being the second best predictor. While typically considered less detrimental than physical or sexual abuse, Widom (1996) suggested that neglect can be associated with developmental difficulties which can increase risk for violence later in life. Neglect was also associated with an increased risk for prostitution arrests.

Sexual abuse has also been linked to delinquency in the research. Widom (1996) also found that sexual abuse was associated with an increased risk for running away and prostitution. However, childhood sexual abuse was not associated with an increased risk for committing other sex crimes. Wall et al. (2005) examined a sample of maltreated youth to determine if there were gender differences in maltreatment's effects on aggression and delinquency. Wall et al. (2005) found that females who were victims of sexual abuse reported significantly more aggression and delinquent behaviors than males in their sample of youth in the child welfare system. Baron (2003) also found sexual abuse to be a factor in the likelihood for violent and delinquent behaviors in youth.

In addition to linkages between maltreatment and violence, child maltreatment can also affect the youth's self perception. Feiring, Miller-Johnson and Cleland (2007) examined how stigmatization from child abuse can contribute to delinquency in sexually

abused youth. According to the authors, stigmatization or shame from the sexual abuse experience can lead the youth to feel “damaged” and therefore feel the need to associate with delinquent peers who are also viewed as deviant. The concept of being seen as an outsider and thus associating with others who are outsiders was described by Becker (1963). Because shame or stigmatization is a highly uncomfortable emotion, Feiring et al (2007) suggested that individuals will displace shameful feelings with feelings of anger. Feelings of anger were expected to be related to associations with delinquent peers, which consequently would provide more opportunity for delinquency. The findings of the study supported these linkages and suggest that feelings of anger, which would be described as provocation in control balance theory, might be an important component in the pathway from maltreatment to delinquency (Feiring et al., 2007).

Frequent and multiple forms of maltreatment have also been found to be a risk factor for delinquency in the literature. Following a sample of youth from the Pennsylvania Child Welfare system from birth to age 18, Lemmon (2006) found that multiple incidents of child maltreatment contributed to chronic and violent offending in delinquents. Widom (1996) found that children who had been exposed to multiple forms of abuse were more likely to become runaways and subsequently be arrested for prostitution. Thompson and Braaten-Antrim (1998) found frequent incidents of maltreatment increased the odds that youth participated in gang involvement 1.34 times over occasional maltreatment. While being maltreated increased the probability that youth would participate in gang involvement independent of other factors, more frequent maltreatment seemed to have a compounding effect. Thompson and Braaten-Antrim also found that 37 % of physical abuse victims reported gang fighting compared to 20% of

non maltreated youth. Sexual abuse had a smaller effect, with only 32% of sexual abuse victims involved with gang fighting compared to 21% of non maltreated youth.

Mediating Factors between Maltreatment and Delinquency:

The pathway from maltreatment to delinquency is not inevitable, however. In fact, the majority of abused children in the Widom (1996) study did not have official criminal records as adults, suggesting that there are factors that can mediate any long term criminogenic effects of childhood abuse. Only 27% of the abused children in Widom's (1996) study were arrested as juveniles. Lemmon (2006) and Widom (1991) found that out-of-home placements can mediate the criminogenic effects of child maltreatment history. However, the relationship among child maltreatment, out-of-home placement history and delinquency is unclear. In examining the sequence of placements and placement types, Widom (1991) distinguished between children who were maltreated but never placed in out-of-home care, children who were maltreated and placed in out-of-home care, and children who were placed in out-of-home care for maltreatment and delinquency. Widom found that children who were maltreated but never placed in out-of-home care and children who were placed in out-of-home care for maltreatment only, had similar rates of delinquency and adult arrests. These children were six times less likely to be delinquent, and three times less likely to have adult arrests than children who were placed for both maltreatment and delinquency.

Mallett, Dare and Seck (2009) found that early interventions may mediate the link between maltreatment and delinquency their sample of youth involved in the juvenile court system. Using logistic regression analysis, Mallett et al. (2009) examined whether

mental health diagnosis and maltreatment histories were independently predictive of later delinquency adjudication. Most of the youth in the study had experienced at least one incident of maltreatment. While diagnosis of depression and bipolar disorder were found to be associated with later delinquency adjudication, maltreatment was not. In their study, youth who were adjudicated delinquent were three times less likely to have experienced any one form of maltreatment and six times less likely to have experienced any two forms of maltreatment. This result was attributed to the success of possible early interventions given to the maltreated youth, and suggests that formal social supports may be effective in mediating the negative effects of maltreatment. The impact of formal social supports on maltreatment is further supported by a study done by Moore et al. (1998). They did a 12 year follow up study of at risk (officially identified as maltreated or at risk of being maltreated) infants and toddlers who were randomly assigned to a therapeutic child care intervention or traditional community services. The youth receiving traditional community services were arrested earlier, more frequently, and had more violent delinquency offenses than the youth in the therapeutic child care program. Treatment youth described more supportive home environments, which suggests less negative labeling of the child by the parents and more informal social supports. They also had less aggression and anger than the youth receiving traditional community services.

Wall et al. (2005) also found relationships with caregivers to be a potentially mediating factor in the child maltreatment delinquency link. Wall et al. (2005) found that the youth who reported fewer aggressive behaviors and less delinquency in their sample of maltreated youth differed from their peers in several ways. These maltreated youth were younger, had better reported social skills, and reported more feelings of relatedness

with their caregivers. For youth who reported discipline that was not harsh, as caregiver relatedness increased, delinquent behaviors decreased. This same finding did not hold for youth who reported harsh discipline. The importance of caregivers in the maltreatment and delinquency link was also examined by Stouthamer-Loeber, Wei, Homish and Loeber (2002). They examined family and demographic factors that related to both maltreatment and delinquency in order to determine if maltreatment has an independent or interactive effect on delinquency risk. One factor in particular (not living with both biological parents) was related to both increased risk for maltreatment and delinquency. Maltreatment had a strong interactive effect with this variable in predicting delinquency. However, maltreatment did not have an independent effect on predicting delinquency when controlling for the youth's living arrangements. It is possible that living with both biological parents provides an increase in social supports. This could be accomplished informally through extended family networks and increased supervision in two parent households. It could also increase formal social supports through an increase in economic means. These findings suggest that the presence or absence of supportive family relationships may interact with maltreatment's link to delinquency.

Treatment Efficacy:

Not only does maltreatment increase the risk for delinquency, it may also affect the efficacy of treatment for these youth. Ryan (2006) found that delinquent youth who were victims of physical abuse and neglect had a 50% greater chance of recidivism upon exiting a positive peer culture program than youth without a maltreatment history. Ryan (2006) suggested that histories of child maltreatment may inhibit the child's ability to

form positive attachments. He stated that the inability of the maltreated youth in his study to attach to the group in the Positive Peer Culture (PPC) program kept them from optimizing their treatment experience, thus increasing the probability of recidivism. While a Positive Peer Culture program is an example of formal social support, it was not effective with the maltreated youth in Ryan's sample. It is possible that the maltreated youth in the sample did not perceive the program as supportive. The ability to attach to the group was seen by Ryan as a necessary component to the PCC treatment program. It is unlikely that a youth would attach to a group if they did not perceive that the group was socially supportive.

The age of onset for maltreatment seems to have an interactive effect with type of maltreatment in the long term outcomes for maltreated youth. Kaplow and Widom (2007) found that subjects who experienced physical abuse and neglect prior to age 6 reported more anxiety and depression as adults, than subjects with later onset of maltreatment. However, later onset of maltreatment was significantly associated with the development of Antisocial Personality Disorder in adulthood. The authors stated that this was due to the type of maltreatment since neglect tends to have an earlier onset than sexual abuse. Kaplow and Widom (2007) further suggest that maltreated youth perceive a lack of control over their environment and have insecure attachments to others. For the purposes of the present study, this finding suggests that maltreatment may have an impact on the maltreated child's perceived control balance ratio. Having insecure attachments to others can affect a youth's perception of their control ratio because insecure attachments suggest a lack of environmental stability and an increase in personal vulnerability for the youth.

In addition, lack of secure attachments can also reduce the impact of social consequences for deviance.

In addition to attachment difficulties, other individual characteristics of the child can also have an impact on the outcomes for maltreated youth. Widom (1991) found that a subset of maltreated children, who were diagnosed with behavior problems early in life, had more placement moves than children without documented behavior issues, even after controlling for moves related to delinquency. Widom suggests that it is important to differentiate between placement moves for maltreated children that are related to child behavior characteristics, delinquency or detention placements. There appears to be a subset of maltreated children who are at greater risk for delinquency due to their individual characteristics, such as behavior problems and family of origin characteristics, such as mental illness or alcoholism (Widom, 1991). This subset of children may be more likely to experience negative labels in their family of origin due to these characteristics.

Maltreatment can also impact the behavior of youth. Lemmon (2006) stated that youth who are repeatedly victimized may become tolerant or desensitized toward victimization of themselves and others. This would seem to be supported by Baron (2003) who found that formal sanctions against violent behavior were not effective in deterring street youth because their peer group valued violence as a method of solving disputes. This type of aggressive behavior can also result in placement moves. Consequently, the placement moves associated with these behaviors will also have a

negative effect on the child's treatment progress due to the frequent treatment interruptions.

According to Maas et al. (2008), there are many difficulties in reviewing the research on the link between child maltreatment and delinquency. Some of the problems highlighted in the Maas et al. (2008) review are the lack of specific definitions of key concepts, differences in the ways that studies analyze data and the lack of theory driven research on the maltreatment/youth violence link. In addition, the link between specific forms of maltreatment and delinquency and the potential for gender differences in the maltreatment/delinquency link all warrant further study.

However, several key findings seem to be consistent in the literature reviewed in this chapter. Physical abuse appears to be strongly linked with violent behavior. In addition, more frequent maltreatment, and maltreatment of two or more types are also strongly linked to delinquency. Appropriate treatment can mediate these effects, but as Ryan (2006) found, some juveniles may not be able to fully utilize their treatment experiences. The age of onset for maltreatment experiences is also a factor in outcomes for these youth, with youth who experience earlier maltreatment having mental health problems that persist into adulthood (Widom 1991). Other factors that interact with maltreatment and delinquency include individual characteristics of the child, such as attention problems, feelings of stigmatization and anger, and social skills (Widom 1991; Wall et al., 2005). The presence of social support can mediate the link between child maltreatment and delinquency through an increase in feelings of caregiver relatedness and the youth's living arrangements (Stouthamer-Loeber et al., 2002; Wall et al., 2005).

Chapter 3

Theoretical Foundation

Introduction:

Chapter three will form a theoretical foundation for the integrated model by discussing control balance theory, the labeling perspective, and the social support perspective. Control balance theory will be described first, followed by a review of the available research on the theory. A description of the labeling perspective based on Lemert (1951) and Becker (1963) will follow and the research pertaining to the labeling perspective will be reviewed. Finally, Cullen's (1994) description of the social support perspective and supporting research will be discussed. In order to begin the integration these theories, it is important to first understand and evaluate constituent theories. This will give the reader an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each theory. In Chapter four the strengths will then be used in the integrated model to help overcome the weaknesses of each theory.

Description of Control Balance Theory 1995:

Control balance theory is an integrated theory originally described by Tittle in 1995. Since that time, empirical testing and critique of the theory have resulted in revision to the theory in 2004. This chapter begins with a description of Charles Tittle's control balance theory as it was originally conceived in 1995. A discussion of the 2004 revisions made by Tittle will follow. The research review for control balance theory critiques both versions of the theory and will conclude this section of the chapter.

Control balance theory is a general theory of deviance that assumes that all individuals will seek autonomy (Tittle, 1995; 2004). Control balance theory is an integrated theory that uses ideas from Katz's transcendence theory, Turk's conflict theory and Brehm's reactance theory to explain the central causal process of deviance (Tittle, 1995). While not expressed explicitly in these theories, the idea that individuals will seek control over their surroundings is implicit in all of them.

Katz's (1988) *Seductions of Crime* discusses the processes that must occur for crime to be committed. Central to his transcendence theory are the emotions that come into play prior to committing a crime. These emotions are seen by Katz (1988) as "moral emotions" and include humiliation, righteousness, and vengeance among others. Katz stated that it is the desire to overcome threats to a person's moral existence rather than material existence that motivates a person to commit a crime. Tittle's interpretation of Katz's transcendence theory is that deviance not only allows a person to escape a situation that may be undesirable, or in Katz's words humiliating, but also gives the individual the ability to overcome the situation, thereby giving the individual more control (Tittle, 1995).

Brehm's reactance theory discusses the innate desire that all people have for freedom (Tittle, 1995). When this desire for freedom is threatened with restrictions, people become motivated to restore that freedom. Tittle translates the desire for freedom that is described in Brehm's reactance theory into a desire for autonomy. Using the central theme of control, autonomy is seen as a desire to have more control over the

environment than is experienced by the individual. This desire for autonomy and the control it implies is present in all human interactions.

Tittle applies the principals of power and control by political and social groups as described in Turk's conflict theory, to the behaviors of individuals, thus extending the macro level focus of Turk's theory to the micro level. In Turk's theory, all societies will experience conflict over control of resources. Societies that are successful in addressing this conflict are able to move from coercive (e.g. military) control of resources to a legitimized legal form. The legal form of control, which is based on laws created by the more powerful group, eventually becomes the norm for society as a whole. As new members are born into this form of control, called living time by Turk, and older members die out, the balance of power in the society becomes the accepted reality (Williams & McShane, 1998). When the balance of power and therefore control as described by Tittle is agreed upon by the members, there is less risk for deviance. In Tittle's words the individual control ratio becomes balanced. In a balanced control ratio the amount of control experienced by the individual in the environment is equal to the amount of control the individual exerts on the environment.

It is the process of control balancing that is the central causal process for deviance (Tittle, 1995). The primary concept underlying control balance theory is the control ratio (Tittle, 1995). It is the interaction between the amounts of control that a person is subjected to versus the amount of control an individual can exert on the environment that determines the control ratio. The control ratio describes the amount of control that a person experiences. Someone who can exert little control over their environment, but

who experiences a large amount of controlling forces is said to have a control deficit. Conversely, someone with great control over their environment, but who experiences few controlling forces would have a control surplus. Deviance is more likely when a person has either a deficit of control in their lives, or a surplus of control. The theory assumes that individuals will seek autonomy and that people want to have more control over their environment than they experience. People become motivated to act deviantly when they are reminded of their control deficit, or when their control surplus is threatened. An individual with a control deficit will try to gain more control and reduce the deficit, while an individual with a control surplus will try to extend the surplus. Deviance results from the combined interactions of four variables: predisposition toward deviant motivation, provocation, constraint and opportunity.

A predisposition toward deviance is generated by two factors, autonomy and the control ratio. As stated before, a desire for autonomy is assumed to be a motivating factor for all individuals in control balance theory. Tittle (1995) describes autonomy as the need to have more control over the environment than that to which one is subjected. The primary desire by individuals is to escape controlling forces, followed by the desire to influence or control environmental outcomes. Tittle describes the control ratio as being stable in the sense of social status and the roles that a person plays in society, but it can also vary by situation. For instance, an individual may have a control deficit in his role as an employee, but a control surplus in his role as a father. The control ratio is a significant factor in the motivation to commit deviance because of its ability to interact with the desire for autonomy. The control ratio is influenced by an individual's roles, social status,

organizational attachments, and interactions with others in their environment (Tittle, 1995).

Another factor in an individual's decision to commit a deviant act is provocation. In order to be motivated to commit a deviant act, a person must be reminded of their control imbalance, and perceive that the deviant act will increase their control and change their control ratio in some way that is beneficial to the person (Tittle, 1995). These provocations can happen in a variety of ways through everyday social interactions and routines. This type of power balance is particularly important in juvenile residential settings, where staff members typically have a control surplus over the youth, and consequently, the youth have a control deficit. For example, a staff person may place his arm across the shoulders of a resident when addressing the resident. For a youth who has been sexually or physically abused by men, this interaction may result in feelings of powerlessness, humiliation and anger. The youth, reminded of his control deficit may be motivated to act deviantly. He may make attempts to hit the staff person in order to change his control ratio.

Constraint refers to the severity of sanctions for a deviant act, and the likelihood that the offender will receive those sanctions. There are three factors that influence constraint, the control ratio itself, the seriousness of the deviant act and the risk associated with that act (Tittle, 1995). In any deviant act, there is a possibility that the person committing the act will experience counter-controlling measures by either individuals or society at large. Consider the earlier example of the youth in residential placement. The youth might be motivated to hit the staff person in order to gain more

control. However, if there is a significant chance of experiencing counter controlling measures, such as the threat of physical restraint by the staff person, the youth may not act in a deviant manner even if highly motivated to do so. While hitting the staff person may be a seriously deviant act, in the youth's control balance ratio, the risk associated with that act may be different in differing situations. Hitting a staff person in residential placement will almost certainly result in a restraint and possible charges. However, hitting a family member in the home may not result in any consequences. Based on the youth's age and developmental abilities other means of rectifying a control deficit may not be readily available to the youth. A youth with poor impulse control, who is feeling strong emotions, may hit the staff person even though counter controlling measures are a certainty. As a result, the control ratio of the youth interacts with seriousness of the act and the risk of the act to determine the likelihood of physical aggression in any given situation.

Opportunity is the fourth key concept in control balance theory (Tittle, 1995). Any act of deviance is contingent upon the opportunity to commit the act. The youth in placement may be motivated to hit the staff person, have a predisposition for doing so based on a control deficit, and experience provocation by being touched by a male. He may experience limited constraint even though he knows there will be counter controlling measures. For example the staff member he wants to hit may be smaller in stature than the youth, and the youth may feel that he can overtake the staff person. If however, the staff member is suddenly called to another area, the youth would not have an opportunity to act deviantly in that case.

It is the interaction among the predisposition to be motivated to commit deviance, provocation, constraint and opportunity that influences the likelihood that a person will commit a deviant act. It is the control imbalance that serves as the motivation to commit a deviant act, and the deviant act is the method used to alter the control imbalance (Tittle, 1995).

In the 1995 version of Tittle's theory, the type of deviant act that will be chosen by an individual depends upon the nature of the person's control imbalance. Tittle described categories of deviant acts that exist along a control balance continuum. Individuals in the middle of the continuum have balanced control ratios and are unlikely to commit deviant acts. Individuals with control deficits are placed along the left side of the continuum and are likely to use repressive forms of deviance. Repressive forms of deviance are categorized by their seriousness, with the most serious form of repressive deviance (predation) located toward the middle of the continuum. Only individuals with minor control deficits would be likely to choose acts in this category. Predatory acts are considered to necessitate some control and include such things as manipulation of people by inducing guilt, assault, murder and rape.

Individuals with larger control deficits would choose acts in the defiant category which is located further left along the continuum. Defiant acts are less successful in decreasing a control deficit. These acts, such as violating curfews, worker strikes, alcohol and drug abuse, are only available to individuals with moderate control deficits, because these individuals experience more control than they are able to exert.

The final category of repressive deviance is submission. In this category, individuals have such extreme control deficits that there is no hope of decreasing their control deficits. Consequently, they submit to the control with no thought of trying to correct the deficit. Tittle gives the example of abused spouses who submit to the abuse with no thought of rectifying the situation.

On the right side of the control balance continuum are the autonomous forms of deviance. These acts are chosen by individuals who have a control surplus. Similar to the repressive end of the continuum, those with smaller control surpluses are located closer to the middle of the continuum near the balanced point. In this category (exploitation) individuals utilize indirect methods of predation, such as price fixing by corporations. Further to the right of the continuum is the plunder category of deviance, which consists of selfish acts such as large scale pollution by industry. Finally the extreme right of the continuum is decadent acts that are considered bizarre by most of society (see figure 1). Tittle gives the example of Nero and Howard Hughes as examples of people with extreme control surpluses.

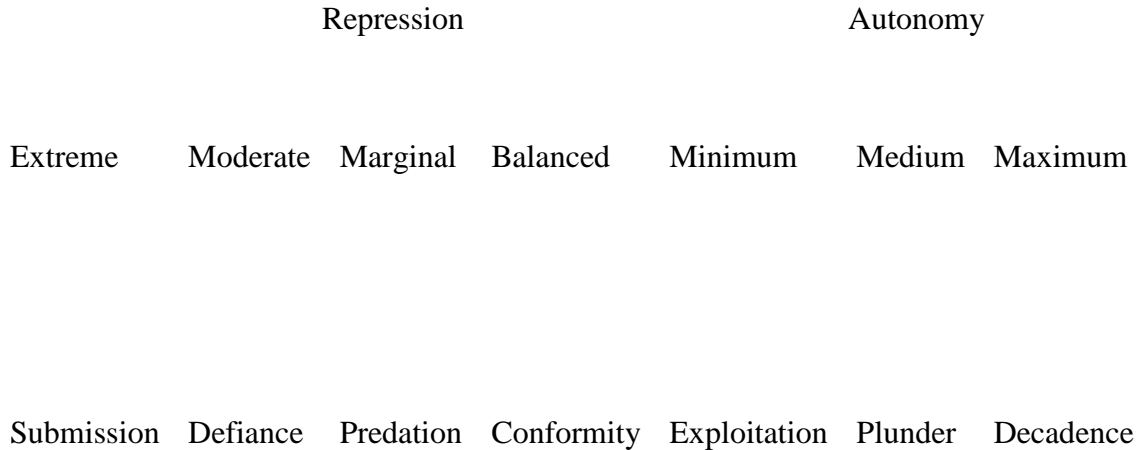


Figure 1. Type of Deviance.

Source: Tittle, C. (1995). *Control Balance Toward a General theory of Deviance*. Westview Press.

Tittle (1995) also theorized that gender differences in crime could be explained by the differences in control ratios for males and females. In general, Tittle stated that more males than females conform. The status of being female as opposed to being male and the role most females play in society places females along the control repressive end of the continuum. The largest number of females would be located in the submissive category of the continuum, with progressively smaller numbers continuing up the continuum into decadence. While females do enjoy more control in certain domains, such as the home and family, this is not enough to overcome the control deficits that they experience in other areas. Tittle's definition of conformity is obeying social rules, even though it is possible to visualize other forms of behavior. In other words, a person chooses to conform. In submissive deviance, the person obeys societal norms without thought to other forms of behavior. The choice to conform is not present. Tittle hypothesized that

females should have higher rates of submissive deviance and somewhat higher or possibly equal rates of defiant forms of deviance than males.

Description of Control Balance Theory 2004:

Tittle refined control balance theory in 2004, choosing to abandon the distinctions between autonomous and repressive deviance. Tittle felt that the distinctions between repressive and autonomous forms of deviance were unclear and constituted a logical flaw in the theory. Research from Piquero and Hickman (2001) had suggested that both surpluses and deficits result in both repressive and autonomous forms of deviance, thus supporting the rationale for theory revision.

In Tittle's revised control balance theory there are three types of behavior, which include conformity, deviance and submission. Conformity is more likely when an individual's control ratio is balanced and the amount of controlling forces and counter controlling forces are equal. Deviance occurs when there is a control imbalance, either a deficit or surplus. Submission is seen as a failure of the control balancing system. The individual has given up trying to correct the control imbalance due to the extreme nature of the control deficit. An example of submission might include an otherwise heterosexual male prisoner submitting to the sexual advances of his more physically powerful cell mate.

Tittle also addressed the ambiguity of his definition of seriousness in the revised theory. In the revised theory seriousness describes the likelihood that counter controlling measures will be employed because of the deviant act and the magnitude of those

measures. Tittle uses murder as an example of how seriousness relates to the likelihood of counter control. Because murder is a serious act, it is likely that society will attempt to punish the act in some way. In other words, the act of murder makes it highly likely that the murderer will lose what ever control was obtained by the murderous act in the first place. It is not an estimate of the morality of the deviant act. Seriousness is also differentiated from situational risk. Situational risk is operationalized as the risk of getting caught and punished for the deviant act. A shooting conducted in the victim's home has less situational risk than shooting the victim in a busy public parking lot. Both seriousness and situational risk are seen as pieces of the composite variable, constraint. In constraint, the individual cognitively balances the amount of control to be gained by a deviant act against the seriousness and situational risk of the act.

In the revision, deviant acts are placed along a control balance desirability continuum. Deviant acts are placed along the continuum dependent upon how effective the act is at changing the control imbalance and by the amount of personal contact the offender has with the victim. Thus, control balance desirability is also a composite variable. An act that results in a significant improvement in the offender's control imbalance, and does not require personal contact with the victim would be high on the control balance desirability scale (Tittle, 2004). An act that does not have personal contact with the victim reduces the risk of counter controlling measures. Tittle stated that lack of victim contact also decreases the likelihood that the offender will become publicly labeled by the act, which would alter the self concept or public image. Tittle stated that incurring a bad reputation from a deviant act would reduce the amount of internal control the offender possessed because the offender would lose control of their own physic states.

This is based in the social interactions that accompany the process of developing a person's self concept. It also suggests the possibility that people become labeled by deviant acts when counter controlling forces are incurred. The effectiveness of a deviant act consists not only of how much increased control the act can achieve both internally and externally, but also the likelihood that the deviant act will result in counter control measures. In addition, a deviant act may have low control balance desirability, but high personal desirability (Tittle, 2004). A person who acts out of extreme emotions may commit an act with low control desirability, such as hitting a staff person while in placement, but high personal desirability.

In the revised version, four variables influence the control balancing process. These are the control ratio, opportunity, constraint and self control. In the individual's control ratio, the larger the deficit or surplus the more likely it is that the individual will experience debasement or humiliation from a provoking event and therefore be motivated for deviance. The likelihood of an event being construed as humiliating may also depend on an individual's personal experiences, innate personality characteristics, or membership in particular groups (Williams, 2008). The feelings of humiliation that are brought about by the reminder of a person's control imbalance serve as a catalyst for motivation for deviance (Williams, 2008).

Opportunity will influence the deviant act chosen. While a person may be provoked in one setting, such as at work, the opportunity for deviance may not occur in that same setting. Because deviance is utilized to alter the control ratio in general, it is not limited to one particular setting. Consequently, provocation at work may result in

deviance in the home, due to an increase in opportunity for deviance in the home (Williams, 2008).

Constraint refers to the cognitive balancing of seriousness and situational risk. Seriousness is seen as the likelihood that if caught committing the deviant act, some form of counter controlling measure will be imposed on the offender. Situational risk refers to the likelihood that the offender will actually be caught once the deviant act has been committed.

Self control is also an important factor, as one with lower self control is less likely to go through the cognitive balancing process of constraint adequately and may choose acts lower on the control desirability scale out of impulse. This can be seen repeatedly in youth diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder and other psychiatric disorders. It is through self control that Tittle is able to include individual level traits that may cause variations in responses to provocation (see figure 2).

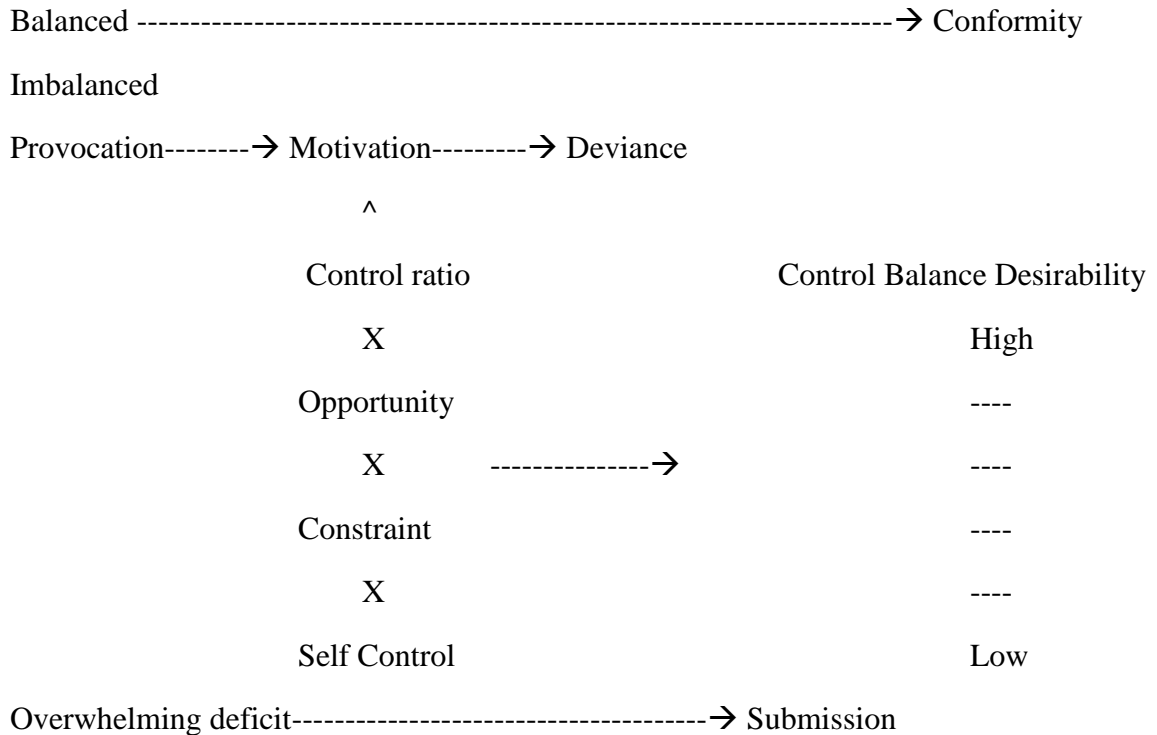


Figure 2. Control Balancing Process

Source: Tittle, C. (2004). Refining Control Balance Theory. *Theoretical Criminology*.

Vol. 8 (4): pp 395-428.

Review of Research on Control Balance Theory:

As recognized by Tittle, control balance theory is not fully integrated, and Tittle intended for modifications to be made to the theory if needed. There are many contingencies that affect the control ratio that are not explained by the theory. Tittle states that in order to fully integrate control balance theory, these contingencies need to be explained, and other theories that may influence these contingencies need to be included. This leaves room for further integration in order to fully explain how the control ratio can be affected by individual characteristics and circumstances.

Several other theorists have examined control balance theory and have given their own interpretations of the strengths and needs of the theory. Braithwaite's (1997) critique of the 1995 version of control balance theory is a primary example. In Braithwaite's opinion the distinctions between predatory acts on the deficit end of the continuum and the exploitive, plundering and decadent acts on the surplus end are unclear. It is plausible, according to Braithwaite, to see the deviant acts described on the control surplus end of the continuum as basically predatory in nature. Braithwaite (1997) suggests that in order to make the theory more parsimonious, control balance should be described as a theory of predation, rather than a theory of deviance. Braithwaite offers a more parsimonious version of control balance theory which can be summarized in this way. When societies have large numbers of the population with control ratios that are balanced, predatory deviance will be lower. Predatory deviance will increase with increasing control surpluses because people have an innate desire to extend control. Predatory deviance will increase to a point with control deficits for the same reason. However, as the control deficit becomes larger, the ability to conceptualize methods for extending control becomes less (described as learned helplessness), and predatory deviance is then replaced by self inflicted deviance (drug abuse or suicide) or extreme forms of submission. Braithwaite further suggests that submission be seen a separate and non-deviant behavior.

Savelsberg (1999) suggests that there are dimensions to control that need to be included into the theory, such as recognized versus unrecognized control and legitimate versus illegitimate control. In addition, Savelsberg takes issue with the omission of the socialization process that could easily be included into an individual's motivation for deviance. Motivation in Tittle's view is seen more as a product of a person's attempt to

balance power and control. This view of motivation omits factors such as social roles which may, according to Savelsberg be important to the process.

Baron and Forde (2007) examined the roles that control deficits and control surpluses played in the commission of crime with a sample of street youth. In particular, the authors were interested in the role control ratios play in crime in the presence of other high risk factors such as low socio-economic status. They found that both control deficits and control surpluses were related to serious property and person crimes, but not minor thefts. The sample consisted of 400 homeless youth who were given scenarios that depicted various types of crimes. Youth were asked whether they would have committed the acts in the scenarios given the same circumstances. The majority of the youth in the study had a control surplus, with only 31 % of youth experiencing control deficits. The study found that both control surpluses and control deficits were related to violent and serious thefts. The study also suggested that youth who had meager control surpluses were more likely to respond with violence when their surplus was threatened. The authors surmised that these youth lacked the types of control surpluses that would allow them to choose from responses higher on the control desirability scale which resulted in acts that had direct contact with victims.

Piquero and Hickman (1999) conducted an empirical test of control balance theory which tested the hypothesis that the nature of the control balance ratio predicts the type of deviant behavior. The study gave a sample of college students two scenarios that described an act of predatory deviance and an act of defiant deviance. Control ratios for the students were computed by asking a series of questions about the amount of control

they have versus the amount of control they are subjected to in various areas of their lives. The study found that having a control surplus or control deficit significantly predicted deviance. However, both control deficits and control surpluses significantly predicted predatory acts of deviance and defiant acts of deviance. Similar results were found in other studies. For example, Hickman and Piquero (2001) examined gender, control balance and deviance. They found some gender differences in deviant acts chosen. More females choose the repressive deviant act of unhealthy dieting, and more males choose the autonomous deviant act of using someone to obtain class notes. There were not, however, differences in the type of control ratio imbalance and the type of deviant act chosen. There were also no significant differences in the control ratios for males and females. This seems to contradict Tittle's (1995) assertion that more males than females conform. The finding that both control deficits and control surpluses lead to repressive and autonomous forms of deviance was also supported by Curry and Piquero (2003) and seems to support Braithwaite's critique that both repressive and autonomous forms of deviance are really predatory in nature.

Curry (2005) used a convenience sample of college students to test the relationships of several key variables in control balance theory. Using a parced model, Curry examined the relationships between the control balance ratio, deviant motivation, self control, situational provocations, constraint and deviance. His study used scenarios that asked students the likelihood that they would cheat on a college examination after learning that their grade in the class was lower than expected, and that a friend had a copy of the exam. The study found direct relationships between control surpluses and control deficits and deviance. There was also a direct relationship between motivation and

deviance. No direct relationship between situational provocations and deviance was found. However, there was a positive relationship between situational provocations and motivation. The study also found that as control imbalances increased, either in the direction of a surplus or deficit, levels of perceived constraints decreased. This relationship also held for self control, where individuals with low self control were more likely to cheat on the exam, and less likely to perceive constraints. Students with low self control also had greater deviant motivation. When testing the full model equation, control ratio imbalances (either deficits or surpluses), deviant motivation and constraint all had significant effects on deviance. Situational provocation was an intervening variable in the relationship between control ratios and deviance. These findings support Tittle's idea of a causal chain process in deviance, where control ratios affect deviance through motivation, constraint, and situational provocations. However, control ratios did not explain a large amount of variance in motivation and constraint, which suggests that other factors may have effects on these variables that are not explained by the theory.

Williams (2008) applied control balance theory to explain computer crime. Because of the potential for anonymity, computer crime allows people with a control deficit to choose acts that are higher on the control balance desirability scale than might be possible otherwise. According to Williams, Tittle assumes in control balance theory that most individuals are generally non-impulsive and capable of the cognitions required to balance situational risk and seriousness. It is this balancing process that allows a person to choose an act that has limited contact with the victim and the potential for higher levels of control. Williams criticizes Tittle for underestimating the amount of

internal feelings of control that a person may experience from an impulsive act, even though that act may be lower on the control balance desirability scale.

Control balance theory is a relatively new addition to the field of criminology. Consequently, the amount of research necessary to refine and test the theory has not yet occurred. Curry (2005) cites the need for primary data sources and the large number of potential variables as factors in the lack of research on the theory. The research that is available seems to support Tittle's revision in 2004 that does away with the idea that having a control deficit or control surplus will predict particular types of deviance. In general, control imbalances have been found to have a direct effect on deviance regardless of the type of imbalance (Curry 2005; Curry and Piquero 2003; Hickman and Piquero 2001; Piquero and Hickman 1999).

In addition, as Tittle (1995) asserts, there is room in control balance theory for further integration to explain some of the contingencies that occur during the control balancing process which lead to deviance. Curry's (2005) findings that control ratios did not explain a large amount of the variance in deviant motivation and constraint are potential areas for further integration. In addition, Tittle also described how people could lose internal control over their self concepts from negative reputations if caught committing a deviant act. This implies that labels affect not only the control ratio, but also are factors in constraint as well. The labeling perspective addresses some of these contingencies by describing how individuals internalize labels. These labels determine how an individual will react to a provoking event and may explain some of the variances in motivation and the control ratio. The next section of this chapter will describe the

labeling perspective based on Lemert (1951) and Becker (1963) followed by a review of the research on the labeling perspective.

Description of the Labeling Perspective:

The labeling perspective is a collection of concepts and ideas about the nature of the relationship of criminalization to deviant behavior. The perspective discusses both why some acts are defined and reacted to as deviant, and the effect that the deviant label may have on a person's self-concept and future behavior. Foremost in this perspective is the idea that labeling is a process that happens over time through social interactions. These social interactions form the core of labeling theory and are based on symbolic interactionism which is borrowed from the sociology discipline (Akers & Sellers, 2004). In symbolic interactionism meanings are conveyed through face to face communications of words and gestures (Akers & Sellers, 2004). These communications are symbolic because they convey ideas about other people's perceptions of an individual's self concept. A primary idea in symbolic interactionism is that who we are is shaped by how others perceive us (Akers & Sellers, 2004). The symbols or labels that we are given allow us to define our self concept, which then shapes our behavior. Consequently, our labels become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Once a person has been stigmatized by a negative label, such as delinquent, the self concept will be changed to support the label. This in turn results in behaviors that also support the label (Akers and Sellers, 2004). During the course of social interactions, which are based on symbols, people actively assign meanings to the symbols they encounter. People then act based on these meanings. Consequently, subjective interpretations of meanings become central in accounting for

actions, such as the link between maltreatment and delinquency. This concept of symbolic interactionism is central to all labeling perspectives. However, for the purposes of this paper, labeling theory will be evaluated based upon Edwin Lemert's views in his book *Social pathology; a systematic approach to the theory of sociopathic behavior* (1951) and Howard Becker's ideas in his book *Outsiders* (1963)

Lemert (1951) begins with the belief that deviant labels are the result of social interactions designed to sanction in some way behavior that is outside of socially acceptable norms. Lemert felt that most people will at times and for a variety of reasons make behavior choices that are outside these norms. For example, a person who is experimenting with alcohol for the first time may consume too much alcohol out of inexperience and become embarrassingly intoxicated. These choices may be recognized and penalized by society through social interactions. However, the social interactions arising from the deviation are not severe enough to change the status of the individual or cause the individual to question his or her self concept (Lemert 1967). Because there is no tension between the person's social role and self concept, this type of deviation is considered primary deviation (Lemert 1951, 1967).

In Lemert's view, the defining factor in the deviant labeling process is how an individual internalizes the social reactions that occur based upon a deviant act. The deviant label is not acquired by the individual immediately. It is a process whereby the individual becomes sanctioned by society, and because of these sanctions, develops tension between his or her self concept and his social role. As more deviant acts occur, for possibly a variety of reasons, society continues to sanction the behavior. Eventually

the community's tolerance quotient for the deviant behavior is reached. The tolerance quotient was expressed by Lemert (1951) as the amount of deviant behavior in the community, divided by the community's acceptance of the deviant behavior. When this quotient reaches a critical level, the community organizes to reduce the behavior. The stigmatization that occurs from being repeatedly labeled as a deviant results in frustration on the part of the labeled person because his/her original social roles are no longer available. Eventually the tension that develops among being labeled as a deviant, the social roles that accompany the deviant label, and the individual's original self concept reaches a critical level. This tension may cause the individual to reorganize his or her self concept around the deviant behavior. Lemert described this as internalizing the deviant label. Any deviant acts following this process are secondary to the label and caused by the reorganization of the self concept around the deviant label. Lemert called this secondary deviance. Lemert outlined the sequence of this process in his book *Social pathology* (1951, pg. 77).

“ (1) primary deviation; (2) social penalties; (3) further primary deviation; (4) stronger penalties and rejections; (5) further deviation, perhaps with hostilities and resentment beginning to focus upon those doing the penalizing; (6) crisis reached in the tolerance quotient, expressed in formal action by the community stigmatizing of the deviant; (7) strengthening of the deviant conduct as a reaction to the stigmatizing and penalties; (8) ultimate acceptance of the deviant social status and efforts at adjustment on the basis of the associated role.”

Lemert (1951) emphasized that all behavior, both deviant and normal, is goal driven. The range of behaviors that any person can employ are determined by external limits created by society, and the internal limits created by the individual. External limits are determined by the status of the individual, such as age, gender, race or deviant status. Internal limits are determined by the individual's personality traits and abilities. Both external and internal limits shape the social roles and opportunities available to the person. When a person is labeled as a deviant by society, the social roles available to him change based on the external limits of having a deviant status. If the person is able to find a social role compatible with both his external and internal limits he will become adjusted to his new status. If there is no compatible social role, the person may become blocked from social participation completely.

Becker (1963) shares with Lemert the belief that deviance is a product of social interactions. Deviance is created by social groups who create rules that group members are required to follow. Central to Becker's labeling theory is that deviance is created by society. Consequently, deviance is not a trait of the person or of the act committed. It is a result of the social interactions that occur when the individual is sanctioned for rule breaking by the group. When a rule is broken, the offender may be labeled as an outsider. The social group has discretion about who will or will not be labeled as a deviant for rule breaking and which rules are more thoroughly enforced.

According to Becker (1963), the social group with the most power, either political or social, is the group who makes and enforces the social rules. Ethnicity, age, sex and social class are all factors related to distinctions of power. These rules are not universally

agreed upon, which causes conflict with other groups. Becker cites two examples of social groups whose value systems often come into conflict with mainstream society, marijuana users and dance musicians. Both of these groups, because of their different values, see mainstream society as the outsiders. It is possible then, for the deviant to be labeled as an outsider by mainstream society, while at the same time, the deviant views mainstream society as the outsiders. This highlights the fact that the labeling process is a social interaction and not based on a characteristic of the labeled person, or of the behavior committed. Consequently, Becker does not subscribe to the view that there is something inherently wrong with the individual labeled as deviant.

This idea that deviance is not a psychological trait inherent in the individual but a social process is also a factor in the motivation to commit deviance in the first place. Becker (1963) felt that there were two types of initial deviant activities: those committed out of ignorance of the rule, and intentional commissions of acts. In Becker's view people who belong to subcultures may be ignorant of mainstream society rules. For example, immigrants are not usually aware of every law and social custom of their new country. A newly immigrated family may leave young children home alone during the day because both parents work outside the home. While this is considered unacceptable in this country, it may be acceptable in others. Deviant acts that are committed intentionally may be done for a variety of reasons. A person may socialize with a subculture that views the activity as acceptable; the person may be curious about the deviant activity and therefore have an impulse to engage in the activity. Becker felt that most people have deviant impulses, but refrain from them based on commitments to conventional society. A person who intentionally commits a deviant act may justify the

need for the activity in some way, or may not fear reprisal from conventional society. Regardless of how the initial deviant act occurs, Becker felt that once a person was caught and labeled as deviant, there was an important change in the person's public identity. This change in public identity also results in a change in the person's status.

Becker (1963) stated that people were differentiated from each other by status. While a person might have several status positions, such as employee, parent, or child, some status positions carry more influence and power than others. Becker called such a position a "master status". The status position that carries the most influence or power is the one that most people react to and tends to be stereotypical. The CEO of a large organization would command more socially recognized influence as a CEO than he would in his role as a husband or father. According to Becker, a person's master status can influence the opportunities that a person has in life. Becker saw the label of criminal or delinquent as a master status, which could limit the individual's opportunities for employment and positive relationships with others. These limits then become a self-fulfilling prophecy in which the deviant is unable to participate in conventional daily activities and must develop other, less conventional means to meet his needs. The deviant then becomes a member of a subculture of people, labeled as outsiders, who participate in the activity. In this way, ties to conventional society may become strained and eventually disappear. Rather than deviant motives (which assumes a deviant character trait) leading to deviant behavior, the deviant behavior actually leads to deviant motivations (which assumes a social interaction). Becker felt this was particularly true in the case of the marijuana user, whose initial vague impulses to try the drug eventually lead to participation in a subculture of other users. Once marijuana use is discovered by

conventional society, the user becomes labeled as an outsider and develops patterns of behavior (based on limited opportunities) which support the behavior and consequently the label.

Both of these perspectives highlight the amount of discretion that social groups have in determining who will be labeled as a deviant, and which behaviors will incur the most severe sanctions. These factors are often referred to as extra-legal factors and can impact the justice system processing of offenders (Akers & Sellers, 2004). Extra-legal factors include race, gender, and socio-economic status. According to the labeling perspective, the justice system has great discretion as to whom and how the criminal label is applied. For example, not all youth who enter the juvenile justice system will receive the delinquent label; some will receive a label of dependent child, even though their behaviors are similar to those labeled delinquent. This discretion can result in a biased system. This bias can occur at any point throughout the legal system, from the decision to arrest and charge an offender and continuing through the sentencing and sanctioning processes. Certain acts are defined as criminal by more powerful groups (Akers & Sellers, 2004). These more powerful groups then impose the label on the less powerful groups, thereby ensuring their continued power. Becker's master status positions can play a role in this process, as the more powerful master statuses can influence the way society reacts to the individual (Williams & McShane, 1988). Race can be a powerful master status, so that a white male might not be sanctioned as severely as a black male for the same deviant act. Gender is another powerful master status. For example a female might be seen as being in need of protection and labeled dependent, whereas a male might be labeled delinquent, even though the initial deviant acts are similar in nature.

Review of Research on Labeling Perspective:

Brezina and Aragonés (2004) take this discretionary labeling process a step further in their discussion of the effects of positive labels on delinquency. They hypothesize that having a positive label actually gives the adolescent more opportunity for delinquency because these labels afford more freedom. Positive labels tend to be more informal in nature and are generally obtained from parents, teachers and other authority figures.

Brezina and Aragonés (2004) also highlight thrill seeking as a possible motivation for delinquent behavior. In several interviews the interviewee described the thrilling nature of committing deviance, while being seen as a “good kid” by authority figures. This suggests that the commission of deviant acts may provide feelings of power and control for the individual. It also highlights a criticism of labeling perspective described by Tittle (1975) which states that the absence of a negative label does not necessarily mean that the individual will conform.

Tittle’s (1975) criticism of labeling perspective also includes its inability to account for initial acts of deviance. In addition, Tittle contends that labeling a person can possibly deter a person from further crime, or might have no effect on future crime. Labeling also does not address how the addition of a label might affect the individual differently in some situations or with different offenses. Finally, the labeling perspective does not address when and how deviance will occur once the label has been internalized.

However, there has been research support for Becker's (1963) view that the person labeled as deviant becomes motivated through social exclusion and stigmatization to seek out like-minded deviant groups. Bernburg, Krohn and Rivera (2006) examined this premise in their longitudinal examination of juvenile justice intervention and its effects on gang involvement, delinquent peer associations and subsequent delinquency. The authors found that involvement in the juvenile justice system increased the likelihood that juveniles would engage in subsequent serious delinquency. Youth involved with the juvenile justice system were significantly more likely to have subsequent involvement with delinquent peers and with delinquent gangs. The authors found strong mediating effects for both delinquent peer involvement and delinquent gang involvement on subsequent delinquency. Jointly these two variables accounted for about 46% of the observed effects on subsequent delinquency. Bernburg et. al. (2006) felt that these findings give support to the idea that there may be independent effects of official labeling on subsequent delinquency. In fact, Bernburg et al. (2006) felt that official labeling is the beginning of a process that not only increases a youth's involvement with deviant peer groups, but also helps to maintain and support delinquency through involvement with delinquent peers. This study supports Becker's hypothesis that labeling a youth as delinquent may cause the youth to seek other peers who share the same label.

Several studies have examined the process of official labeling and the effects of official labels on attitudes and self perceptions. Andrew McGrath (2009) examined the effects of stigmatization, re-integration and deterrence on subsequent offending in a group of youth before the New South Wales juvenile court system. McGrath interviewed the youth after formal sentencing to determine their attitudes on how stigmatized,

reintegrated or deterred they felt following their formal court hearings. Individuals who felt that subsequent arrest was likely if they re-offended were less likely to re-offend. This gave some support to the idea that juvenile court interventions can be a deterrent. There was no support for the hypothesis that youth who felt re-integrated after the court hearing were less likely to re-offend than those who did not. In support of labeling theory, individuals who felt stigmatized by the court process were more likely to re-offend. According to McGrath this finding comes with a caveat however; the numbers of youth who felt stigmatized by the court proceedings were relatively low. McGrath felt that juvenile court proceedings in general are not always stigmatizing to the youth and that stigmatizing effects may not be immediately felt by youth. McGrath further states the assumption that formal court proceedings are always stigmatizing to the youth is a major flaw in the research on labeling theory.

The idea that contact with the court system may not always lead to stigmatization and internalization of the label for the offender was supported by Patrick and Marsh (2005). They randomly assigned juveniles referred to the court system for status offenses relating to tobacco and alcohol use to one of four groups. Three groups were considered experimental groups and consisted of two diversion programs and one traditional court program. The fourth group was a control group in which the offenders were interviewed, the problems associated with tobacco and alcohol usage were discussed and the charge was removed from the juvenile's record, provided there was no recidivism for one year. The results of the study indicated that there was no statistical difference in recidivism rates for any of the four groups. The authors stated that it was unlikely that labeling

occurred in any of the groups. This study did not examine whether the youth actually felt stigmatized by the court process, which is a weakness in the study.

Hirschfield (2008) however, did examine this issue by conducting interviews with youth from severely disadvantaged inner city neighborhoods in Chicago who had been arrested as juveniles. He found that formal legal sanctions for the youth did not result in feelings of stigmatization or in changes to the youth's self concept. Because as many as half of the youth in the neighborhood schools experienced arrest at one time or another, teachers and family members in most cases did not stigmatize the youth who were arrested. Hirschfield noted that many of the youth and their families felt that the youth were falsely accused on some occasions, which decreased the legitimacy of the police and the court system. The youth in Hirschfield's study did not experience much if any changes in their social or familial interactions or in their self-concept after being arrested. In fact, youth in his study saw arrest as a normal process in their neighborhoods. In order to adequately examine labeling theory, the presence of feelings of stigmatization needs to be included in the research.

Cechaviciute and Kenny (2007) examined the effects of labeling and neutralizations on official offending patterns in a sample of youth who were serving community based supervision. The authors hypothesized that youth who perceived themselves as being labeled as delinquent would have more serious offending behaviors. In support of neutralization theory he also hypothesized that youth who were less involved in offending behavior would employ more neutralizations than youth who thought they were labeled as delinquents. Consistent with the studies previously

mentioned, 54% of youth in the sample did not believe that others labeled them as delinquent. However, those who did feel that they had been labeled displayed more severe self-reported delinquency, and more violence and anger than those who did not feel labeled. There was no difference however in their official offending behaviors. The neutralizations of minimization and rationalizations were weak predictors of official offending behaviors but were somewhat better at predicting self reported delinquency. However, two thirds of the labeled group could be discriminated by the factor of rationalizations and the age at first court appearance. Youth who perceive themselves as being labeled employed more rationalizations for their behaviors and appeared before court at earlier ages. This finding was in the opposite direction hypothesized by Cechaviciute and Kenny based on neutralization theory. The authors suggest that during the process of being labeled, the youth do feel some conflict with self image and justify their behaviors accordingly. The length of time involved with the court system also seems to be a factor, since youth who first appeared before court at younger ages were more likely to be in the labeled group. This study suggests that the delinquent label is not something that is attached during a single court appearance, but is a process that happens over time. It also suggests that it is the perception of being labeled that has the most effect on offending behavior and not the label itself. This supports Lemert's (1951) view that only after the label has been internalized will secondary deviance occur. Based on the research, the perception of being labeled as a delinquent, and feelings of stigmatization are important factors in this process and do not always occur with official court involvement.

Because the official court process does not always result in stigmatization or internalizing labels, some scholars have begun examining the informal labeling process. Zhang (1997) used data from the National Youth Survey to examine the link between informal labels and delinquency. Several findings supported labeling theory. A youth's delinquency was a significant predictor of parental labeling of the youth as delinquent. Both delinquency and parental labeling of delinquency also had significant positive effects on youth's perceptions that their parents, friends, and teachers labeled them as delinquent. Several other factors were also related to youth's perceptions that they were labeled by significant others. Non-Caucasian, male youth whose parents had lower educational attainment and lower incomes were more likely to believe that significant others labeled them as delinquent. The study also examined these beliefs and the extent to which youths' beliefs that parents labeled them as delinquent affected their social relationships. Youth who believed that parents thought them to be delinquent experienced more social isolation at home, at school and with friends. Perceived labeling by friends only affected social isolation from friends, and perceived labeling by teachers only affected school isolation. Zhang stated that informal labeling may negatively affect personal relationships. However, social isolation did not affect subsequent delinquency, which was contrary to labeling theory. In support of labeling theory youth's perceptions of parental labeling and teachers' labeling did increase the possibility of subsequent delinquency. Based on these results, informal labeling does seem to have an important impact on the labeling process, particularly when youth feel labeled by parents. Parents convey labels to their children through their social interactions with the children. These labels form the foundation for the youth's self concept.

The importance of the informal labeling process is also highlighted in Kenny's (2002) research on victimization. Kenny studied the process by which family members of murder victims become labeled as victims and become stigmatized through their expressions of grief. When family members of murder victims fail to negotiate the socially acceptable sequence and timing of grief reactions, they become socially isolated from extended family members and friends. Kenny suggests that victims of crime are sometimes subjected to a parallel labeling process similar to the labeling process of offenders. In the case of victims, the label of victim can become a master status label which dictates how others react to them socially. This study is important because it suggests the possibility that victims of crime can also become labeled and receive negative social consequences from the label. Childhood maltreatment is also a crime, and consequently, victims of maltreatment can become labeled as victims not only through official means but also on an informal level as well. In addition the maltreatment experience conveys to the youth a label from the person maltreating the youth. Because the label of victim can become a master status label, it is reasonable to believe that maltreatment would affect a person's perceived control ratio in a direct sense.

The research on the labeling perspective has given some support for several key processes described by Lemert (1951) and Becker (1963). Subsequent delinquency does become more likely if youth perceive themselves to be labeled or stigmatized both in the court system and by significant others (McGrath, 2009; Zhang, 1997). A youth's perception of being labeled as delinquent and feelings of stigmatization are key factors in the labeling process. Several studies found that involvement in formal court proceedings are not automatically stigmatizing for youth and many youth do not feel labeled by court

involvement (Cechaviciute and Kenny, 2007; Hirschfield, 2008; Patrick and Marsh, 2005). As Lemert (1951) stated it is the internalization of the label that leads to secondary deviance. Youth who do not feel stigmatized by the labeling process may have no conflict with their self images, as the interviews conducted by Hirschfield (2008) show.

Another key factor in subsequent delinquency described by Becker (1963) is social isolation and the resulting involvement with deviant peers. Research in this area is mixed. Zhang (1997) did not find that social isolation affected subsequent delinquency directly. However, Bernburg et al. (2006) did find that youth who were involved with the juvenile court system were more likely to be involved with delinquent peers and have gang involvement, which increased their likelihood of subsequent delinquency. The relationship between social isolation, deviant peers and subsequent delinquency warrants further study to determine the processes that occur to move a youth from feelings of social isolation into involvement with a new deviant peer group. However, some insights into this process can be obtained by examining the role of social support in the link between maltreatment and delinquency.

Description of the Social Support Perspective:

According to Cullen (1994; 1999), it is not only a lack of social control that results in crime, but a lack of social support as well. Social support can be broadly defined as the provision of resources. These resources can be in the form of social relationships, cultural ideas or values, or material means. These resources may be supplied formally through social or governmental programs or informally through relationships with significant others. The central thesis in social support perspective is

that criminal behavior decreases as social supports increase (Cullen 1994). Cullen (1994) stated that the concept of social support is inherent in many theories and thus can function as a unifying concept in criminology. From a control theory perspective a lack of social control suggests a lack of social support. Consequently, control and support may reinforce each other in crime control (Cullen 1994). In addition, a lack of support can be seen in the concept of stigmatization that is central to labeling theory (Cullen 1994). Social support is dependent upon the perceptions and subjective interpretations of those receiving support and is not a “one size fits all” commodity. As such, the social support perspective ties in well with the labeling perspective’s roots in symbolic interactionism. The perceptions and meanings given to social interactions determine whether formal or informal interactions will be defined as supportive. These definitions, in turn, can be expected to shape behavior. The concept of social support can explain why some maltreated youth are able to avoid both the stigmatizing labels and control deficits associated with child maltreatment.

Maltreatment Research Supporting Social Support Perspective:

Research reviewed in chapter two suggests that an increase in social support can mediate maltreatment’s effects on delinquency. Maltreated youth who have more supportive relationships with their caregivers (Wall et al., 2005), who live with both biological parents (Stouthamer-Loeber et al., 2002), who were placed out of the home (Lemmon, 2006; Widom, 1991), and who received early interventions (Mallett et al., 2009; Moore et al., 1998) were less likely to become delinquent. All of these studies imply that these maltreated youth received more social support either informally through

caregiver relationships, or formally through community resources. It is social support that results in a more balanced control ratio and reduces the likelihood that maltreatment will result in stigmatization.

The research reviewed in this chapter on control balance theory and the labeling perspective support both the causal chain that links control ratios to deviance and the processes by which youth come to view themselves as labeled and stigmatized. Conversely, increased social supports for some youth seem to mediate the relationship between maltreatment and delinquency. Hence in the next chapter, this research and the maltreatment research from Chapter Two will be used to explain the relationship between maltreatment and delinquency through integration of the labeling perspective and the social support perspective into the causal chain described in control balance theory.

Chapter 4

Theoretical Integration

Introduction:

Chapter four discusses integration of the labeling perspective and the social support perspective into the central causal process posited by control balance theory. The role of child maltreatment in this process and its effects on delinquency will be discussed using an integrated model. The final section of this chapter will discuss how, from the model's perspective, maltreatment may or may not lead to delinquency.

Integration:

Tittle's interpretation of how provoking factors (such as emotions like anger or humiliation) can motivate a person's choice of deviant acts leaves room to integrate labeling perspective and social support precepts into the central causal process of control balance theory. This process can be thought of as a chain in which a provoking event leads to motivation which leads to deviance (Curry 2005). This chain is the control balancing process. Several key contingencies influence the motivation link in this chain: control ratio, opportunity, constraint and self control.

For the purposes of this thesis, integration of the labeling perspective will occur through labeling influences on provocation and motivation. The labeling perspective's influence on motivation will be apparent in its effects on the control ratio and opportunity for deviance. The altered self concepts from internalized labels can also alter levels of self control and constraint. The negative labels associated with child maltreatment will be

used to explain how youth who internalize negative labels based on maltreatment experiences become delinquent.

However, all youth who are maltreated do not internalize negative labels and therefore do not become delinquent. The social support perspective will be used to explain why some youth do not internalize negative labels from the maltreatment experience and how this process affects the control balancing chain. The social support received by the victim during and after the maltreatment experience impacts the control balance ratio by reducing feelings of stigma and humiliation. When a victim of maltreatment has supportive relationships and social interactions, they are less likely to experience a control deficit due to the maltreatment experience. Consequently, social support increases the likelihood that a maltreatment victim will have a more balanced control ratio, and be less motivated to commit deviance when provoked.

Tittle (1995) stated that full integration of control balance theory needs to explain how contingencies in the control balancing process affect motivation for deviance. In order to fully integrate control balance theory then, the contingencies that operate in the control balancing chain must be fully explained. The labeling perspective will address this void by describing how individuals become negatively labeled by maltreatment and how that label directly affects the youth's self concept. The maltreatment victim label explains variations in opportunity by explaining feelings of stigmatization that lead youth to associate with deviant peers. It also explains variations in the control ratio and determines how a youth will interpret a provoking event.

Conversely, social support acts as a protective factor that prevents the child maltreatment victim label from being internalized. This is accomplished through positive social interactions, either formal or informal, that offset negative interactions from the maltreatment experience. These positive interactions alleviate the stigma associated with maltreatment by allowing new definitions, perceptions and meanings to be attached to the maltreatment experience. While the maltreatment experience implies negative meanings to the victim, social support implies positive meanings. As social support increases for the victim, the likelihood of negative labeling and stigma decreases.

Figure 3 is an integrated model based on Tittle's (2004) control balancing process. The model describes how labels internalized from child maltreatment experiences affect provocation, the control ratio, opportunity, constraint, and self control which in turn increase the motivation for delinquency. It is the symbolic interactions that occur during the labeling process that give meaning to the maltreatment experience. Similarly, the symbolic interactions from social support also give meaning to the maltreatment experience which lessens the impact of the negative labeling process. These symbolic interactions, and the messages they convey shape the likelihood that a maltreated child may or may not become delinquent.

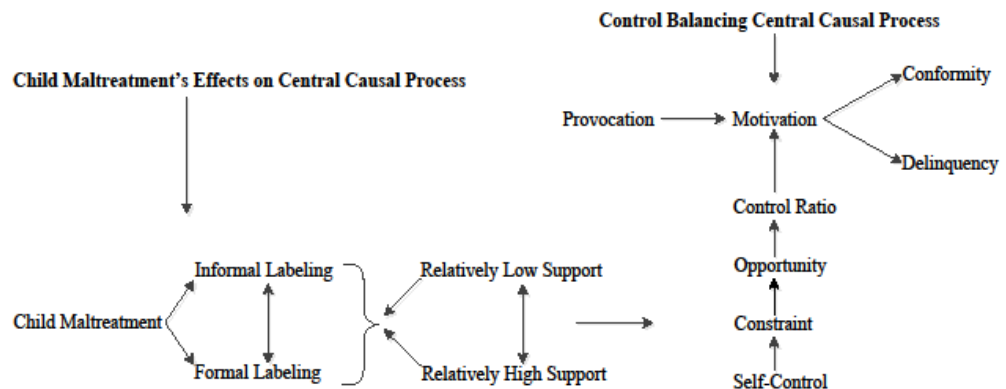


Figure 3. Integrated Control Balancing Process

Child maltreatment may or may not result in official formal labeling, depending on whether and how it's detected and processed. Maltreatment, even if not officially detected, will result in informal labeling by self and others who are aware of it. In the event of official detection and processing, informal and formal labeling will interact such that informal labels could affect formal processing, and formal processing could affect informal labeling. The entire process just described (i.e., the effects of maltreatment on labeling as well as the interaction between forms of labeling) is modulated by the social support network, which is posited to have relatively high and/or low interactive component parts, depending on circumstances surrounding the case. To the extent that the balance of supports resulting from this interaction is relatively high, the probability of negative labeling effects is diminished. To the extent that the balance of supports is relatively low, the probability of negative labeling effects is increased. In turn, it is the totality of the process just described that frames the meanings assigned to the maltreatment experience and leads into the control balancing causal process. These

meanings influence provocation, the control ratio, opportunity, constraint and self control, such that we anticipate high support to predict conformity and low support to predict deviation.

The child maltreatment experience and resulting label, through symbolic interactions, gives meaning to provocation, reduces the amount of control imbalance needed to feel humiliated, and provides the need to associate with deviant peers. It also reduces self control by requiring an immediate response, such as fight or flight, from the victim. This lessens the victim's ability to engage in the cognitive balancing required to choose acts that are higher on the control balance desirability scale. This in turn also affects constraint, because the vulnerability felt due to the maltreatment experience makes the offender label more attractive. The label of offender offers more power and decreases feelings of vulnerability.

According to Cullen (1994) the social support concept is the opposite of the stigmatization concept in the labeling perspective. While stigmatization results in feelings of powerlessness and humiliation, experiencing social support would decrease those feelings by generating feelings of empowerment and connectedness. Cullen (1994) stated that social support can lessen the stress associated with victimization by reducing the feelings of isolation that are associated with crime. Similar to the labeling process, social support is a process that gets its meaning from social interactions and the youth's perceptions of those interactions. Therefore, social support can alter the labels generated from the maltreatment experience and subsequently alter the self concept and behavior. Consequently, social support also affects the control ratio, constraint, self control, and

opportunity, which in turn affects motivation. As social support increases, the control ratio becomes more balanced, because feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability decrease. When the youth does not feel powerless there is less need to associate with deviant peers, which decreases opportunity. In addition, getting caught in a deviant act, may negatively affect the positive social interactions that have been gained through social support. This would increase constraint, because the youth would have more to lose by committing a deviant act, than he would gain in his control ratio. Finally, having a more balanced control ratio and more feelings of power make it less likely that a youth would act out of impulse, which increases self control.

Informal and Formal Labeling:

In order to discuss how the labeling perspective integrates with control balance theory, we must first discuss how victims of child maltreatment may become labeled as victims. According to Kenny (2002) victims of crime may become stigmatized by their victimization and labeled as victims. Kenny (2002) stated that the label of victim becomes a master status label and affects how others react to the youth. The stigmatization that occurs leads to social isolation, which parallels the offender labeling process. According to Kenny however, the victim labeling process is informal and occurs through associations with significant others. While Kenny's research examined stigmatization of the surviving family members of murder victims, it is not unreasonable to believe that a similar process could occur with victims of child maltreatment. However, unlike the victims in Kenny' (2002) research, the labeling of maltreatment victims happens on both a formal and informal level. For example, the informal labeling

process often occurs in the family of origin through the maltreatment experience. As noted in chapter one, in many cases, the perpetrator in child maltreatment cases is a parent, with 38% of victims being maltreated by the mother, and 18 % by the father (U.S Department for Health and Human Services report, Child Maltreatment 2008).The maltreatment experience implies labels to the child, such as being bad, worthless, deserving of abuse, or in the words of Feiring et al. (2007) as being “damaged goods”. These implied labels can result in feelings of fear, powerlessness, humiliation and anger. When the child is maltreated by a parent those labels are significant in forming the child’s self concept. Recall from chapter three that these symbolic social interactions are what shape a person’s self concept and behavior (Akers & Sellers, 2004). Negative labels that are heard consistently over time are more likely to be internalized through this process of symbolic interactions. Consequently, negative labels heard in the family through day to day social interactions are more likely to influence the self concept and behavior.

Negative labels in the home can also occur due to individual child characteristics regardless of whether the child has been maltreated. Youth with behavior problems, attention problems, or poor social skills can become negatively labeled in the home because they require higher levels of parental supervision. These youth may become labeled informally as difficult by parents, teachers, and peers. They may also experience less self control than children without these characteristics, which could place them at greater risk for maltreatment and delinquency. This would seem to be supported by Widom (1991), who found that a subset of maltreated children were at greater risk for delinquency due to individual characteristics, such as behavior problems. This subset of

children had more placement moves than children without these characteristics, which suggests that the labeling process may continue throughout the youth's placement history. The influence of individual child characteristics, particularly as they relate to self control, on maltreatment and delinquency is outside the scope of this thesis. However, it would seem that these factors may have an important role in how labels become internalized and is an area for further research. For the purposes of this thesis, variations in self control will impact the cognitive balancing process required to determine the best method of overcoming a control deficit, or increasing a control surplus.

The formal labeling process begins through involvement with child protective services, which can lead to dependency actions in juvenile court. Once involved in the court system the maltreated youth may acquire the formal label of victim in addition to the informal familial labels. The formal victim label can also result in feelings of stigmatization and social isolation, particularly if the victim is removed from the home. Even if the maltreatment does not result in formal court proceedings, the family may continue to be involved with child protective services after the initial investigation is completed. Frequent contact with child protective services provides more opportunity for the formal victim label to be internalized. Similar to the informal labeling process, internalization of the label results in feelings of stigmatization which will alter the youth's self concept and ultimately self control.

Internalizing the Labels from Maltreatment Experience:

Internalization of labels is a process that happens over time (Lemert, 1951). This is consistent with findings in the maltreatment research suggesting that more frequent

maltreatment and maltreatment of more than one type are linked more strongly to delinquency. Familial labeling is also important for delinquency and is supported by Zhang's (1997) finding that youth who perceived parental labeling of delinquency experienced more social isolation at home, at school and with friends. It is not unreasonable to believe that maltreated youth labeled negatively by their family of origin would also experience social isolation. Perceived labeling by friends and teachers only affected social isolation in those domains, which suggests that it is parental labeling that has the most far reaching consequences for youth. It is this labeling process that gives meaning to the maltreatment experience. When the formal and informal labels are internalized those labels result in feelings of stigmatization, humiliation, shame and anger and will affect the youth's self concept.

Self concept is important in Tittle's causal process because the self concept determines the thoughts and feelings that accompany a provoking event. According to Tittle (1995; 2004), motivation for deviance occurs when the individual is reminded of their control imbalance in some way. This is usually the result of some triggering event that provokes the individual. Tittle (1995) stated that as control imbalances increased, the likelihood that a provoking event would cause feelings of humiliation also increased. In other words, the larger a person's control deficit or surplus, the more likely the person is to be humiliated by provocation. Both Tittle (1995) and Katz (1988) assume feelings of humiliation are key factors in motivation for deviance. Where control balance theory is limited, is in explaining how a provoking event is translated into motivation for deviance, and the labeling perspective addresses this void by explaining how stigmatization can result in feelings of humiliation and anger.

Victim Label Affects Provocation and Motivation:

It is through the social labels that we accept as individuals that we construct a view of self and a world view. The social labels that an individual internalizes determine the individual's self concept and the self-talk that will follow a provoking event. The label of child maltreatment victim is the filter through which a provoking event is interpreted. The child maltreatment experience and the consequent label of victim imply weakness and vulnerability, resulting in feelings of stigmatization and shame which contribute to control deficits. According to Feiring et al. (2007), stigmatization and shame are translated into anger. Some forms of child maltreatment in particular, such as physical abuse and sexual abuse may also predispose a child to feelings of humiliation. The residual feelings of stigmatization from being labeled formally and informally as a victim create a situation where feelings of humiliation from a provoking event are more likely regardless of how large the control imbalance may actually be. There is some support for the link between stigmatization from labeling and feelings of anger in the research on labeling perspective, particularly as it relates to delinquency (Cechaviciute and Kenny, 2007). There is also support in the maltreatment research for a link between trauma, anger and delinquency (Maschi et al., 2008). As Kenny (2002) noted labeling occurs for both victims and offenders. When youth who have internalized the victim label are faced with a provoking event, they are more likely to feel humiliation and anger and be motivated to commit deviance.

Victim Label Affects Control Ratio:

The label of child maltreatment victim can also result in the perception that the youth has a lack of control (Kaplow and Widom, 2007), or in Tittle's language a control deficit. In this way, the victim label affects the control ratio in a direct way. This is supported by research from Baron (2003) and Widom (1996) which found that histories of physical and sexual abuse were associated with running away and homelessness. In fact, Baron found that being physically and sexually abused was an important factor in the youth's decision to live on the street. Based on these findings, it seems likely that youth may leave situations where they are experiencing a control deficit, in order to gain more control. This would explain why Baron and Forde (2007) found that most of the street youth in their study had small control surpluses. This also highlights the need to be cautious in assuming that all victims of child maltreatment experience stable control deficits. The idea that youth reminded of their control deficits through the maltreatment label would run away in order to gain more control seems to support Tittle's theory. It also suggests that internalizing the victim label begins a process where more control is sought in order to overcome the victim master status. Stigmatizing labels motivate youth to alter their control imbalances. Because the label of offender is also a master status label, youth with feelings of stigmatization and anger from their maltreatment victim status may gravitate toward the offender label. The reason for this is that they perceive that the offender label will alter their control ratio by lessening their deficit or by creating a control surplus. In addition, offending behavior also alters the control ratio. At its basic level, the label of offender provides more power and thus more control than the label of victim because the offender label does not imply weakness or vulnerability. It is this

assumption that is at the heart of the control balancing process. Research would seem to support this link, particularly in the area of physical abuse and violent delinquency (Maas et al., 2008). Experiencing physical abuse leaves the victim feeling vulnerable, afraid and humiliated, which implies a control deficit. Being physically violent toward others provides the offender with feelings of power and domination which implies a control surplus, at least temporarily.

As Cullen (1994) stated, receiving socially supportive interactions can lessen the pain and stress that is associated with victimization. This can happen informally through nurturing interactions with significant others, or formally through supportive programs in the community. Cullen (1994) further states that the more social support a person is exposed to, the less likely it is that crime will occur. In a way similar to the labeling process, supportive interactions that are repeated over time, and perceived by the youth as being supportive, have a larger impact on the control ratio. When supportive interactions outweigh negative interactions the likelihood that the negative labels from the maltreatment experience will be internalized decreases as well. This leads to fewer feelings of humiliation and anger from the maltreatment experience and increases feelings of empowerment and social connectedness. Consequently, the control ratio becomes more balanced as the social support network counteracts the stigma associated with the maltreatment experience.

Victim Label Affects Opportunity:

Altering a control imbalance is impossible if there is no opportunity for deviance in the first place. The labeling process also explains variations in opportunity. Once again

feelings of stigmatization are important to this process. Becker (1963) stated that feelings of stigmatization would lead a person to believe that they were outsiders and thus feel a need to associate with other outsiders in order to experience a sense of belonging and status. Feiring et al. (2007) found that the stigma and anger surrounding maltreatment were linked to associations with deviant peers. Maltreatment itself has also been linked to deviant peer associations in the research, particularly frequent maltreatment (Baron, 2003; Thompson & Braaten-Antrim, 1998). Juvenile court involvement was also linked to delinquent peer associations and gang involvement (Bernburg et al., 2006). It is through the association with delinquent peers that youth increase opportunities for delinquent acts. Opportunity is important to the central causal process in control balance theory because it is one of the key variables that interact with deviant motivation. The child maltreatment label provides the stigma necessary to increase the likelihood that a youth will feel social isolation from conventional groups and therefore associate with deviant peers. The deviant peer group presents opportunities for rectifying control imbalances associated with victimization and stigmatization.

As stated earlier, Cullen (1994) felt that social support can lessen the social isolation that accompanies criminal victimization. This can also be said for youth who experience maltreatment as well. Adequate social support either through community counseling programs or supports from significant others reduces the stigma and anger associated with maltreatment. Social support alters the messages implied by the maltreatment experience and thus the label, so that a youth is less likely to feel inadequate or damaged. As a result, youth who feel less social isolation are less likely to feel the need to associate with deviant peers, which reduces opportunity. In a community

where there is adequate social support, there is also a greater likelihood of supervision, either formally through increased police presence, or informally through neighborhood social networks.

Victim Label Affects Constraint:

In Tittle's (2004) control balance theory constraint is described as a composite variable that is made up of the seriousness of the act and the situational risk of the act. This is a cognitive balancing process in which the youth is able to compare the potential gain in control versus the potential loss of control committing the deviant act might provoke from society or others. In other words, the youth contemplates the following questions. Is it worth it? Will I get caught? Will I lose more control than I gain? Therefore, constraint is the rational element of the integrated model.

According to Tittle (2004) getting caught in a deviant act potentially results in a loss of control both externally through potential loss of freedom, and internally from the potential to incur negative reactions from others. These negative reactions can result in changes to the self concept and self esteem (Tittle 2004). This implies that the potential to incur negative social labels from committing a deviant act is a factor in the cognitive balancing process that occurs when constraints are weighed by the youth. Youth who already have negative social labels from their maltreatment experiences, and the insecure attachments that go along with those labels, may not see the addition of new negative labels as a deterrent. In fact, getting caught can provide the youth with the opportunity to change their social labels from victim to offender. This change implies more power and control for the youth, at least in the short term, than the weakness and vulnerability

implied by the victim label. In this way, situational risk becomes less detrimental because it offers the youth an opportunity to change the internalized victim label into the more powerful offender label. Being labeled officially as an offender can also provide the youth with more opportunity for deviance, through the association with deviant peers. Thus, getting caught can give the youth more credibility with deviant peers, which may make the deviant act “worth it”.

However, social support increases constraint. Youth who feel connected to and supported by the community and significant others have more to lose by committing deviant acts. They are at risk of losing not only external control through situational risk and seriousness, but also losing internal control through losses in self esteem. Getting caught committing a deviant act would imply more negative labels to socially supported youth and result in changes to the self concept. Because these youth are less likely to feel angry and humiliated by maltreatment, they do not feel the need to overcome a control deficit by changing their label from victim to offender. In addition, Cullen (1994) stated that communities with increased social support also have an increase in guardians to protect against crime. Connected communities have a vested interest in protecting not only their own resources, but also the resources of their neighbors. This dynamic, according to control balance theory, would increase the likelihood that if caught committing a deviant act, there would be sanctions for the deviant act. Cullen (1994) further states that in socially supportive communities, the probability of being known by the victim is also increased. Not only does this increase the chances of getting caught, but it also makes the deviant act less desirable on the control balance desirability scale. Social support affects constraint by increasing both situational risk (getting caught) and

seriousness (getting sanctioned) and decreasing control balance desirability (the victim is known to the offender). Consequently, in communities that are high in social support a deviant act is likely to result in a loss of control instead of a gain in control.

Victim Label Affects Self Control:

As revised by Tittle in 2004, the control balancing process requires that the individual motivated to commit a deviant act be capable of rational, non impulsive cognitive processes. Tittle realized however, that as an individual's self control decreased, motivation and provocation increases. According to Tittle (2004) an individual with low self control is more likely to choose acts that are lower on the control balance desirability scale. In this scale, the less contact the offender has with the victim, the more desirable the deviant act is on the scale. While self control can be thought of as an individual characteristic or personality trait, child maltreatment can also affect self control. Youth who are maltreated may be more likely to act out of impulse and choose deviant acts that seem to alter the control ratio in a large way, even though the change is not permanent. Deviant acts that are low on the control balance desirability scale require contact with the victim. These types of acts, such as assault, increase the control ratio in an immediate sense, but because of the greater likelihood of counter control, these acts do not provide lasting improvements to the control ratio. Maltreated youth may lack the ability to see the consequences beyond the immediate sense of power that physical conflict provides. There is some support for this in the research. There have been several studies that link physical abuse (Baron, 2003; Lemmon, 2006; Maas et al. 2008; Widom, 1996) and sexual abuse for females (Wall et al., 2005) with violence. It seems that child

maltreatment may increase the likelihood that youth will choose acts that have more victim contact because they lack the self control necessary to envision alternate means of altering the control ratio.

In addition, Baron (2003) found that physical abuse and sexual abuse were linked to the youth's decision to live on the street. Widom (1996) found similar results with sexual abuse which was linked to runaway behaviors. Running away from physically and sexually abusive environments does alter the control ratio at least in the immediate sense. However, from a long range perspective, living on the street would not seem to be high on the control balance desirability scale. According to Baron (2003) the street lifestyle makes youth more likely to be victimized further. Both the fight and flight reaction to maltreatment experiences are impulsive in nature. The maltreatment experience reduces the youth's self control because the maltreatment experience sometimes requires an immediate response from the victim. This lessens the youth's ability to go through the cognitive balancing process necessary in control balance theory to choose acts that are higher on the control balance desirability scale.

While maltreatment may reduce self control in the victim, social support can compensate for the changes in self control due to maltreatment. This can be done on a formal level through educational, therapeutic or even medical resources. Informally, this can be accomplished through interactions with significant others that either address the victim's self control issues through behavior modification techniques or accommodate them through social activities. For instance, an impulsive maltreated youth may receive special educational and counseling services through the school system in order to modify

his impulsive tendencies. The youth may also be enrolled in after school activities or sports that allow release of excess energy or aggressive behaviors in socially appropriate ways. These activities would allow the youth to alter the control ratio in socially appropriate ways and would result in a more balanced control ratio. A larger social support network may also reduce the need for the youth to resort to violence or runaway behaviors in order to gain more control.

Model Examples of Maltreated Youth:

Not all victims of child maltreatment become delinquent. In fact, the majority of maltreated youth in Widom's (1996) study did not have any official adult criminal records. Several factors from the research on child maltreatment suggest that youth who have better social skills, are able to successfully avail themselves of treatment opportunities and who have more feelings of support and relatedness from their caregivers are less likely to become delinquent. All of these factors are forms of formal or informal social support. These findings further suggest that these youth are less likely to internalize the victim label and less likely to have feelings of powerlessness and humiliation. Maltreated youth who do not feel powerless or humiliated by the maltreatment experience, due to an increase in social support would also experience more balanced control ratios. In addition, youth who come from two biological parent households appear to be less likely to become delinquent (Stouthamer et. al. 2002). It is entirely possible that two parent households generally have more social support and consequently more resources. This increase in social support results in higher levels of supervision in two parent households which may decrease the opportunity for deviance. It

could also be that youth who live with both biological parents have experienced less severe forms of abuse or less parental labeling. Cullen (1994) stated that the more social support a family provides or that is provided to the family, the less likely criminal behavior becomes. This is an area that may warrant further study. The model described at the beginning of chapter four can be used to show how the maltreatment experience might result in delinquency for one youth and resiliency for another.

Consider the case of Johnny. Johnny lives in the home with his mother, stepfather, and half brother. Johnny is a victim of chronic neglect from an early age. The chronic neglect results in fewer feelings of attachment to his parents. He has extremely poor hygiene which is a result of chronic environmental neglect, and is often in the office at school due to his body odor. This leads to increased social isolation and stigmatization from his peers at school and causes Johnny to feel humiliated. Parental supervision is lax, and Johnny has often been seen riding his bicycle up and down the streets near school after school hours. This increases his opportunity for deviance. He is also the victim of physical abuse at the hands of his step father, which increases Johnny's feelings of humiliation and powerlessness. Johnny's step father rarely has any positive comments to say about Johnny to social workers or school personnel and consistently blames Johnny for the family's problems. Johnny frequently has unexplained bruises and numerous reports have been made to social services. The family has frequent contact with social services, but the abuse is not severe enough to warrant Johnny's removal from the home.

Johnny has many problems at school both socially and academically which contributes further to his isolation and stigmatization. Because of this, Johnny's mother

and step father frequently change school systems. Johnny has few friends in school and generally does not like school. His chronic hygiene problems create problems for him with other youth, and he is frequently shunned due to his offensive odor. Johnny has problems with self control and is frequently a disturbance in class. He is also absent from school often, which leads to formal court proceedings for truancy. By the time Johnny is sixteen he has been in several fights at school and frequently tells his friends that he would like to see the school burn down. Johnny is formally labeled as truant through the court system and as a maltreatment victim by social services. He is labeled at school as a trouble maker and is stigmatized by his peers because of his odor and poor social skills.

Johnny's situation at home has also not improved. He continues to have problems with his step father, who still treats him as the family scapegoat. The maltreatment experienced at the hands of Johnny's stepfather has labeled him at home as worthless and deserving of the abuse, which leaves him feeling powerless. However, in order to alter his control deficit, Johnny begins to fight back against his step father, and the police are called on several occasions. When Johnny is expelled from school for stealing the school nurse's cell phone, which reminds him of his control deficit, he breaks in with a group of friends and sets the high school on fire. While this alters his control imbalance temporarily, it does not give him a lasting control surplus. Johnny is sent to a residential placement at the age of 17.

Johnny is stigmatized both in the family and at school which results in feelings of social isolation, humiliation and powerlessness. As a victim of neglect his basic needs are not met, which causes him problems in the school setting. As a victim of physical abuse,

he is stigmatized as the family scapegoat which results in feelings of anger. Johnny avoids school when possible, which results in formal court proceedings which further stigmatize Johnny. The chronic abuse and neglect have also brought formal sanctioning to bear on the family, which serves to increase the step father's anger against Johnny, which further increases the abuse and stigmatization. The chronic neglect has also created a situation in which Johnny spends more time on the street than he does in the home, which increases his opportunity for deviance. Johnny and his friends have broken into several cars, before Johnny is ever caught stealing the nurse's cell phone. These break-ins usually occur after a fight with his step father and are efforts by Johnny to lessen his control deficit. When the school suspension reminds Johnny of his control imbalance, he acts deviantly by setting the school on fire, even though he knows there are security cameras throughout the school and the likelihood of getting caught is high.

Johnny is offered some social support in his community and through the school setting. Johnny's elementary school nurse often gives him clean clothes and allows him to shower at school. However, Johnny's parents view this support from the school nurse as interfering and suspect that she is the reason that they are frequently involved with social services. Consequently neither Johnny nor his family views the social interactions of the school nurse as supportive. In addition, Johnny's family has been involved with social services and been referred to several community programs to assist with housing and the home environment. Johnny's step father does not view these programs as supportive and blames Johnny for the family's involvement with social services. While social support is offered in Johnny's case, it is not perceived as supportive by the family.

In Johnny's case, the symbolic interactions of the social support is viewed as stigmatizing by the family and serves to further label Johnny within the family.

Cody is also a victim of neglect and physical abuse. Cody's living situation is unstable from a very early age which also results in fewer feelings of attachment to his parents. His parents are addicted to methamphetamine and manufacture it in the home. His parent's relationship is violent and the police are often called to the residence. Cody's father has been in and out of jail for manufacturing methamphetamine. When his parents are high, they are abusive to Cody and his siblings. Cody's dad frequently states that Cody is not his child and Cody gets the brunt of his father's anger. Cody's father treats him as an outsider because he believes that Cody is not his child. Cody frequently receives negative social interactions from his father and is negatively labeled by his father. However, Cody has a maternal aunt and grandparents that frequently take Cody and his siblings in their home until the situation improves. Consequently, Cody stays at various relatives houses almost as much as he stays at home. Because of this informal social support, Cody has a close relationship with his maternal grandparents. Cody's grandparents frequently blame Cody's father for the family's problems. Since Cody has a strong attachment with his grandparents, he does not feel stigmatized by his maltreatment. The messages given to Cody by his grandparents suggest to Cody that the maltreatment is his father's fault. Consequently, Cody does not internalize the labels given to him by his father and therefore has fewer feelings of humiliation and powerlessness.

Social services have been involved with the family for most of Cody's life and have assisted Cody's grandparents in obtaining custody of him with the agreement of Cody's parents. Because this arrangement is by agreement and not the result of a dependency petition, Cody frequently moves from parents, to grandparents, to his aunt. Most of the time, Cody is allowed to choose where he wants to live. Since Cody is allowed to choose his living arrangements, his control ratio is closer to the balanced end of the continuum than the deficit end. In addition, Cody's family perceives the formal actions of social services and the court system as supportive because all court action has been agreed to in advance by the family. This lessens the likelihood that formal court involvement will be stigmatizing to the family.

Cody is an active, impulsive youth from an early age. This causes him some problems in school and he is frequently in trouble. Cody does receive some negative labels from his teachers due to his behavior. However, Cody is clean and is always dressed appropriately so he does not receive negative social interactions from his peers. He makes friends easily, and is usually the leader in his group of friends. Cody's grandfather believes that Cody is "all boy" and does not see a problem with his impulsivity. He tries to keep Cody busy and burn off his excess energy by working on the family farm. Cody spends a lot of time with his grandfather after school doing farm work. This not only reduces Cody's opportunity for deviance, but it also provides Cody with a socially acceptable means of releasing his excessive energy.

By the time Cody is sixteen, he has a job working at a local stable cleaning out the horses' stalls. Cody is given free riding lessons in exchange for farm work and spends

most of his time either at the stable or at his grandparents' home. Cody does not like school and has not done well. He is not a favorite with his teachers and drops out as soon as he is allowed. He continues to work at the stable and lives mostly with his grandparents. When Cody turns eighteen, his grandfather gets him a job at a local factory. Cody has a large socially supportive network through his grandparents, his after school activities, and his factory employment. It is the social support network that increases Cody's control balance ratio, and lessens the negative impact from his maltreatment experience.

Even though Cody is also a victim of neglect and physical abuse, he does not become stigmatized by the abuse due to his social support network. Since Cody is not stigmatized, he never internalizes the victim label from his maltreatment experiences. Cody assigns meaning to the maltreatment experience based on his social support network. Therefore, while Cody is a victim of maltreatment, he does not see himself as deserving of the abuse. Cody's positive relationship with his grandfather, and the resulting social support, outweighs the negative labels that he receives from his parents, particularly his father. The formal court proceedings to alter Cody's custody arrangements are with the agreement of the family, consequently the family does not feel stigmatized by the formal court process. Cody's family views the formal actions of the court system as supportive of the family's needs. While Cody does have trouble at school, this does not affect his peer relationships, so Cody does not feel socially isolated. He also does not feel the need to associate with delinquent peers. In addition, Cody's grandfather is able to keep Cody busy on the farm and at the stable, which lessens his opportunity for deviance. Because Cody is willing to work, he is able to obtain things he

wants, such as horse riding lessons. This increases Cody's feelings of control. As another means of control, when Cody's living situation does not meet his needs, he is able to change the situation by moving in with another relative. Consequently, Cody has more balanced control ratio and is not often motivated to commit deviance.

The victim label from child maltreatment affects the control balancing process directly by providing a filter through which provoking events will be interpreted. It also affects motivation indirectly by its effects on the control ratio, opportunity, constraint and self control. Child maltreatment reduces the amount of imbalance in the control ratio needed to make an individual feel humiliated by a provoking event, which increases motivation for deviance. It also provides the need, through stigmatization and social isolation, to associate with deviant peers, which increases the opportunity for deviance. By imposing these linkages on Tittle's control balancing process a clearer picture of how maltreatment can be linked to delinquency emerges. The presence of social support can mitigate maltreatment's effects on the control balancing process by reducing the negative labels associated with maltreatment. In addition, increased social support can lessen opportunity for deviance and increase the control ratio, constraint, and self control. All of these factors reduce the motivation to commit deviance and reduce the likelihood that a maltreated youth will become delinquent.

For the maltreated children who do go on to become delinquent, it is important to understand why they may not be able to successfully avail themselves of the treatment options available to them. In addition, it is also important to understand how the control balancing process might interact with attempts by caregivers and treatment professionals

to provide treatment for these youth. The next chapter will discuss the application and policy implications of maltreatment's effects on delinquency as well as areas for further integration of control balance theory.

Chapter 5

Summary

Discussion:

The purpose of this thesis has been to integrate the labeling perspective, and the social support perspective with control balance theory. This was done to help account for variations in the relationship between maltreatment and delinquency. The labeling perspective was assimilated into the central causal process of control balancing theory by describing how child maltreatment as a master status label has a direct effect on provocation and an indirect effect on motivation. The victim master status label describes how maltreated youth become stigmatized and therefore become humiliated by provoking events. The master status of victim affects the control ratio by lessening the amount of control imbalance necessary to motivate the youth to deviance. In addition, the master status label increases opportunity for deviance through feelings of social isolation. These feelings of social isolation lead the maltreated youth to associate with other deviant peers, thus increasing their opportunity for deviance. Finally the internalized victim label also reduces both self control and constraint by creating a situation where the youth feels vulnerable. This leads the youth to seek out new, more powerful labels, such as the label of offender, in order to eliminate feelings of vulnerability.

The social support perspective was assimilated into the central causal process of control balancing theory by describing how perceptions of supportive interactions can mitigate the effects of maltreatment and the labeling process. Social support decreases

perceptions of social isolation, humiliation and powerlessness and provides the youth with less stigmatizing perceptions and meanings for the maltreatment experience. A youth who has a strong social support network would feel more connected to the community and significant others. Similar to the labeling process, social support is based on symbolic interactions which give meaning to the maltreatment experience. Social support differs from the labeling process because it works to reverse the stigmatization that can occur with the label of maltreatment victim. Cullen (1994) stated that the social support process is the reverse of the negative stigmatizing that occurs during the labeling process. Therefore, social support could be viewed as a form of positive, constructive labeling in many instances. This results in the individual feeling worthwhile and valued. Consequently, as social support increases, stigmatization and humiliation from the maltreatment experience and the consequent labels imposed on the victim decreases. The interactions between the social support and the labeling processes help explain differences in maltreatment's link to delinquency.

Maltreatment and Violent Delinquency:

Physical abuse has been found to be a strong predictor of violence among youth in general (Baron, 2003; Maas, 2008). Widom (1996) found physical abuse to be the best predictor for violence in adulthood and neglect to be the second best predictor. In addition, sexual abuse was found to be a predictor of violence for female youth (Wall et al., 2005). The model in chapter four explains these findings by describing how child maltreatment can result in feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability and can be extremely stigmatizing, particularly when they occur repeatedly. Maltreatment, and the

labels implied are social interactions and those interactions affect the self concept and ultimately behavior. The feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability that may be associated with these types of abuse affect the control balance ratio directly, leaving the youth with a marked control deficit. Social support is the mechanism that allows youth to overcome the control deficit created by the maltreatment experience and the labeling process. Social supports are also social interactions and imply different perceptions and meanings to the maltreatment victim. These alternate meanings counteract the maltreatment victim status by providing alternate ways to interpret the maltreatment experience. If there is a lack of social supports to overcome this deficit, then youth will seek to overcome the deficit in other ways. For instance some youth may runaway or act aggressively in order to increase their feelings of control. This is supported by Baron and Forde (2007), who found that the street youth in their study had meager control surpluses. Living on the street gave these youth the perception that they have more control over their environments, but also increased the likelihood that they could be victims of crime. Consequently these youth are in a constant cycle of provocation and deviance in order to maintain the small surpluses that they acquired by living on the street. Youth who perceive socially supportive interactions have a more balanced control ratio and therefore avoid the provocation and deviance cycle.

The importance of social support in the maltreatment/delinquency link seems to be supported by Wall et al. (2005). Wall et al. (2005) found that as caregiver relatedness increased, delinquent behaviors decreased when youth were exposed to less harsh discipline. Caregiver relatedness or feelings of attachment can be perceived by the maltreatment victim as social support. However, this finding did not hold true for youth

who reported harsh discipline. This is because harsh discipline creates negative social interactions and informal labels that become humiliating and stigmatizing over time. Consequently, as discipline becomes progressively harsher, perceived social support from caregivers decreases. Kaplow and Widom (2007) reinforce the importance of familial attachments by suggesting that maltreated youth feel insecure attachments to others and thus perceive a lack of control over their environments. These insecure attachments, or feeling less related to caregivers, also impact the effectiveness of social consequences for deviant behavior in addition to the control ratio. When child maltreatment results in feelings of powerlessness, vulnerability, and humiliation the youth becomes negatively labeled as a victim. This labeling process leads to stigmatization which in turn leads to feelings of anger. In order to compensate for reductions in familial supportive relationships, social supports from other areas, such as significant others or formal community organizations would have to increase. As social supports increase, feelings of stigmatization and the resulting anger associated with the maltreatment stigma would also decrease.

Maltreatment's Link to Recidivism:

Feelings of anger due to stigmatization from the maltreatment experience are important in the link between child maltreatment and recidivism because those feelings serve as a motivational catalyst to alter the control imbalance. This is supported by Feiring et al. (2007) and Maschi et al. (2008), which found that anger was linked to delinquent peer exposure. A youth who is angry, and associates with delinquent peers has both more motivation and opportunity for deviance when reminded of his or her control

imbalance. Baron (2003) found that having delinquent peers increased the chances that a youth would not only engage in violent behavior, but also be victims of violent assaults. Baron (2003) felt this was due to the value that the delinquent peer subculture placed on violence as a means of solving disputes. When feelings of anger are combined with fewer feelings of familial attachments, both self control and constraint are also decreased, thus further increasing motivation for deviance. Consequently, a youth stigmatized by the maltreatment victim label not only has more motivation and opportunity for deviance, but has less self control and fewer constraints prohibiting delinquency.

The model's explanation of how social support reduces the feelings of stigma and anger associated with maltreatment also explains variations in recidivism. Youth who do not feel stigmatized should also feel less social isolation. Consequently, the need to associate with delinquent peers would be reduced since these youth would have other supportive relationships. In addition, youth who experience adequate social support have an increase in self control and constraint because they have a vested interest in maintaining socially supportive relationships. Deviance for these youth, would result in a loss of control because it could potentially result in a loss of social support.

Frequent and Multiple Forms of Maltreatment:

In order for stigmatization to occur, the label (either formal or informal) must be internalized through a repeated process of negative social interactions. This explains why more frequent maltreatment and maltreatment of more than one type is more closely linked to delinquency (Lemmon, 2006; Ryan, 2006; Thompson and Braaten-Antrim, 1998). Both of these situations result in social interactions which reinforces both the

negative label and the reminder that the control ratio is imbalanced by reinforcing feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness. In order for child maltreatment to become a risk factor for delinquency, the victim label must be internalized and the youth must feel stigmatized by the maltreatment experience. This does not always occur, and is less likely as social supports increase. Many youth do not necessarily feel stigmatized by the delinquency court process (Hirschfield, 2008; McGrath, 2009), which suggests that it is the perceptions of formal and informal process that give meaning to the process. It is reasonable to assume that the child maltreatment experience would also not always lead to feelings of stigmatization. For instance, a child may receive negative social interactions from one parent, but receive supportive social interactions from the other parent. Only 17.9 % of all maltreated children were maltreated by both parents according to the U.S. Department for Health and Human Services. Since labeling is a social interaction, this suggests that negative interactions by one parent can be overcome by positive, socially supportive interactions from the other parent or significant others. This may explain Stouthamer-Loeber et al.'s (2002) finding that maltreatment's influence on delinquency was mediated when the youth lived with both biological parents. Youth who live with both parents may experience increased social support either from the non-maltreating parent, or from extended family members. Youth who do not feel stigmatized by child maltreatment, because of increases in social support, would be less motivated to commit deviance and have control ratios that fell closer to the balanced section of the continuum.

Policy Implications:

The impact of the child maltreatment victim label is an important consideration for practitioners in the field of juvenile corrections, particularly in the residential treatment setting. Maltreated youth may be less able to negotiate the control balancing process that is inherent in residential treatment settings. The tug of war that may ensue from residents with control deficits and staff with control surpluses may be particularly problematic for maltreated youth. The victim label may make these youth more likely to experience humiliation from the regular day to day interactions with staff, thus resulting in either increased risk for violence against self or others, or an increased risk for running away. That these youth may have difficulties in treatment is supported by Ryan (2006) who found that maltreatment was linked to recidivism, and felt that maltreated youth may have difficulties with group attachments. Physical and sexual abuse has been linked in the research to running away and violence while the youth is in the community (Baron, 2003; Widom, 1996). Further research needs to be conducted to determine if these same linkages hold true while the youth is in placement.

The above findings are especially important for staff that must balance treatment for and control of maltreated youth in residential placements. Nowhere is the issue of control more salient than in residential treatment facilities. Understanding how maltreated youth may react to provoking stimuli is a matter of safety for both youth and staff. Given that physical abuse is linked to violent behavior in maltreated youth and both physical and sexual abuse are linked to runaway behaviors the issue of fight or flight is particularly important for staff attempting to supervise these youth.

Due to their incarceration, juveniles in residential treatment settings may experience a control deficit relative to youth in the community. While there may be variations in the amount of control deficit an individual youth has relative to other youth in the facility, staff must still obtain control over the day to day interactions of the youth. Ideally, for treatment and facility safety reasons, staff should have a control surplus. In reality, this may not always be the case as relationships between staff and youth may vary on an individual basis. However, when there are large variations between the control ratios of youth versus the control ratios of staff, the likelihood for provocation increases. This dynamic creates a situation where the smallest provocation can result in a tug of war between youth who are trying to overcome a control deficit, and staff who are trying to maintain a control surplus or vice versa. For youth who have been maltreated, small provocations are perceived as humiliating and motivate the youth to increase their control. Youth may respond by attempting to run away from placement, or by fighting with staff or other youth. Both of these behaviors interrupt the treatment process for these youth. These behaviors also result in negative interactions with staff, and negative labels which can further stigmatize the youth while in placement. An inability to attach to the group treatment process was seen by Ryan (2006) as a possible reason for recidivism for maltreated youth. Maltreated youth who are locked into a power struggle with staff may exhibit behaviors that prevent attachments to the group altogether. These youth may be the subset of youth seen in the Widom (1991) study that had more placement moves and more risk for delinquency..

Piquero and Hickman (2003) examined the idea that control balance theory could account for victimization as well as deviance in a study using college students. Of

particular interest for the purposes of this thesis is their finding that both control surpluses and control deficits significantly predicted victimization. As the amounts of control surpluses and control deficits increased, the likelihood of victimization also increased. Piquero and Hickman hypothesize that control deficits make individuals appear to be easy targets for victimization. On the other end of the spectrum, people with control surpluses generally try to extend their surpluses. This puts them at risk because they are constantly reminding others of other's control deficit. There were some limitations to the study however, because the full model which included control balance ratios along with lifestyle factors, such as how long individuals spent on campus and the participation in night classes, only accounted for 5% of the variance. In addition, most of the victimization that occurred in the study was due to theft, which in most cases did not include contact with the victim. Consequently, there was no way to determine if the offenders chose particular victims because they were easy targets. However, this study is pertinent to the dynamics in residential settings between youth and staff because it describes how control deficits and surpluses predict victimization. Youth in residential placements who have severe control deficits may be at higher risk for both victimization and deviance. When this dynamic is coupled with staff who have large control surpluses over youth, there is potential for increasing victimization for both youth and staff.

An area for further study discussed by Piquero and Hickman (2003) involved Tittle's idea that control deficits and surpluses create a situation in which deviance becomes reciprocal as both individuals try to either overcome deficits or increase surpluses. This idea of reciprocal deviance can be seen in the power struggles that sometimes occur between staff and youth in residential placements. As stated earlier, physical abuse is

associated with violence in youth. Physically abused youth in residential settings may be more likely to respond to provoking incidents with violence toward persons and/or property in an effort to overcome their control deficits. In addition, many residential placements approve the use of safe physical management of residents when there is a threat to themselves or others. This is generally seen as a legitimate method of control used by staff and one that would drastically increase the control surplus held by staff. However, given the hypothesis that deviance may become reciprocal in nature, it is possible that the amount of physical management employed in residential settings could escalate as a result of this control balance tug of war. As Piquero and Hickman stated, this is an area that warrants further study. Reciprocal deviance between staff and residents has important policy implications particularly in residential settings.

According to Bernard (1992) there are two philosophies that drive policy in juvenile justice, a punishment oriented philosophy, and a treatment oriented philosophy. The treatment oriented philosophy assumes that if given the appropriate environment, skills and counseling juvenile delinquents will change their behavior and conform to the norms of society. The punishment oriented philosophy, by contrast, assumes that juvenile delinquents are younger versions of adult criminals and will continue with their criminal behaviors unless punished for those behaviors. These two ideas compete for prominence in juvenile justice policies and have been seen as being mutually exclusive. Bernard (1992) further states that the general public believes that juvenile crime is high, and that something different must be done about it. Fueling this cycle between treatment and punishment, is the thought that harsh sentences can make juvenile crime worse and force

judges to do nothing, while lenient sentences don't do enough to reduce juvenile crime (Bernard, 1992).

This same cycle between punishment and treatment is also present in the organizational culture of residential treatment settings. When a balance between treatment and control is not maintained there is greater likelihood that deviance on the part of youth and staff will escalate. This particular dynamic can be seen in the "Final Fact-Finding Report, S.H. v Stickrath" (Cohen, 2008). In this case the organizational culture of the Ohio Department of Youth Services created a harsh environment for juveniles that were based on a control and punishment philosophy. This punishment philosophy can lead to a culture where staff feel justified in using excessive force to control incarcerated juveniles. If staff are not effectively supervised in their use of force, excessive force can become the norm. A lack of supervision was evident in Cohen's (2008) report. The report found that the administrative review process for incident reports concerning the use of restraints was inadequate (Cohen, 2008). The report also found that problems with physical restraints ranged from inappropriate use by poorly trained staff, to excessive and vicious use of force by staff (Cohen, 2008). While control of incarcerated youth is necessary for their safety and the safety of the staff, excessive control creates the kind of reciprocal deviance cycle hypothesized by Piquero and Hickman (2003). This reciprocal deviance cycle resulted in litigation for the Ohio Department of Youth Services that alleged excessive use of force by staff and denial of treatment for youth. Cohen (2008) stated that inadequate training, inadequate supervision, poorly structured review processes for physical management of residents by staff, and vacancies in supervisory positions all created a crisis and control oriented organizational

philosophy. This completely undermined the balance needed between control of and treatment for youth in residential settings.

As Cullen (1994) stated, the concept of social support can be utilized as a unifying concept in criminology. When integrated into the central causal process of control balance theory, social support can mediate the tendency for deviance to become reciprocal in residential treatment settings. Integration of control balance theory, the labeling perspective, and the social support perspective results in a more comprehensive theory. This integration can then be used to break the cycle between a treatment oriented or punishment oriented philosophy that fuels juvenile justice reform movements.

Empirical Testing of Model:

There has been some empirical support for the central causal processes described by control balance theory (Curry, 2005). Both control surpluses and control deficits have been found to significantly predict deviance (Baron, 2007; Curry, 2005; Piquero and Hickman, 1999, 2001). Curry's (2005) study supports Tittle's central causal process in which control ratios affect deviance through motivation, constraint and situational provocations. Empirical testing of the integrated model could build on these studies by examining the link between social supports and labeling. The integrated model predicts an inverse relationship between perceived social support and negative labeling from informal and/or formal sources. When examining child maltreatment's link to delinquent behavior, the model therefore predicts an increased likelihood of conformity when social supports are high, and an increased likelihood of delinquency when social supports are low. Empirical testing of the model could begin by examining the relationship between

perceived social supports and stigmatization from negative labeling. This relationship is central to the integrated model and builds on the central causal process of Tittle's theory.

Much of the research on control balance theory has used convenience samples of college students, with the notable exception being Baron and Forde's (2007) sample of street youth. When testing the integrated model, using college students could potentially skew the results toward an increased social support network. Likewise, using a sample of street youth could skew results in the opposite direction. In addition, it is the perceptions of labeling and social supports that are important to the integrated model. Interviews with subjects exposed to variable types and amounts of social support would help determine the extent to which they felt stigmatized or socially supported based on their maltreatment experiences.

Child maltreatment and the internalized label of victim has a direct effect on the control balancing process through provocation and an indirect effect on motivation through the control ratio and opportunity. Labeling perspective addresses how maltreatment victims may internalize the victim label and feel humiliated and stigmatized by their victimization. The social support perspective, by contrast, explains why a maltreated youth may be able to avoid stigmatization and thus delinquency. By integrating labeling perspective and the social support perspective into the control balancing process described in control balance theory the linkages between child maltreatment and delinquency can be better understood. Understanding these linkages is especially important for the treatment and control balance necessary in residential placements for these youth.

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