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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Sarah Beck Buchanan entitled "Social Work Practice in Public Defense." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Social Work.

John G. Orme, Major Professor

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Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

Social Work Practice in Public Defense

A Dissertation Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Sarah Beck Buchanan
December 2017

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Abstract

Little is known about the collaboration between public defense and social work despite the growing implementation of the approach. This dissertation attempts to better understand the implications for social work practice in the public defense setting by 1) reviewing the literature to gain an understanding of social work roles, services, and practice outcomes, 2) examining demographic characteristics and criminal charges incurred by a group of clients in a public defense setting to better understand the population to develop and tailor interventions, and 3) determining the effect of social work services in terms of the number and severity of criminal charges when statistically controlling for pre-existing criminal history and demographic characteristics. Findings indicate that significant gaps exist in understanding the population of public defense clients served by social workers, making it difficult to understand how to tailor services and target interventions. A clear picture emerged of the typical social work client in one public defense setting: male, European American, unmarried, and around 34 years old at the time he began working with a social worker. Also, two distinct subgroups of social work clients were identified: a smaller group comprised of clients who predominantly incurred low-level misdemeanor charges, and a larger group comprised of clients who incurred a high number of low-level misdemeanors, but incurred a higher number of charges, in general, and were more likely to have incurred some felony charges. When comparing clients who did and did not receive social work services, results indicated that the probability of incurring a misdemeanor charge and the number of misdemeanor charges incurred during a two-year time period were lower for clients who received social work services. The probability of incurring a felony charge was lower for the legal group, but there was not a statistically significant difference between groups in the number of felony charges. Implications for practice and future research are discussed.

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Introduction

Social workers have been incorporated into public defense settings since the inception of the public defense system though roles and services have varied and have been difficult to define (Senna, 1975; Hisle, Shdaimah & Finegar, 2012). Various models of public defense have emerged over the years, each with an increasing integration of social work practice (Buchanan & Nooe, 2017). The holistic model, which emerged in the 1990s, incorporated social work as an integral component of public defense practice defining legal representation, in part, as “... at a minimum, lawyers partnering with social service providers both in-house and in the community to address legal and psychosocial needs (Center for Holistic Defense, 2015).” In the early 2000s, Texas developed a Mental Health Public Defender System that, in most counties, ensures social work support for every client represented by a Mental Health Public Defender (Travis County Justice Planning, 2016). Recent large-scale evaluations of the various models, the implementation of state-wide social work programs, social work-oriented workshops offered at national defender conferences (NLADA, 2017), and the development of social work sub-committees and social work listservs by national defender organizations (NAPD, 2017) suggest that the practice of combining legal and social work services is growing (Lee, Ostrom & Kleiman 2014; Walker & Miller, 2016; Travis County Justice Planning, 2016).

Few studies of social work practice in public defense exist, though (Hisle, Shdaimah & Finegar, 2012, Buchanan, in process). Little is known about individuals who receive social work assistance or about the ability of the collaborative approach to effectively address both legal and psychosocial needs. Who are the clients, what works – and for whom – are questions that should be answered as social work moves forward in the public defense setting.

My dissertation addresses some of the methodological and substantive limitations and attempts to better understand a population of clients served by social workers in public defense. It is divided into three chapters, or scholarly papers. The first chapter provides a critical review and synthesis of research on social work practice in public defense. It presents a first step in understanding the body of work available to guide both research and practice. The second chapter addresses gaps in the literature by examining demographic characteristics and the number and severity of criminal charges incurred by a group of clients in a public defense setting. A failure to provide information about clients and their alleged offenses is a critical problem since an understanding of the population is necessary to tailor services, target interventions and compare results across studies. The third chapter examines the effect of social work services on public defense clients in terms of the number and severity of criminal charges when statistically controlling for pre-existing criminal history and demographic characteristics. This chapter addresses a significant gap by presenting one of the only studies of social work practice in public defense to include a comparison group.

Chapter I:
Social Work Practice in Public Defense: A Review of the Literature

This manuscript has not been published. Reviewers included my dissertation committee, Drs. John Orme (Chair), Terri Combs-Orme, Matthew Theriot, and Michelle Brown. I plan to submit this manuscript for publication upon its approval by the aforementioned committee.

Abstract

Social workers have been incorporated into public defense practice since the inception of the public defense system in the early 1960s. The purpose of this article is to review the literature on social work practice in public defense to gain an understanding of social work roles, services, and practice outcomes. Studies and evaluations of practice were retrieved from databases, listservs and email correspondence. Findings, limitations and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: *public defense, criminal defense, holistic defense, indigent defense, forensic social work*

Public defense systems began to emerge in each state following a United States Supreme Court ruling that requires states to provide defense attorneys to indigent individuals charged with felony crimes (Gideon, 1963). The administration and funding of each state system varies with some operating public defender offices at either the state or county level, some appointing attorneys from a list of private bar members, and others adopting a hybrid system with both public defender offices and appointed counsel managing cases (Owens, Accetta, Charles & Shoemaker, 2014). Various models of public defense have emerged that depart from a traditional approach and attempt to consider life circumstances and concerns outside of the immediate legal case: the client-centered model emerged in the 1970s (Steinberg, 2013), followed by community-oriented and holistic models that emerged in the 1990s (Clark & Savner, 2010; Steinberg, 2013). A Mental Health Public Defender approach is the most recent to emerge in Texas in the early 2000s as an effort to improve the way the justice system responds to the needs of individuals experiencing significant mental illness (Travis County Justice Planning, 2016).

Social workers have been incorporated into public defense practice since the inception of the public defense system and have had varying roles (Senna, 1975). It wasn't until the holistic model of public defense emerged in the 1990s, though, that social work services became an integral component of public defense practice. The Center for Holistic Defense describes holistic defense as:

An innovative, client-centered, and interdisciplinary model of public defense that addresses both the circumstances driving people into the justice systems as well as the devastating consequences of that court involvement. Based on individual needs, this model connects clients with criminal defense, family defense, and related civil legal representation, as well as social work support and advocacy beyond the courtroom.

Holistic representation includes, at a minimum, lawyers partnering with social service providers both in-house and in the community to address legal and psychosocial needs.

(www.bronxdefenders.org, 2015)

An equal – if not heavier - emphasis is placed on social work services in some Mental Health Public Defender offices where social workers are assigned to each client (Travis County Justice Planning, 2016).

The number of state or county public defense systems that have adopted a model of defense that relies on social workers is unknown, though recent large-scale evaluations of holistic defense (Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights, 2013; Lee, Ostrom & Kleiman 2014) and the creation of county and state-wide social work programs in public defense systems suggest interest is growing (State of Maryland Office of the Public Defender, 2015; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016; Dalton, 2016).

Tracing the evolution of social work practice in public defense reveals a shift in the relationship between social work and the law from antagonistic and uneasy (Sloane, 1967) to positive and receptive (Steinberg, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender’s Office, 2014). It is clear that social work is now a valued partner and an integral component of various models of defense (Steinberg, 2013; Travis County Justice Planning, 2016). Despite the shift in this relationship, though, social work continues to struggle to define roles and identify effective practice approaches (Hisle, Shdaimah & Finegar, 2012).

Given the commitment various models of public defense have made to social work, it is important to understand the impact social work services have on both public defense clients and the overall public defense system. Few resources are available for legal and social work practitioners interested in implementing social work services in public defense. The purpose of

this review is to synthesize and critically review literature related to social work practice in public defense systems. Methodological strengths and weaknesses are discussed, outcomes of interest are reviewed and future directions are explored.

This article presents a first step in understanding the body of research available to guide practice.

Literature Review

I performed a comprehensive search of peer-reviewed literature from January 1963 to August 2016. I searched Social Work Abstracts, Academic Search Complete, Google Scholar and Scopus databases. Search terms included *public defense*, *criminal defense*, *indigent defense*, *holistic defense*, *holistic defense representation* and *holistic representation*. I reviewed articles for specific focus on evaluation of social work practice in public defense settings. I excluded studies of overall state or county public defense systems that did not examine outcomes specific to social work practice. Some studies considered social work outcomes as a small part of their overall evaluation effort; I included those studies and have discussed social work outcomes.

Unpublished studies were sought to capture a comprehensive assessment of social work practice in public defense. I sent an inquiry to the National Legal Aid and Defender Association requesting information about recently developed studies or evaluation projects. I also sent an email to the Indigent Defense Research Association listserv detailing known studies and requesting information about other unlisted projects. I conducted a state-by-state search of public defender websites to locate internal evaluations, though a comprehensive gathering of information was limited by varying administration practices. Finally, I contacted authors and evaluators of known evaluations by email in an attempt to gain access to unpublished studies and forthcoming papers.

Methodological Overview

An understanding of the impact and benefit of social work practice in public defense is emerging, but studies are limited and vary in purpose. A majority have been undertaken solely to justify funding for social work staff and social services programs (Wald, 1972; Senna, 1975; Moriarty, 1979; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Anderson & Mills, 2011; Steinberg, 2013; Geurin, Otis & Royse, 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender's Office, 2014; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). Twelve evaluations are included in this review. Three have been published in peer-reviewed journals (Hisle, et al., 2012; Geurin et al., 2013; McCarter, 2016).

Samples

Samples vary depending on the purpose of the study. In most cases, single, point-in-time, convenience sampling was used. Samples were small in most instances, limiting statistical power to detect relationships and limiting generalizability.

Many samples were selected from case files, with inclusion criteria simply being that the client was referred for social services assistance (Wald, 1972; Moriarty, 1979; Anderson & Mills, 2011; Geurin, et al., 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender's Office, 2014; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). Overall populations and specific methods of case selection were not described in studies that used subsets of cases, limiting an ability to understand the sample and determine whether it might be representative of the overall population or of a specific sub-group (Moriarty, 1979; Anderson & Mills, 2011; Steinberg, 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender's Office, 2014; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). Information about whether the samples were representative of the communities and/or the

overall public defense population is unavailable in all but two studies. Geurin, et al. (2013) noted that the racial composition of their sample is similar to that of the community (lacking racial diversity), and noted that African American youth were overrepresented. McCarter (2016) found a similar overrepresentation of African American youth, mentioned national statistics and noted that race-analysis would have been helpful. The reliability of data extracted from case files wasn't discussed in most cases, though challenges clearly exist.

Studies that reviewed case files range from as few as 20 cases (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013) to 326 cases (Moriarty, 1979), though most used information from fewer than 100 cases. Studies that employed interview and survey methods selected samples ranging from one to 181 (Wald, 1972; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008). Most surveyed and interviewed fewer than 50 professionals or clients (Senna, 1975; Moriarty, 1979; Hisle, Shdaimah & Finegar, 2012), though, and generally included every professional or client served during the study period who was willing to participate, calling into question sample representativeness and limiting statistical power. Little information is provided about the clients or professionals surveyed and interviewed, making it difficult to understand and generalize results. In fact, no demographic information is provided in the only study that included interviews of clients and subsequently proposed outcomes resulting from interactions with social workers (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008).

Just three studies included juvenile clients (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Geurin, et al., 2013; McCarter, 2016). Samples are small in those instances, particularly in the one randomized trial of combined social work and legal services (treatment group, $n = 22$; control group, $n = 7$) (McCarter, 2016).

Demographic themes emerged in the samples, though it is unclear whether this is a result of convenience sampling or of other unknown factors given the overall dearth of information regarding sampling methods and overall populations. Of the six studies that documented the racial makeup of the samples, four reported predominately Caucasian samples (ranging from 47.6% - 88.6%) (Moriarty, 1979; Geurin, et al., 2013; Steinberg, 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). Six studies included age ranges for adult clients (Wald, 1972; Moriarty, 1979; Steinberg, 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender's Office, 2014; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). The average age reported by three of them was between 31-38 years old (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender's Office, 2014; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). The average age reported for the two juvenile studies that included this information ranged from 14.22 to 15.4 (Geurin, et al, 2013; McCarter, 2016). Overall, white males in their 30's and African American males around 15 years old are overrepresented, but no explanations or assumptions are offered outside of the two previously mentioned by Geurin, et al. (2013) and McCarter (2016).

Three studies included no demographic information (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Anderson & Mills, 2011; Hisle, et al., 2012), significantly limiting an ability to understand results. The lack of demographic information across studies, in general, (i.e., only half documented the racial makeup of samples) contributes to an inability to understand the overall population of public defense clients and any sub-groups that might exist within the population. Without this information, it is difficult to tailor services and target interventions to best meet needs.

Specific types of criminal offenses allegedly perpetrated by clients were included in six of the twelve studies (Wald, 1972; Moriarty, 1979; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy 2008; Steinberg, 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender’s Office, 2014), though non-specific information (i.e., number of overall felonies or misdemeanors) was included in two additional studies (Geurin, et al., 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). Offenses related to possession of controlled substances were included in all six and were noted to be the most prevalent offense type in half of them (Wald, 1972; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Steinberg, 2013). Other common offense types included burglary or theft related offenses, though the offense types varied across studies from criminal trespass to homicide. In most cases, it wasn’t possible to determine if charges or convictions were considered when counting offense types and, where applicable, it was not clear if offense types for the samples were representative of the overall public defense population from which the sample was chosen. Offense type is a necessary demographic component for sample comparison and generalization that contributes to an understanding of how to tailor services and target interventions. A failure to provide information about offenses and how they are defined and to distinguish between charges and convictions is a critical problem.

Client needs were identified in eight of the twelve studies (Wald, 1972; Moriarty, 1979; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Steinberg, 2013; Geurin, et al., 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016; McCarter, 2016). It is not clear how needs were identified in any circumstance (i.e., identified by attorney at point of referral to satisfy a legal requirement, identified by social worker following assessment, self-identified by client), making it difficult to understand the

nature of the information. Substance abuse and mental health concerns were noted in all (Wald, 1972; Moriarty, 1979; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Steinberg, 2013; Geurin, et al., 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016; McCarter, 2016). Employment/job placement/vocational assistance, housing assistance, and education were noted across studies, though it is clear that multiple bio-psycho-social needs are commonly present.

An understanding of “social work” staff is of particular importance since results and outcomes are attributed to social workers and social work intervention. As previously mentioned, studies differ in purpose; some interviewed social workers and other professionals to determine roles and evaluate practice (Wald, 1972; Senna, 1975; Moriarty, 1979; Hisle, et al., 2012), while most used information extracted from social worker case files to determine the impact and outcomes of social work programs (Wald, 1972; Moriarty, 1979; Anderson & Mills, 2011; Steinberg, 2013; Geurin, et al., 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender’s Office, 2014; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). In all cases, though, little information was provided about professional licensure, training, or years in practice. Social work staff described in the studies weren’t even necessarily professionals with social work degrees. In one instance, “social work” staff was comprised of a law student, a psychology student, and a criminology student (Wald, 1972). Two studies identified use of “case workers,” though only one detailed that the case workers had no social work training and their supervising Licensed Master Social Worker had less than two years’ experience (Anderson & Mills, 2011; Steinberg, 2013). Five studies mention use of MSWs (Moriarty, 1979; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender’s Office, 2014; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016), but only one

documented licensure (Steinberg, 2013). Use and evaluation of social work students is identified in two studies (Moriarty, 1979; Guerin, et al., 2013). Seven studies included fewer than five social workers (Wald, 1972; Moriarty, 1979; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Anderson & Mills, 2011; Hisle, et al., 2012; Steinberg, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender's Office, 2014). Just one study included more than ten social workers, though they were all social work students (Geurin, et al., 2013). Social workers are briefly noted to have been trained in an evidence-based practice - Motivational Interviewing - in two evaluations conducted in the same state (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016), and it is suggested in one evaluation as a potentially necessary skill (Steinberg, 2013). The lack of information available regarding use of trained social workers – or of evidence-based practice approaches – creates difficulty in attributing outcomes to social work intervention.

Research Designs

Research approaches varied widely and are generally reflective of beginning steps toward understanding social work practice in public defense. In some cases, an exploratory mixed-methods approach was used, combining data from case files with surveys and interviews from various stakeholders (Wald, 1972; Moriarty, 1979; Michigan State Appellate Defender's Office, 2014). Cross-sectional designs were common (Senna, 1975; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Anderson & Mills, 2011; Geurin, et al., 2013; Steinberg, 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). This approach provides needed information about the use of social work services and the perceived value of services, but results are limited to snapshots of information at defined times as data were largely collected from case files and/or obtained during a specific grant period. Cause-and-effect

relationships were not explored. A qualitative approach was used in one study relying on interviews, focus groups and observations (Hisle, et al., 2012). A pretest-posttest randomized experimental design was used in one instance (McCarter, 2016).

Longitudinal studies examining social work practice in public defense have not been conducted.

The most significant design limitation, in general, is the absence of comparison groups, restricting assumptions about the benefit of social work services despite positive findings in many cases. Just two studies included nonequivalent retrospective comparison groups (Geurin, et al., 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender's Office, 2014) and only one pretest-posttest randomized experiment was conducted, though the sample was small and focused exclusively on juveniles (McCarter, 2016).

Measures

A significant limitation in the literature also includes the lack of standardized measures for the wide variety of outcomes of interest. Just one study used a standardized measure to determine client functioning pre- and post-interaction with social work services (McCarter, 2016). Other outcomes (i.e., recidivism and jail days) are measured various ways with no consistency. There is no ability to aggregate and compare results across studies.

Statistical Analyses

Information about statistical analysis was provided in just three studies. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used in one instance to determine differences in juvenile client functioning (McCarter, 2016). Binary hierarchical logistic regression was used in another study to predict the likelihood a juvenile client would receive an alternative sentence if they had the assistance of a social worker (Geurin, et al., 2013). Finally, one-way analysis of variance

(ANOVA) was used in one instance to evaluate the relationship between groups of clients and to assess if a difference in pre-disposition jail days was more than would be expected by chance (Steinberg, 2013). There is no ability to compare results across studies given the varying purposes and outcomes of interest.

Review of Outcomes

Given an understanding of the limitations present in studies of social work practice in public defense, a review of identified outcomes is provided. Historically, the literature begins with studies focused on defining the unique roles of social workers in public defense, so that is the first point of discussion. Following that, services are outlined to provide an understanding of how social workers assist their clients. Next, cost savings and satisfaction outcomes are discussed and criminal justice outcomes such as recidivism and reductions in jail days are summarized. Finally, outcomes related to client functioning are noted.

Unique Roles

Terms such as *professional partnership*, *collaborative team*, *cooperative effort*, and *team-based approach* are found throughout the studies. While it is clear that social work's role in public defense is ancillary, it is apparent that the trend has moved from simply providing assistance (i.e., in the form of alternative sentencing plans) to integration on defense teams as partners in the defense effort. Challenges are discussed – primarily the difficulties that arise when attempting to integrate two professions with different professional goals – and it is noted that social workers have struggled to define their roles (Hisle, et al., 2012). It is mentioned several times that social workers relieve attorneys of having to navigate social and psychological difficulties faced by their clients and offer skills that are outside of the scope of the legal profession (i.e., crisis intervention, mental status exams, diagnosis, development of appropriate

treatment plans) (Senna, 1975; Moriarty, 1979; Steinberg, 2013; Geurin, et al., 2013). Social workers were described in one evaluation as being the “heart” of the team and as “providers of compassionate understanding” (Hisle, et al., 2012). The unique skills social workers possess in assessment, interviewing, advocacy and relationship building define the social work role(s) on defense teams, even if it has not always been clear how to best use these skills in the public defense setting.

Services Provided

All twelve studies provided information about the services offered by social work staff (Wald, 1972; Senna, 1975; Moriarty, 1979; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Anderson & Mills, 2011; Hisle, et al., 2012; Steinberg, 2013; Geurin, et al., 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender’s Office, 2014; McCarter, 2016; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). Social histories, counseling (for clients and families), crisis intervention and case management tasks (i.e., assisting clients apply for benefits or access treatment) were noted across the board, but it is overwhelmingly clear that client evaluation/assessment and linkage to appropriate resources is the predominant service offered by social workers in public defense. The process of assessment, recommendation, and referral was described in every study or evaluation. In some cases, that resulted in written individualized dispositional, pre-sentence, rehabilitation, treatment or alternative sentencing plans (Wald, 1972; Senna, 1975; Moriarty, 1979; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Hisle, et al., 2012; Geurin, et al., 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender’s Office, 2014; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). In limited cases, that work required the social worker to testify in court (Senna, 1975; Michigan State Appellate Defender’s Office, 2014).

Cost Savings Outcomes

Five studies reported costs savings realized to county and state governments as a result of social work services (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Steinberg, 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender's Office, 2014; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). Methods of determining cost savings varied. Three of the studies took place in Kentucky (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). All three considered the likely sentence faced by clients in the absence of an alternative sentencing plan and compared that to the actual sentence imposed, though there were slight variations in calculations and sample sizes. Costs of community interventions, attorney costs and social worker costs were calculated in two instances (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013), but removed from the most recent study (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016), citing the notion that the cost of community interventions shifts to federal dollars and removes the burden on the state. The first study found a savings of \$100,000 per social worker, the second found a savings of \$4.47 to \$6.80 for every \$1 spent on the social worker program, and the final study noted a return on investment of \$5.66 for every \$1 spent on the program (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013, Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). In Texas, the cost of operating a Mental Health Public Defender Office (where all clients received social work support) was compared to the cost per case of the county's overall indigent defense program (Steinberg, 2013). Three scenarios (conservative to optimistic assumptions) were calculated to determine the potential monetary benefit, all considering the number of jail days/costs saved. Savings ranged from \$32.26 per case to \$734.51

per case depending on the assumption (Steinberg, 2013). In Michigan, the money saved via re-sentencing efforts was calculated by determining the number of months reduced from original minimum sentences. A total of 1,243 months were reduced, resulting in a savings of \$3,504,141.30 (the 2013 daily cost of a prisoner was \$93.37, resulting in a savings of \$67,367 per client) (Michigan State Appellate Defender's Office, 2014). A retrospective comparison group was used, however, and it was determined that the difference in the reduction of sentences (with and without social worker involvement) was not statistically significant (Michigan State Appellate Defender's Office, 2014). Statistical significance is unknown in all other instances.

Satisfaction Outcomes

Five studies surveyed professionals and/or clients to determine satisfaction outcomes (Wald, 1972; Senna, 1975; Moriarty, 1979; Hisle, et al., 2012; Steinberg, 2013). Depending on the scope of the study, clients, judges, probation officers, district attorneys, community agencies and public defenders participated. Sample sizes were small in all instances (ranging from 1 – 45 respondents), but results indicate a trend away from hostility toward social work programs as awareness and understanding of potential services grew. All responses from public defenders were positive with findings indicating value in social work services (Senna, 1975; Moriarty, 1979; Hisle, et al., 2012). Client satisfaction was assessed twice (Hisle, et al., 2012; Steinberg, 2013). Samples of less than 30 were used in both cases, but responses were positive.

Criminal Justice Outcomes

Criminal justice outcomes fall into three categories: recidivism, acceptance and use of alternative sentencing plans and change in the number of jail days.

Recidivism. Just four studies measured recidivism despite its common use as an indicator of success or failure of criminal justice programs (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy,

2008; Anderson & Mills, 2011; Steinberg, 2013; McCarter, 2016). There is no consistency in measurement across them. In some instances, recidivism rates were determined simply by calculating the number of bookings or petitions filed during some time period post-involvement with a social work program or service (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Anderson & Mills, 2011; McCarter, 2016). No information about types of bookings or petitions (i.e., new criminal charges vs. violations of probation/parole) is provided.

The Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy (2008) asserted program success based on the recidivism rate of social work clients, though simply compared their calculated recidivism rate for a small sample ($n = 181$) to the overall Department of Corrections recidivism rate (18% recidivism vs. 34% recidivism) with little to no detail about how either instance was calculated. McCarter (2016) measured juvenile recidivism comparing petition filings for treatment and control groups, but statistically significant results were not found. Decreases in arrests are noted by the Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy (2008) and Anderson and Mills (2011), but the statistical significance of these findings was not determined. Steinberg (2013) assessed recidivism by comparing the number of arrests pre-program and post-case closure, but the difference was not statistically significant.

Alternative sentencing plans. The use and acceptance (by the courts) of alternative sentencing plans, a common service provided by social work staff in public defense settings, was considered by just three studies (Wald, 1972; Moriarty, 1979; Geurin, et al., 2013). Interest in the plans varied. One study determined ways alternative sentencing plans developed by social work staff differed from plans developed by probation staff, though trained social workers were not employed (Wald, 1972). Another study determined the acceptance rate of a sample of alternative sentencing plans created by social work staff ($n = 170$) and found that over half (64%) were

accepted (Moriarty, 1979). Finally, a comparison of case outcomes found that juveniles were almost three times more likely to receive alternative sentences if represented by both attorneys and social workers capable of creating alternative sentencing plans (Geurin, et al., 2013).

Jail days. Six studies calculated jail days in an effort to make assumptions about the ability of social work services to reduce incarceration time (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Anderson & Mills, 2011; Steinberg, 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender’s Office, 2014; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). Four of the studies performed this calculation to determine cost savings and employed various methods of counting likely and actual jail days and have previously been discussed (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender’s Office, 2014; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). Steinberg (2013) is the only study to have employed statistical analysis to determine that “... well developed MHPDO services are related to a decrease in jail time pre-disposition among clients with a misdemeanor charge (p. 21).”

Client Functioning

Just two studies considered client functioning as an outcome of interest (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; McCarter, 2016). The Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy (2008) captured percentages of their sample that experienced a decrease in substance abuse (83-95% decrease depending on the substance) and decrease in alcohol use (93% decrease for adult, 91% decrease for juveniles). They also considered participation in self-help groups (300% increase in participation) and changes in employment (little change, though a percentage was not indicated). This information was derived from self-reports at baseline and 6-month follow-up interviews. McCarter (2016) is the only study to use a standardized measure. Youth

functioning was measured with the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment Youth Self-Report for both treatment and control groups. Conclusions are limited given the small sample, but functioning was shown to significantly improve at posttest on multiple scales.

Conclusion

The literature reflects beginning steps at understanding roles, services, and practice outcomes, but there is little consistency given varying evaluative purposes. Samples are small and ill-defined with overrepresentation of some populations with little explanation. Comparison groups are almost non-existent and, when used, are nonequivalent, retrospective groups. Standardized measures and statistical analysis are lacking. Information about social work training, credentials, licensure and experience is incomplete and mention of evidence-based practice is scarce.

The ability to work toward an understanding of best practices is possible. We know from the studies that the relationship between social work and the law has improved and that public defenders are increasingly welcoming social workers into their practice. Samples may have been small, but it's clear that both professionals and clients find value in social work intervention. Roles, services, and levels of integration on defense teams may vary, but the studies show a clear pattern: social workers in public defense largely perform assessments and offer individualized recommendations and referrals. Other support services are offered in many cases, but a pattern exists there, too: crisis intervention, supportive counseling, and case management skills are key. Despite limitations, studies indicate cost savings are being realized as a result of social work programs and services. We know social work intervention is desired, we know common client needs and social work services offered and there is preliminary work toward developing outcomes.

Primary goals for next steps include a better understanding of the client population served by public defense systems and by social work staff in the systems. We know very little about public defense clients and we know little about sub-groups within the population. A comprehensive understanding of client demographic information is needed to tailor services and target interventions to meet needs. It is also imperative that social work staff be identified and defined to understand how education, training and licensure impact services offered. What training do social workers need to appropriately assess and refer – or otherwise meet the needs of public defense clients? In addition to client demographic information, understanding client needs (i.e., a clear understanding of how needs are identified - by attorney at point of referral to satisfy a legal requirement, identified by social worker following assessment, self-identified by client) is imperative when considering evidence-based practice approaches for this population. We know what services are commonly offered, but we do not know why. Are services chosen and provided because they are within the scope of the social workers practice, because they meet a legal need or because they meet the needs of the clients? Who are the clients, what works – and for whom – are questions to be answered. Finally, identification and consistent measurement of the most relevant outcomes (i.e., recidivism, life outcomes, etc.) is crucial. Questions remain about recidivism, cost savings and life outcomes. What matters – and how should it be defined and measured?

The public defense system made a commitment to social work when it developed models of practice that rely on social work intervention. Practice standards – based on clear, measurable outcomes - should be identified if we hope to continue working in public defense systems serving a population of clients with whom the profession has long claimed allegiance.

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Chapter II:
Understanding Public Defense Clients to Inform Social Work Practice

This manuscript has not been published. Reviewers included my dissertation committee, Drs. John Orme (Chair), Terri Combs-Orme, Matthew Theriot, and Michelle Brown. I plan to submit this manuscript for publication upon its approval by the aforementioned committee.

Abstract

Studies of social work practice in public defense elaborate on various outcomes, but significant gaps exist in understanding the population of public defense clients served by social workers. A failure to provide information about clients and their alleged offenses poses critical problems, making it difficult to understand populations being studied and to subsequently understand how to tailor services and target interventions. This paper examines demographic characteristics and the number and severity of criminal charges incurred by a group of clients in a public defense setting to begin to better understand a population served by social workers practicing in public defense. A clear picture emerged of the typical social work client in one public defense setting: male, European American, unmarried, and around 34 years old at the time he began working with a social worker. Over three-fourths of the clients had incurred one or more misdemeanor charges by the time they were referred to a social worker, and almost half had incurred felony charges. Two distinct subgroups of social work clients were identified: a smaller group comprised of clients who predominantly incurred low-level misdemeanor charges, and a larger group comprised of clients who incurred a high number of low-level misdemeanors, but incurred a higher number of charges, in general, and were more likely to have incurred some felony charges. Implications for practice and future research are discussed.

Keywords: *public defense, criminal defense, holistic defense, indigent defense, forensic social work*

Introduction

Social workers have been practicing in the public defense system since its inception in the 1960s (Senna, 1975; Hisle, Shdaimah & Finegar, 2012). Various models of public defense have emerged over the years, each with an increasing integration of social work practice (Buchanan & Nooe, 2017). Historically, social workers were incorporated into public defense settings in supportive roles. They generally provided concrete services (such as alternative sentencing plans) to assist attorneys with sentencing negotiations (Wald, 1972; Moriarty, 1979). The relationship has shifted over time, though, to a team-based approach with lawyers who recognize that ignoring the psychosocial needs of clients is shortsighted (Buchanan & Nooe, 2017). Progressive public defender leaders have begun to embrace a client-centered, holistic approach that attempts to understand and work toward addressing the needs of the clients who enter – and often become consumed by – the criminal justice system. Holistic defense is described as an interdisciplinary model of public defense designed to address both legal and psychosocial needs – “... the circumstances driving people into the justice systems as well as the devastating consequences of that court involvement (Center for Holistic Defense, 2015).”

Social work roles have expanded and integration on defense teams has grown, but this did not necessarily arise out of a theoretical framework, and little empirical evidence supports ongoing practice (Buchanan, in process). Various evaluations of social work practice in public defense provide limited general descriptions of public defense clients and elaborate on outcomes of some nature: cost/benefit, sentencing, recidivism (Michigan State Appellate Defender’s Office, 2014; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). Samples are small, though, and no emphasis is placed on understanding the population of public defense clients or the social workers who serve them. In fact, some evaluations provide little to no demographic information

at all and few provide details about alleged criminal offending. Who are social workers serving? What needs are present? Do those needs differ given varying criminal histories and subsequent community repercussions (i.e., limited or no access to housing)? Are services offered by social workers addressing the needs of the population they serve? Are social workers trained to address the needs of the population they serve?

It is essential to the successful collaboration between social work and public defense to gather data that provide an understanding of the approach and the population (Clarke & Neuhard, 2004). A failure to provide information about clients and their alleged offenses is a critical problem since an understanding of the population is necessary to tailor services, target interventions, and compare and integrate results across studies.

Purpose

I used a retrospective cohort design to identify demographic characteristics and the number and severity of criminal charges to understand a population served by social workers practicing within a client-centered, holistic model of public defense.

Methods

Clients

Clients are individuals who have been charged with a crime and found by a court of law to be indigent, with liberty at stake, qualifying them for public defense services. They were represented by an institutional county public defender office operating within a state public defender system. The county office practices client-centered, holistic defense. The county court system appoints attorneys in private practice when legal conflicts arise. Indigent individuals appointed attorneys outside of the county public defender's office were not included because

data for these clients was not available. I obtained de-identified demographic and criminal history data from the county public defender's office.

I obtained data for all clients referred by public defenders for social work services during fiscal year 2013 (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013) (FY13). All county criminal history prior to 2013 was obtained, some information dating to the 1980s. The data provided information about criminal charges (i.e., dates of alleged offenses, alleged offense descriptions, etc.), not convictions, since charges reflect the circumstances that brought each client to the criminal justice system during FY13 – and subsequently to the public defender's office and a public defender social worker. Each charge represents an interaction with the criminal justice system at a point in time when social workers could intervene. Developing an understanding of the client and the events occurring in the life of the client at that point is critical.

Additionally, I obtained Self-Sufficiency Survey data collected by social workers for a subsample of FY13 social work clients. This subsample includes clients identified by social workers as high-risk. Clients were identified as high-risk if they presented histories of difficulty maintaining stability in the community following a period of incarceration, a pattern of failed attempts at treatment and/or employment, and/or a pattern of failed attempts at community supervision (i.e., probation or parole).

Measures and Variables

Self-Sufficiency Survey. The Self-Sufficiency Survey (Nooe, n.d.) is a questionnaire designed to assess client functioning across 16 domains relevant to stability in the community: housing, food, clothing, health care, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, support network, child care, transportation, education, training, employment, legal problems, financial, supervision, and recreation. Self-Sufficiency Survey data were recorded during initial interviews

by social workers during FY13 for the high-risk subsample. The intake score was of interest because it reflects the circumstances faced by the client at the initial encounter with a social worker.

A score of 1-10 was possible for each Self-Sufficiency Survey domain. For example, a score of 1 for the housing domain indicated “homeless,” whereas a score of 10 indicated “stable housing.” While there are sixteen domains listed on the survey, nine were of interest: housing, healthcare, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, education, training, employment, legal problems, financial. Items such as support network, child care, and transportation were excluded because they were not required to be completed and social workers rarely provided a score for them.

Demographic Variables. Demographic data obtained from the public defender’s office for the overall sample and the high-risk subsample (part of the overall sample) included sex (male, female), race (Native American, African American, European American, Hispanic, Indian, other), marital status (divorced, single, married, widowed) and date of birth. There were only 11 clients who were other than African American or European American (1.05%), so I excluded these clients from the sample. Four of those clients were part of the subsample (.80%) and were excluded from that sample as well. Marital status was dichotomized into married and unmarried. Marriage is associated with lower recidivism for both men and women (Kendler, Lönn, Sundquist, & Sundquist, 2017), so I was interested solely in whether the clients were married.

Criminal Charge Variables. The data set included dates, types, descriptions and state charge classes (Felony A, B, C, D, E, M or Misdemeanor A, B, C) for the overall sample for each alleged offense. I was not able to separate and describe criminal history information

specific to the high-risk subsample because demographic and criminal history data were provided from different databases and did not have matching identification numbers. I did not have the ability to determine which clients from the overall sample comprised the high-risk subsample.

State charge classes distinguish alleged offenses based on the seriousness of the alleged crime and the potential sentence at conviction. Charge classes range from low-level misdemeanors to First Degree Murder (Table 2.1). State charge classes were used to understand the seriousness of each alleged offense and to differentiate among alleged offenses.

Data Analysis

I used latent class analysis (LCA) to: (1) explore whether there are distinct types of clients based on alleged criminal offenses; (2) determine the size of subgroups; and (3) assign clients to subgroups. LCA is a statistical method used to identify discrete subtypes (subpopulations) of similar cases, in this case social work clients, within an overall population (Collins & Lanza, 2010; Muthén, 2008). These subtypes are referred to as “latent classes.” The classes form categories of a discrete latent variable. The variable is latent in that it is not directly observable, but instead is inferred from a set of observed variables (*indicators*). The variable is discrete in that it is not presumed to reflect a continuum (Cherry & Orme, 2013).

I used MPlus7.3 (Muthen & Muthen 1998-2014) and the robust maximum likelihood ratio estimator (MLR) for these analyses. I assumed fixed covariances among the latent class indicators (i.e., *local independence*). I treated all variables as count variables with zero-inflation given the large percentage of cases with zero charges for each charge class.

There is general agreement that theory, interpretability, parsimony, and class size should be considered in selecting the number of latent classes. In addition, there are several statistical

indices that can be used in model selection. However, there is no definitive statistical test of the “true” number of classes, so I considered three statistical criteria used to select the most plausible number of classes (Henson, Reise, & Kim, 2007; Nylund, Asparouhov, & Muthén, 2007): (1) the bootstrap likelihood ratio test (BLRT; McLachlan & Peel, 2000; Nylund et al., 2007); (2) the Bayesian information criterion (BIC; Schwarz, 1978); and (3) the sample-size adjusted Bayesian information criterion (SSABIC; Sclove, 1987). In addition, after identifying the most plausible model, I considered the degree of error associated with the assignment of respondents to classes as indicated by entropy, an aggregate measure of classification uncertainty and, more specifically and importantly, the mean probability of class membership for each class.

Models with the lowest BIC or SSABIC, or the point at which these indices begin to level off, as shown in a scree plot, suggest the best model fit. The BLRT provides a *p*-value that can be used to determine if there is a statistically significant improvement in fit when an additional class is added; a nonsignificant *p*-value indicates that the more parsimonious model with one fewer class is preferred. Finally, entropy values (Ramaswamy, DeSarbo, Reibstein & Robinson, 1993) and mean probabilities of class membership near one indicate a high degree of certainty in classifying cases to classes. Entropy should not in itself be used to determine the optimal number of classes, but it does provide an important summary of the extent to which a model generates classification errors.

Results

To better understand clients served by social workers practicing within a client-centered, holistic model of public defense, results describe: (1) demographic characteristics; (2) Self-Sufficiency Survey intake scores for the high-risk subsample; and (3) the number and severity of

criminal charges. Two distinct subgroups were identified based on alleged criminal offenses and will be described and compared.

Demographic Characteristics. A total of 1,039 clients were included in the study (Table 2.2). Approximately two-thirds were male, three-fourths were European-American, and over three-fourths were not married. The typical client was in his or her early 30s, but one-fourth were about 25 years old or younger and about one-fourth were 42 years old or older ($M = 34.12$, $Mdn = 32.08$, $SD = 11.10$, $IQR = 25.05$ to 42.05).

The high-risk subsample was comprised of 485 clients (47% of the overall sample). Three-fourths were male, almost 80% were European American, and over 80% were unmarried. The typical client was in his or her early to mid-30s, but one-fourth were about 27 years old or younger and one-fourth were about 44 years old or older ($M = 35.6$, $Mdn = 33$, $SD = 10.82$, $IQR = 27$ to 44).

Intake Self-Sufficiency Survey scores for the high-risk subsample show that most (89.3%) had a score indicating they were incarcerated in a county jail when they began working with a social worker, over three-fourths (77.1%) had a score indicating no source of income (either through employment, Social Security Income or Social Security Disability Income), and almost half (46.6%) had a score indicating they were homeless. Over two-thirds (68.7%) had a score indicating they were not receiving substance abuse treatment but were exhibiting apparent problems and over one-third (39.8%) had a score indicating they were not receiving mental health treatment but were exhibiting apparent problems. Fewer than one-half (42.7%) had a score indicating they were able to identify a health care source. Very few (6.4%) had a score indicating they had some sort of specialized training (defined as “skilled, certified or degreed”), but some had high school (21%) or post high school achievement (18.8%).

Alleged Criminal Offenses. I considered all county criminal history to determine the number of charges incurred by clients by the time they were referred to a social worker (Table 2.3). A total of 76.6% of clients had incurred one or more misdemeanor charges by the time they were referred to a public defender social worker, whereas 23.4% had no misdemeanor charges and had only incurred felony charges. In contrast to misdemeanor charges, 40.4% of clients had incurred one or more felony charges by the time they were referred to a social worker, whereas 59.6% had no felony charges and had only incurred misdemeanor charges. Clients were more likely to have incurred misdemeanor charges and more likely to have more of them.

The number of felony charges decreased as the seriousness of the charge class increased: 649 Felony E charges (lowest-level felony) were reported compared to just 71 Felony A charges (highest-level felony excluding First Degree Murder). A total of 22.1% of the clients had one or more Felony E charges. Only 2.8% had incurred one or more Felony A charges. The same does not apply for misdemeanor charges. A higher number of misdemeanor charges was reported for the highest-level charge class (Misdemeanor A). Percentages do not consistently decrease with each charge class. In their respective categories, more Misdemeanor A (highest-level misdemeanor) and Felony E (lowest-level felony) charges were reported.

Distinct Subgroups. Using LCA, I estimated and compared models with one through four classes. This allowed me to examine the possibility that there are no discrete subtypes (i.e., a single homogeneous population) or as many as four subtypes. This is analogous to determining the number of factors in a factor analysis.

I selected the two-class model for several reasons. First, in going from a one- to two-class model, the BIC and SSABIC decreased, but decreased little after that (Figure 2.1). Second, results of the BLRT suggested that each model fit better than the model with one fewer class, and

so it was of limited use in selecting the optimal model (Table 2.4). Third, there was minimal error associated with the assignment of respondents to these two latent classes, suggesting that the two-class model adequately defines the data; 0.925 for Class 1 and 0.988 for Class 2. Entropy was .845. Fourth, class sizes were adequate in the two-class model (405 for Class 1 and 634 for Class 2), compared to the 3-class model with a class size of just 11 and the 4-class model with a class size of 10. Finally, multiple sets of starting values clearly indicated a single maximum likelihood solution for the two-class model suggesting that it was identified.

Class 1, which I will refer to as the *resource group* because clients in this group generally present with practical needs related to homelessness, substance abuse and mental health, accounted for 39% of the sample; Class 2, which I will refer to as the *assessment group* because clients in this group generally present with needs requiring in-depth assessment, treatment planning, and therapeutic intervention, accounted for 61% (Figure 2.2). The most striking difference between classes is that the assessment group represents a group of clients who not only have more charges, but for most charges, have quite a few more (Table 2.5). Clients in the resource group presented with a high number of the lowest-level misdemeanor charge class (Misdemeanor C) and have a spike at Misdemeanor A (highest-level misdemeanor charge class), but they otherwise have few felony charges and fewer charges, in general.

Clients in the assessment group (the larger class) are similar to the resource group in respect to a high number of Misdemeanor C charges and a large spike at Misdemeanor A. They are more likely to have more felony charges and more charges, in general, though. For example, assessment group clients were 14 times more likely to have incurred Felony E and Misdemeanor B charges than resource group clients. They were 8 times more likely to have incurred Misdemeanor A charges and were 3 times more likely to have incurred a Felony A charge.

Demographically, the two groups are similar in terms of sex ($OR = .81$, 95% CI [0.62, 1.05], $p = .115$, male = 62% in resource group, 67% in assessment group, $n = 1039$), race ($OR = .79$, 95% CI [.59, 1.07], $p = .131$, European American = 79% in resource group, 74% in assessment group, $n = 1038$), and marital status ($OR = 1.17$, 95% CI [.84, 1.62], $p = .358$, unmarried = 83% in resource group, 81% in assessment group, $n = 1017$). However, there was a statistically significant difference in mean age ($t = -5.312$, $p < .001$). The typical resource group client was in his or her early 30s, but one-fourth were about 22 years old or younger and about one-fourth were 41 years old or older ($M = 31.86$, $Mdn = 28.52$, $SD = 12.04$, $IQR = 21.79$ to 40.82). The typical assessment group client was slightly older in his or her early to mid-30s. One-fourth were about 27 years old or younger and one-fourth were about 43 years old or older ($M = 35.57$, $Mdn = 33.63$, $SD = 10.21$, $IQR = 27.42$ to 42.90).

Discussion

Very few resources are available for lawyers and social workers interested in implementing social work services in public defense. Discussion and evaluations of practice began to emerge in the 1960s and 1970s (Sloane, 1967; Senna, 1975), and social work is now a valued and integral component of some models of defense (Steinberg, 2013; Travis County Justice Planning, 2016), but there is little evidence informing or supporting ongoing practice (Buchanan, in process). The number of state or county public defense systems that have adopted a model of defense relying on social workers is unknown, though it is clear that public defense practices across the country are increasingly attempting to better understand potential roles and services (Buchanan, in process). In most evaluations of social work practice in public defense, samples were small, demographic information was limited or non-existent, and information about alleged offense types was lacking (Buchanan, in process). Understanding the population,

their needs, and their barriers to community stability is necessary to understanding potential services and targeted interventions that can be offered.

A clear picture emerged of the typical social work client: male, European American, unmarried, and around 34 years old at the time he began working with a social worker. Of the high-risk subsample (47% of the overall sample), most were incarcerated when they began working with a social worker, had no source of income, and had substance abuse and/or mental health concerns that were not being treated. Almost half were homeless and very few had any specialized training or education.

To put them into context, the overall county population was approximately 432,000 in 2010 (United States Census Bureau, 2010). European Americans made up 85.6% of the county population (compared to 75.8% for the overall sample), while African Americans made up 8.8% (compared to 24.2% for the overall sample). Men made up 48.6 of the population (compared to 64.9% for the overall sample). The overall median age was 37.3, (compared to 34.12 for the overall sample). Marital status information was not available for the county. Only 16% of the population fell below the poverty level. Younger African American men were overrepresented in the sample of social work clients.

Over half of the clients had only incurred misdemeanor charges, but the average number was quite a bit higher than the average number of felonies ($M = 9.07$ vs. $M = 1.82$), potentially suggesting greater life disruption due to cycling in and out of local incarceration. The time spent incarcerated is likely lower for each misdemeanor offense, but the difficulty in maintaining community stability when cycling in and out of incarceration should not be underestimated, especially as it pertains to housing and employment. The number of offenses decreased as the felony charge class increased, which is potentially explained by the sentences corresponding to

each charge class, though this is difficult to determine without a comparison group. Social work intervention may or may not be helpful (specifically by a public defender social worker) and social work referrals may not occur in instances when a client is facing a lengthy incarceration in prison.

The three most common charge classes are Misdemeanor C, Misdemeanor A, and Felony E (Figure 2), all of which are common for individuals struggling with substance abuse, homelessness, unemployment, and untreated mental health concerns. Misdemeanor C charges include offenses such as trespassing, disorderly conduct, minor driving offenses (such as failure to provide evidence of insurance), obstructing a sidewalk or roadway, and public intoxication. Common Misdemeanor A charges, which clearly increased for assessment group clients, include theft (up to \$500), shoplifting (up to \$500), simple possession, possession of drug paraphernalia, driving under the influence, driving with privileges suspended or revoked, vandalism, domestic assault, and prostitution. Common Felony E charges include similar offenses, some at higher levels: theft (\$500.01 to \$999.99), shoplifting (\$500.01 to \$999.99), burglary, driving under the influence (numerous offenses), simple possession (numerous offenses), manufacture, delivery, sale or possession of controlled substances, and assault.

Two groups emerged when I explored whether there are distinct types of clients served by the social workers, which were corroborated by social work staff: The resource group, the smaller class, is comprised of clients who have predominantly incurred low-level misdemeanor charges (largely Misdemeanor C). They are clients who cycle in and out of incarceration for offenses such as public intoxication or trespassing and often present with long-term untreated mental health and/or substance abuse concerns, but are unlikely to commit crimes of a serious nature. They are generally referred to social workers for services such as housing assistance,

assistance obtaining identification, and release planning (from local incarceration). This group likely includes many of the 47% of clients reported as homeless for the high-risk subsample. They are generally connected to community resources and are typically aware of agencies that provide assistance. The criminal justice system often looks to the social worker to get and keep the client out of the system. Client needs often do not align with what the criminal justice system demands, though (i.e., the client wants to continue living outdoors or in a shelter but is required to have a more comprehensive housing plan for release from incarceration). Outside of attempting to reconnect to resources and develop release plans, social workers spend less time with these clients because they are often difficult to engage, resistant to treatment suggestions, and are difficult to locate once they are released from incarceration.

The assessment group, the larger class, is comprised of clients who have also incurred a high number of low-level misdemeanors, but have incurred a higher number of charges, in general, and are more likely to have incurred more serious charges (as much as 14, 12 and 11 times more likely to have incurred some felony charges). They are clients who are facing lengthier incarcerations (including prison sentences) and are likely incarcerated when a social worker intervenes. Assessment and an understanding of client needs is crucial in all situations and for all groups, but more time is spent engaging with this group conducting biopsychosocial assessments, writing social histories, creating treatment plans and/or alternative sentence plans and assisting clients to obtain halfway house beds, treatment beds or intake appointments with substance abuse and mental health providers. Legal needs often demand this, but client life circumstances are often a motivator. Mitigation, supportive counseling, and community advocacy are likely to occur on behalf of this group and longer-term relationships are more common.

The two groups aligned with what was observed at the public defender's office prior to data analysis. An understanding of the two groups developed over time for the social workers involved in the study, which led to a recent staffing structure conducive to the needs of these two distinct populations. Bachelor's and master's-level social work case managers with practical skills and training related to homelessness, substance abuse and mental health were determined to be ideal to work with resource clients, while master's-level clinical social workers with training geared toward assessment, treatment planning, and therapeutic techniques and treatments appropriate for the population were sought to work with assessment group clients. This enabled social workers to best utilize their skills to meet the needs of the clients in the most time-efficient manner. It's clear that all social workers in this agency should be equipped to work with a population struggling with substance abuse, untreated mental health concerns, homelessness, unemployment, poverty, and the life consequences that follow multiple incarcerations.

Limitations

Several limitations exist. First, criminal history information was available for one specific county, though I am aware that clients have often incurred criminal charges and convictions in other counties and states. It would have been helpful to have a more comprehensive summary of each client's criminal history. Second, the Self-Sufficiency Survey was completed by agency staff, not clients, which would have been preferable. The survey domains were open to the interpretation of the social workers (i.e., what constitutes stable housing for one social worker may have been inadequate for another). Validity and reliability are unknown. Third, the criteria to be included in the high-risk subsample were subjective and somewhat unclear. Clients were identified as high-risk if they presented a history of difficulty maintaining stability in the

community following a period of incarceration, a pattern of failed attempts at treatment and/or employment, and/or a pattern of failed attempts at community supervision (i.e., probation or parole), but this was determined by social workers without clear guidelines and was based on limited information provided in initial referrals from attorneys. Fourth, it would have been helpful to have Self-Sufficiency Survey information for the overall sample to compare results. Additionally, I was not able to determine which clients from the overall sample comprised the high-risk subsample since demographic and criminal history data were provided from different databases and did not have matching identification numbers. Finally, the reliability of the data is unknown. Data were collected by various agency staff and entered into two different database systems for administrative purposes and may be incomplete or inaccurate. Demographic data were provided by both systems, however, and no discrepancies were noted when compared. It is unlikely that charge class data were inaccurate since multiple checks for accuracy would have occurred throughout the client's time in the criminal justice system (attorneys would have verified accuracy, accuracy would have been determined by court staff at disposition, etc.). A random check of the data for reliability was not possible.

Conclusion

Literature on social work practice in public defense regarding social work roles, services, and practice outcomes is sparse (Buchanan, in process). Rigorous research demonstrating the efficacy of the approach for all models of social work practice in all models of public defense is much needed, but descriptive evaluations are invaluable as public defenders work to add or grow a social work component within their practice. What types of clients should be referred to social workers? What services can and should be offered to clients and attorneys? What types of social workers should be hired? What training is essential? Developing an understanding of the

population is the first step in answering these and other questions pertinent to the development of social work practice in public defense. Next steps include a better understanding of whether social work and non-social work clients and client outcomes differ. Who receives services? Why? What outcomes are important? The development of potential methods of measuring the impact of social work services is critical as the profession moves forward in public defense.

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Chapter II Appendix: Tables and Figures

Table 2.1
Charge classes.

Charge Class	Potential Sentence(s)
First Degree Murder	Life with parole, life without parole, death
Class A Felony	Not less than fifteen (15) nor more than sixty (60) years in prison. In addition, the jury may assess a fine not to exceed fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000), unless otherwise provided by statute
Class B Felony	Not less than eight (8) nor more than thirty (30) years in prison. In addition, the jury may assess a fine not to exceed twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000), unless otherwise provided by statute
Class C Felony	Not less than three (3) years nor more than fifteen (15) years in prison. In addition, the jury may assess a fine not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), unless otherwise provided by statute
Class D Felony	Not less than two (2) years nor more than twelve (12) years in prison. In addition, the jury may assess a fine not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000), unless otherwise provided by statute
Class E Felony	Not less than one (1) year nor more than six (6) years in prison. In addition, the jury may assess a fine not to exceed three thousand dollars (\$3,000), unless otherwise provided by statute
Class A Misdemeanor	Not greater than eleven (11) months twenty-nine (29) days in jail or a fine not to exceed two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500), or both, unless otherwise provided by statute
Class B Misdemeanor	Not greater than six (6) months in jail or a fine not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500), or both, unless otherwise provided by statute
Class C Misdemeanor	Not greater than thirty (30) days in jail or a fine not to exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00), or both, unless otherwise provided by statute

Table 2.2

Demographic information (sample = 1039; subsample = 485).

	Sample			Subsample		
	<i>n</i>	Percent	Missing Data	<i>n</i>	Percent	Missing Data
Sex			0%			10.7%
Male	674	64.9		325	75.1	
Female	365	35.1		108	24.9	
Race			0.1%			10.9%
African American	251	24.2		91	21.1	
European American	787	75.8		341	78.9	
Marital Status			2.1%			11.1%
Married	189	18.6		73	16.9	
Unmarried	828	81.4		358	83.1	

Table 2.3

Overall alleged criminal offenses.

Percentile	Total Misd (9,424)	Total Fel (1,886)	Misd C (3,399)	Misd B (1,928)	Misd A (4,097)	Fel E (649)	Fel D (519)	Fel C (481)	Fel B (164)	Fel A (71)
10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
30	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
40	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
50	4.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
60	7.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
70	10.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
80	13.00	2.00	4.00	3.00	6.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
90	21.00	5.00	7.00	5.00	10.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
<i>M</i>	9.07	1.82	3.27	1.86	3.94	0.62	0.5	0.46	0.16	0.07
<i>95% CIM</i>	7.69, 10.45	1.56, 2.07	2.13, 4.41	1.65, 2.06	3.56, 4.33	0.50, 0.75	0.38, 0.62	0.38, 0.55	0.11, 0.21	0.03, 0.10
<i>SD</i>	22.68	4.13	18.72	3.3	6.28	2.03	1.95	1.37	0.82	0.57
<i>Mdn</i>	4.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>95% CIMdn</i>	4.00, 5.00	0.00, 0.00	1.00, 1.00	0.00, 1.00	1.00, 2.00	0.00, 0.00	0.00, 0.00	0.00, 0.00	0.00, 0.00	0.00, 0.00
<i>Skew (S.E.)</i>	14.41 (0.08)	4.62 (0.08)	19.61 (0.08)	3.44 (0.08)	4.80 (0.08)	7.47 (0.08)	9.64 (0.08)	7.26 (0.08)	8.85 (0.08)	14.86 (0.08)
<i>Kurtosis (S.E.)</i>	276.17 (.15)	31.28 (0.15)	424.22 (0.15)	17.57 (0.15)	42.47 (0.15)	80.48 (0.15)	127.93 (0.15)	93.41 (0.15)	102.28 (0.15)	289.96 (0.15)
<i>IQR</i>	10	2	3	2	5	0	0	0	0	0
% with 1+	76.6	40.4	53.3	50.2	69.3	22.1	19.6	20.5	6.6	2.8
% with 0	23.4	59.6	46.7	49.8	30.7	77.9	80.4	79.5	93.4	97.2

Table 2.4

Latent class analysis models.

Number of latent classes	Number of parameters estimated	BIC	SSABIC	BLRT	BLRT <i>p</i>-value	Entropy
1	16	28116.3	28065.5	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	25	24148.8	24069.4	1974.07	<.001	0.845
3	34	21300.2	21192.3	1512.02	<.001	0.912
4	43	19884.6	19748	1452.05	<.001	0.924

Note. BIC = Bayesian information criterion; SSABIC = sample-size adjusted Bayesian information criterion; BLRT = bootstrap likelihood ratio test.

Table 2.5

Mean number of charges for the 2-class model.

	<i>Class 1 Resource</i>	<i>Class 2 Assessment</i>	<i>Class2/Class1</i>
Misdemeanor C	2.36	3.85	1.63
Misdemeanor B	0.20	2.91	14.55
Misdemeanor A	0.74	5.99	8.09
Felony E	0.07	0.98	14.00
Felony D	0.07	0.78	11.14
Felony C	0.10	0.70	7.00
Felony B	0.02	0.24	12.00
Felony A	0.03	0.09	3.00

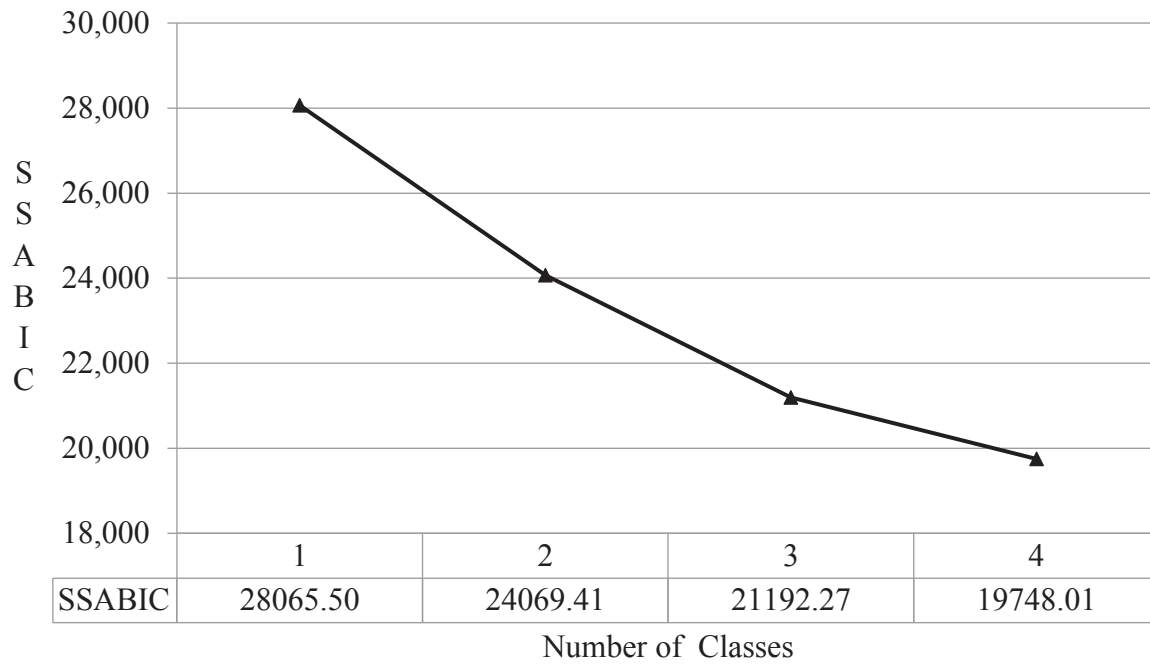


Figure 2.1
BIC plot.

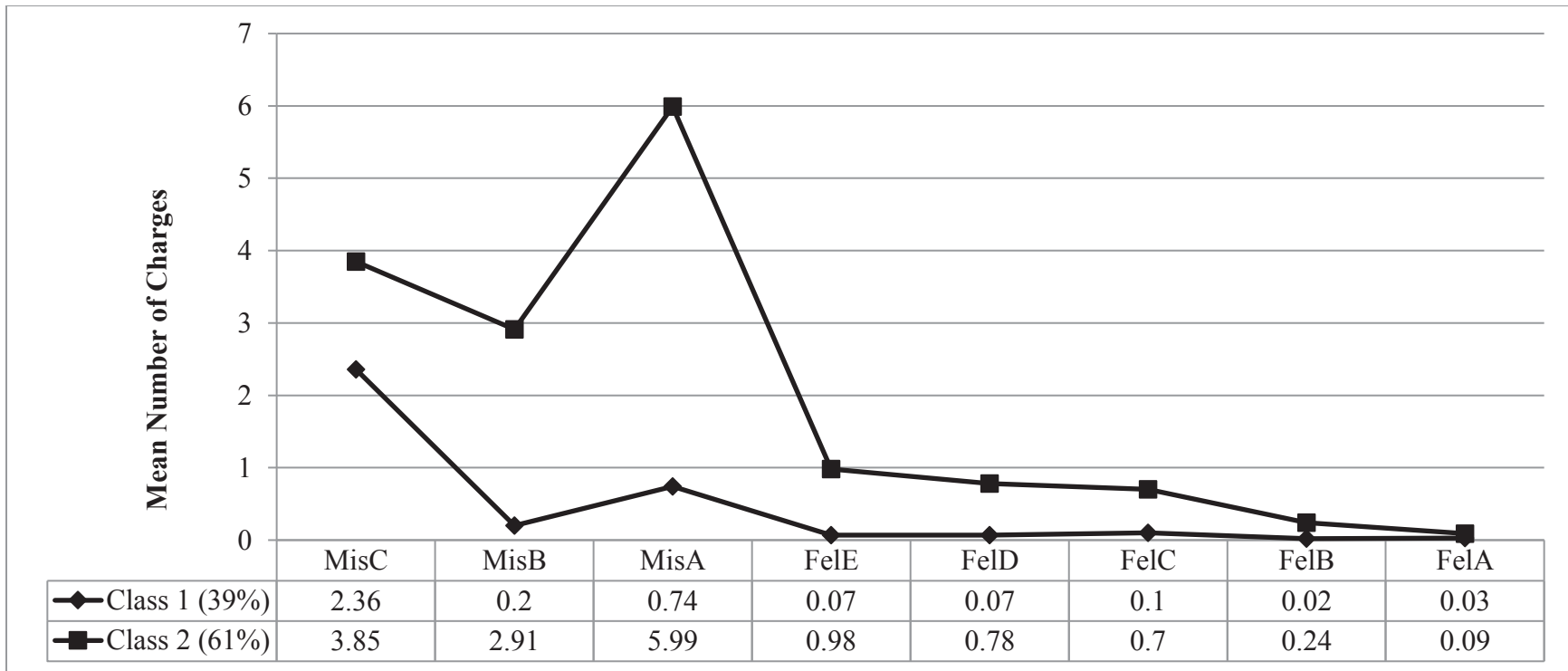


Figure 2.2
Profile-plot for 2-class model.

Chapter III:
Impact of Social Work Practice in Public Defense

This manuscript has not been published. Reviewers included my dissertation committee, Drs. John Orme (Chair), Terri Combs-Orme, Matthew Theriot, and Michelle Brown. I plan to submit this manuscript for publication upon its approval by the aforementioned committee.

Abstract

Public defenders are increasingly welcoming social workers into their practice, but there is little understanding of the impact of this relationship. Studies are limited and vary in purpose, and little consensus exists regarding relevant outcomes. This study used propensity score matching to determine the effect of social work services on public defense clients in terms of the number and severity of criminal charges when statistically controlling for pre-existing criminal history and demographic characteristics. Findings indicate that social work and non-social work clients were similar in terms of demographics and that clients in both groups were more likely to have incurred misdemeanor charges, but clients in the social work group experienced more, suggesting greater life disruption and more psychosocial concerns. When comparing clients who did and did not receive social work services, results indicated that the probability of incurring a misdemeanor charge and the number of misdemeanor charges incurred during a two-year time period were lower for clients who received social work services. The probability of incurring a felony charge was lower for the group that did not receive social work services, but there was not a statistically significant difference between groups in the number of felony charges. Implications for practice and future research are discussed.

Keywords: *public defense, criminal defense, holistic defense, indigent defense, forensic social work, propensity score analysis, propensity score matching*

Introduction

Social workers have been integrated into the public defense system since its inception in the 1960s, but a commitment to the profession was made when models of practice, such as the holistic defense model, were developed (Buchanan, in process). Holistic defense, which emerged in the 1990s, is described by the Center for Holistic Defense as:

An innovative, client-centered, and interdisciplinary model of public defense that addresses both the circumstances driving people into the justice systems as well as the devastating consequences of that court involvement. Based on individual needs, this model connects clients with criminal defense, family defense, and related civil legal representation, as well as social work support and advocacy beyond the courtroom.

Holistic representation includes, at a minimum, lawyers partnering with social service providers both in-house and in the community to address legal and psychosocial needs. (www.bronxdefenders.org, 2015)

The number of state or county public defense systems that have adopted a model of defense that relies on social workers is unknown, but the increasing number of county and state-wide social work programs in public defense systems suggest interest is growing. A sampling of states with websites identifying public defense social work services or programs include (but are not limited to): New York, Colorado, Kentucky, Maryland, Washington, California, Tennessee, Texas, Michigan, Georgia and Massachusetts. Other indications of growth include social work-oriented workshops offered at national defender conferences (NLADA, 2017) and the development of social work sub-committees and social work listservs by national defender organizations (NAPD, 2017).

Beginning steps are being taken to understand social work clients, roles, and services (Buchanan, in process). Most early evaluative work focused on justifying the existence of social workers in public defense given the relative novelty of the approach (Wald, 1972; Senna, 1975; Moriarty, 1979). Outcome evaluations have evolved, though, from simple justification (i.e., evidence that social workers do not simply duplicate probation/parole services) (Wald, 1972; Moriarty, 1979) to evaluations of monetary benefit (Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2008; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2013; Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, 2016). A review of the literature on social work practice in various models of public defense indicates, however, that little consensus exists regarding outcomes, samples are small and ill-defined, and standardized measures and statistical analysis are lacking (Buchanan, in process). The most significant limitation, in general, is the absence of comparison groups, restricting assumptions about the benefit of social work services despite positive findings in many cases. Just two studies included nonequivalent retrospective comparison groups and only one pretest-posttest randomized experiment has been conducted, though the sample was small and focused exclusively on juveniles (Buchanan, in process).

The use of comparison groups and the identification and consistent measurement of the most relevant outcomes (i.e., recidivism, life outcomes, etc.) are critical to continued work in public defense systems. This paper takes a step forward by including a comparison group and measuring the impact of social work services, controlling for previous criminal history and demographic characteristics. Differences between social work and non-social work clients served by a client-centered, holistic public defense practice are described. A description of a social services program and the services offered by social workers is provided.

Purpose

I examined the effect of social work services on the number and severity of criminal charges during a two-year period when statistically controlling for pre-existing criminal history and demographic characteristics using a quasi-experimental nonequivalent control group design (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). It was hypothesized that social work clients would have fewer and less severe criminal charges, although non-directional hypotheses were tested given that it would be important to detect differences opposite to those hypothesized.

Methods

Social Services Program

The institutional public defender's office, a county office operating within a state system, the site of this study, operated from 1990 to 2003 under a traditional legal representation model. Under the traditional model, the scope was narrow with focus solely on legal issues (Buchanan & Nooe, 2017). The search for a more comprehensive approach to problems facing clients - poverty, homelessness, mental illness, and addiction, for example - led to the adoption of a client-centered, holistic model of practice. The public defender's mission is to provide client-centered, holistic legal representation to clients, advocate for a fair and just process within the criminal justice system, increase self-sufficiency and integration of clients into the community, and positively impact the quality of life in the community.

Criminal behavior is viewed by staff as symptomatic of personal, psychological and social dynamics that have coalesced in the life of the individual (Buchanan & Nooe, 2017). It is believed that institutional defender offices who use only a traditional model of representation are shortsighted. Client-centered, holistic representations assists clients in achieving maximum self-sufficiency - however that is defined for the individual client - by addressing clients' needs for

housing, healthcare, employment, education, life skills, support systems, etc. The model seeks justice while working to reduce recidivism and empower clients (Buchanan & Nooe, 2017).

The social services program was staffed by master's level social workers throughout the study period, each with training geared toward the needs of clients struggling with substance abuse, untreated mental health concerns, homelessness, unemployment, poverty, and the life consequences that follow multiple arrests/incarcerations (Buchanan, in process). Services offered include (but not limited to) housing assistance, mental health assistance, substance abuse assistance, driver's license assistance and general resource assistance. Any number of activities fall within the services. Examples include treatment planning (i.e., assisting clients to obtain beds in treatment facilities and halfway houses or securing outpatient treatment appointments), release planning, assessments (i.e., mental health assessments, alcohol/drug assessments), mitigation (i.e., social histories and other reports, identifying expert witnesses), and supportive counseling (utilizing motivational interviewing and other appropriate techniques). Clients are referred by attorneys at any point during the course of their legal representation. Social work services often extend beyond the legal representation.

Clients

Clients are individuals who have been charged with crimes and found by a court of law to be indigent, with liberty at stake, qualifying them for public defense services. They were represented by the institutional public defender office practicing client-centered, holistic defense. The county court system appoints attorneys in private practice when legal conflicts arise. Indigent individuals who are appointed attorneys outside of the county public defender's office were not included because data for these clients were not available.

I obtained de-identified demographic, social work, and county criminal history data from the county public defender's office. All available county criminal history prior to 2013 was obtained for each client, some information dating to the 1980s. The data provided information about criminal charges (i.e., dates of alleged offenses, alleged offense descriptions, etc.), not convictions, since charges reflect the circumstances that brought each client to the criminal justice system – and subsequently to the public defender's office. Each charge represents an interaction with the criminal justice system at a point in time when social workers could intervene.

Demographic and county criminal history data were provided by public defender information technology staff from database systems used by county personnel and public defender staff. Social work interaction data were retrieved from a case management database system used exclusively by public defender staff. A group of law student interns were provided the list of clients (along with identification numbers used for this study) by public defender staff. The students recorded the number of interactions entered into the case management system by the social worker for each client. They also recorded the type of assistance requested by the attorney at the time of the referral. De-identified data were provided and identification numbers were used to match social work data to demographic and county criminal history data.

I selected two groups of clients: the legal group was made up of individuals who received client-centered legal representation; the social work group received client-centered, holistic representation (inclusion of social work services).

Legal Clients. The legal group is comprised of individuals who were charged with a crime and found by a court of law to be indigent, with liberty at stake, qualifying them for public

defense services. They were represented by public defenders during fiscal year 2013 (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013) (FY13).

Social Work Clients. I obtained data for all clients referred by public defenders for social work services during FY13. Clients from this time period were chosen so that two years' post-social work services county criminal history could be obtained.

This group is comprised of individuals who were referred by public defenders for a variety of reasons: client need (i.e., homelessness), legal need (i.e., alternative sentencing plans, treatment planning, court-ordered assessment), client request (i.e., help accessing resources or services) and attorney request (i.e., help understanding clients' behavior and needs). Referrals varied tremendously, but preliminary data suggest substance abuse issues and mental health issues were predominant. There were many reasons a client may not have been referred for social work services - the client was already connected to needed resources or services, the client declined services, the attorney didn't consider social work services relevant or useful, and/or the client had a support system in place - all of which are assumptions. No data were available allowing determination of why some clients were referred and others were not.

Variables

Demographic Variables. The demographic data I obtained included sex (male, female), race (Native American, African American, European American, Hispanic, Indian, other), marital status (divorced, single, married, widowed) and date of birth. Just 2.6% of the overall sample were other than African American or European American, so I excluded those clients. Marital status was dichotomized into married and unmarried. Marriage is associated with lower recidivism for both men and women (Kendler, Lönn, Sundquist, & Sundquist, 2017), so I was interested solely in whether the clients were married.

Criminal Charge Variables. I obtained dates, types, descriptions and state charge classes (Felony A, B, C, D, E, M or Misdemeanor A, B, C) for the overall sample for each alleged offense. State charge classes distinguish alleged offenses based on the seriousness of the alleged crime and the potential sentence at conviction. Charge classes range from low-level misdemeanors to First Degree Murder (Table 3.1). State charge classes were used to understand the seriousness of each alleged offense and to differentiate among alleged offenses.

Social Work Interaction Variables. I documented the number of social work interactions for each social work client. This included every interaction a social work staff member had with or on behalf of the client. Interactions such as phone calls to secure treatment bed dates were included since these interactions directly affected and benefited the client (i.e., instances when a client needed halfway house or treatment beds scheduled to be released from custody).

The lack of information in studies of social work in public defense regarding use of trained social workers creates difficulty in attributing outcomes to social work intervention (Buchanan, in process). For this study, interactions occurred by degreed social work staff: licensed master's-level social workers, two of whom were licensed clinical social workers. Social work staff interacted with and on behalf of clients in any manner appropriate within the scope of their practice.

Data Analysis

First, I examined descriptive statistics and assessed differences between groups. Next, I used propensity score analysis (PSA) to explore whether legal and social work clients differed in terms of criminal charges when statistically controlling for pre-existing criminal history and demographic characteristics.

PSA is a class of statistical methods developed for estimating treatment effects when randomized trials are not possible (Guo & Fraser, 2015). Propensity scores, a conditional probability ranging from zero to one and quantifying the likelihood of assignment to the treatment condition given certain baseline covariates, are determined (Thoemmes & Kim, 2011), typically using logistic regression, to compare outcomes between comparable treated and untreated subjects, so the only “effect” on the outcome is the intervention received (Zakrisson, Austin & McCredie, 2017). The goal is to balance treatment and control groups by measuring all covariates that may induce confounding, simulating random assignment (Zakrisson, et. al, 2017). I estimated propensity scores using client type (legal and social work) as the outcome variable and race, sex, marital status, age, and criminal history (total number of felony charges prior to FY13 and total number of misdemeanor charges prior to FY13) as confounder variables. I used Stata 15 (StataCorp LLC, 1985-2017) for my PSA, employing listwise deletion since I had a small amount of missing data (2.4%).

The PSA method I chose was propensity score matching, which is the recommended method for pairing control and treated participants to attempt to provide an unbiased estimation of the treatment effect (Zakrisson, et.al, 2017). I specifically chose the “nearest neighbor” (also known as “greedy matching”) technique with 1:1 pair matching with replacement, allowing the same controls to be used repeatedly. Treatment participants were matched on propensity scores to the nearest control participants (randomly if more than one control is closest, with no difference in minimum or maximum distance specified) (Zakrisson, et.al, 2017).

Results

To better understand public defense clients and the impact of social work services within public defense, results describe: (1) demographic characteristics for legal and social work clients;

(2) criminal charges as categorized by charge classes for both groups; (3) social work interactions; (4) differences in alleged offending.

Demographic Characteristics

Legal Clients. I obtained a total of 1,061 randomly selected legal cases from FY13 to match the number of social work cases initiated during the same time period (Table 3.2). It is not uncommon for clients to experience multiple legal cases during any given time period, but unique clients were of interest, not cases. A total of 886 unique clients remained once this was taken into account. Approximately two-thirds were male, three-fourths were European-American, and over three-fourths were not married. The typical client was in his or her early 30s, but one-fourth were about 24 years old or younger and about one-fourth were 42 years old or older ($M = 33.95$, $Mdn = 31.41$, $SD = 11.89$, $IQR = 24.38$ to 41.74).

Social Work Clients. A total of 1,039 social work clients were included in the study (Table 3.2). Approximately two-thirds were male, three-fourths were European-American, and over three-fourths were not married. The typical client was in his or her early 30s, but one-fourth were about 25 years old or younger and about one-fourth were 42 years old or older ($M = 34.12$, $Mdn = 32.08$, $SD = 11.10$, $IQR = 25.05$ to 42.05).

Binary logistic regression analyses indicated there was not a statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of sex (0 = male, 1 = female) ($OR = 1.12$, 95% CI [0.92, 1.36], $p = 0.23$, male = 47% legal group, 53% social work group, $n = 1924$), race (0 = African American, 1 = European American) ($OR = 0.98$, 95% CI [0.80, 1.21], $p = 0.87$, European American = 46% legal group, 54% social work group, $n = 1922$), or marital status (0 = unmarried, 1 = married) ($OR = 0.87$, 95% CI [0.69, 1.10], $p = 0.24$, unmarried = 45% legal

group, 55% social work group, $n = 1880$). Also, there was not a statistically significant difference in mean age ($t = -.333, p = .739, n = 1925$).

Statistically significant differences did emerge, however, regarding criminal charges. Clients charged with misdemeanor offenses were more likely to be in the social work group ($OR = 1.01, 95\% CI [1.00, 1.02], p = 0.02, n = 1925$), specifically, clients charged with Misdemeanor B ($OR = 1.04, 95\% CI [1.01, 1.07], p = 0.02, n = 1925$) and Misdemeanor A offenses ($OR = 1.02, 95\% CI [1.00, 1.04], p = 0.02, n = 1925$) (Table 3.3).

PreFY13 Criminal Charges

I considered all county criminal history to determine the number of preFY13 charges incurred for each group.

Legal Clients. A total of 67.7% of the legal clients incurred one or more misdemeanor charges, whereas 32.3% had no misdemeanor charges and had only incurred felony charges (Table 3.4). In contrast to misdemeanor charges, 34.5% of the legal clients had incurred one or more felony charges, whereas 65.5% had no felony charges and had only incurred misdemeanor charges. Clients were more likely to have incurred misdemeanor charges and more likely to have more of them.

The number of felony charges decreased as the seriousness of the charge class increased: 507 Felony E charges (lowest-level felony) were reported compared to just 34 Felony A charges (highest-level felony excluding First Degree Murder). A total of 21.4% of the legal clients had one or more Felony E charges. Only 1.6% had incurred one or more Felony A charges. The same does not apply for misdemeanor charges. A higher number of misdemeanor charges was reported for the highest-level charge class (Misdemeanor A). In their respective categories, more

Misdemeanor A (highest-level misdemeanor) and Felony E (lowest-level felony) charges were reported.

Social Work Clients. A total of 76.6% of social work clients incurred one or more misdemeanor charges prior to FY13, whereas 23.4% had no misdemeanor charges and had only incurred felony charges (Table 3.5). In contrast to misdemeanor charges, 40.4% of clients had incurred one or more felony, whereas 59.6% had no felony charges and had only incurred misdemeanor charges. Clients in the social work group were also more likely to have incurred misdemeanor charges and more likely to have more of them.

Number of felony charges decreased as the seriousness of the charge class increased for the social work group as well: 649 Felony E charges (lowest-level felony) were reported compared to just 71 Felony A charges (highest-level felony excluding First Degree Murder). A total of 22.1% of the clients had one or more Felony E charges. Only 2.8% incurred one or more Felony A charges. The same does not apply for misdemeanor charges. A higher number of misdemeanor charges was reported for the highest-level charge class (Misdemeanor A). Percentages do not consistently decrease with each charge class. In their respective categories, more Misdemeanor A (highest-level misdemeanor) and Felony E (lowest-level felony) charges were reported.

Social Work Interaction

1,537 requests for assistance were made by attorneys in FY13 ($n = 1021$, 18 missing data) (Table 3.6). I condensed the requests into five categories: driver's license assistance (all requests related to assistance obtaining a valid driver's license), resource assistance (all requests related to assistance with employment or other government assisted income/benefits, all requests related to food, clothing, or other community resources and agencies), housing assistance (all

requests related to housing, including assistance accessing halfway houses and group homes), mental health assistance (all requests related to mental health counseling, assessments and/or treatment planning), and substance abuse assistance (all requests related to substance abuse counseling, assessments and/or treatment planning). Driver's license assistance was requested 250 times on behalf of 24.2% of the clients. Resource assistance was requested 322 times on behalf of 31% of the clients. Housing assistance was requested 214 times on behalf of 21% of the clients. Mental health assistance was requested 309 times on behalf of 30% of the clients. Substance abuse assistance was requested 442 times on behalf of 43% of the clients.

Some clients had requests for multiple types of assistance, though requests for one and two types of assistance were most common: 636 clients (61.2%) had requests for one type of assistance, 281 clients (27%) had requests for two types of assistance, and 104 clients (10.4%) had requests for three or more types of assistance.

Social workers interacted with and/or on behalf of clients ($n = 953$, 86 missing data) from one to 173 times from FY13 to FY15. A total of 9,531 interactions were recorded ($M = 10.00$, $SD = 14.46$, $Mdn = 5.00$, $IQR = 8$ to 10) (Table 3.6).

Differences in Alleged Offending

Propensity scores must overlap for the groups to be matched successfully. A sufficient amount of overlap was achieved (Figure 3.1).

If clients had been randomly assigned to receive social work services or not we would expect the two groups to be similar on all possible covariates. PSA attempts to approximate this and because it is an approximation it is important to compare covariates before and after propensity score matching. I did this by comparing standardized mean differences. A cutoff of <0.1 (indicating a negligible difference in covariates between groups) was used (Zakrisson, et.al,

2017). After matching, the standardized mean difference between covariates was trivial, suggesting balance between covariates (Table 3.7).

Two sets of models were estimated: 1) using total number of post-FY13 charges as the outcomes (Table 3.8), and 2) one using dichotomized charges (0 = did not incur the charge, 1 = incurred the charge) as the outcomes (Table 3.9).

The social work group incurred fewer misdemeanor charges during the two year period and more specifically, fewer Misdemeanor A (highest level misdemeanor) charges. There were no statistically significant differences between the groups in the number of felony charges.

When charges were dichotomized, the probability of incurring a misdemeanor and, specifically a Misdemeanor A charge, remained lower for the social work group than the legal group. However, the probability of incurring a felony charge was lower for the legal group.

Discussion

Social workers have been integrated into the public defense system since its inception in the 1960s, but we continue to know little about best practice approaches to meet needs in the public defense setting. Prior evaluations and studies indicate that the relationship between social work and the law has improved and that both professionals and clients find value in social work intervention (Buchanan, in process), but what impact do social workers have? For whom? Developing an understanding of public defense clients, social work interaction within the public defense setting, and ways client outcomes differ is critical in understanding the impact social workers have in public defense.

Demographically, the two groups of clients included in this study were similar. There were no statistically significant differences between the groups in terms of sex, race, marital status or age. The typical client – across groups – was European American, male, unmarried, and

in his early 30s. To put them into context, European Americans made up 85.6% of the county population, while African Americans made up 8.8% (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Men made up 48.6 of the population. The overall median age for men was 35.7. Marital status information was not available for the county.

Social work clients incurred more PreFY13 charges. The average number of misdemeanors incurred by social work clients was quite a bit higher than the average number of felonies. Legal clients were similar, though the average number of charges for both misdemeanors and felonies was lower. Clients in both groups were more likely to have incurred misdemeanor charges, but clients in the social work group clearly experienced more, suggesting they likely experienced greater life disruption and more psychosocial concerns.

Clients charged with misdemeanor offenses were statistically significantly more likely to be in the social work group, especially clients charged with Misdemeanor B and Misdemeanor A (highest-level misdemeanor) offenses, both of which are common for individuals struggling with substance abuse, homelessness, unemployment, and untreated mental health concerns. Examples of Misdemeanor A charges (of which there is the greatest number), include theft (up to \$500), shoplifting (up to \$500), simple possession, possession of drug paraphernalia, driving under the influence, driving with privileges suspended or revoked, vandalism, domestic assault, and prostitution. The time spent incarcerated is likely lower for misdemeanor offenses as compared to felony offenses, but the difficulty in maintaining community stability when cycling in and out of incarceration should not be underestimated, especially as it pertains to housing (for example, unmarried men often do not meet criteria for housing assistance) and employment.

Social workers interacted with or on behalf of clients an average of ten times post-referral. They provided multiple types of assistance, but substance abuse assistance was the most

common (requested for 43% of clients). Resource and mental health assistance weren't far behind (requested for 31% and 30% of clients), all of which align with the criminal charges found to be common for this group.

The probability of incurring a misdemeanor charge and the number of misdemeanor charges incurred during a two-year time period were lower for clients who received social work services. The probability of incurring a felony charge was lower for the legal group, but there was not a statistically significant difference between groups in the number of felony charges.

The fact that the probability of incurring a felony charge was lower for the legal group when charges were dichotomized can potentially be explained if we assume that clients with felony charges spent a greater portion of time incarcerated awaiting case resolution and/or received prison sentences as a result of their felony charges. They likely had less opportunity to incur charges than clients who experienced misdemeanor charges and spent less time incarcerated, in general, though this does not explain why this occurred with just one group.

In sum, the typical client – regardless of group – was a European American, unmarried male in his 30s with a higher number of misdemeanor charges prior to FY13 than felony charges. The primary difference between groups is that clients with misdemeanor charges had a statistically significantly higher likelihood of being in the social work group, especially those with Misdemeanor A charges. For those clients, social workers interacted with them (or on their behalf) an average of ten times, suggesting the development of ongoing relationships. They addressed multiple psychosocial concerns, with substance abuse assistance being the most commonly requested service. Irrespective of the model estimated, the social work clients had a lower probability of incurring a new misdemeanor charge, specifically a lower probability of incurring new Misdemeanor A charges.

Limitations

This study takes a beginning step at comparing groups of public defense clients to determine the impact of social work services. Many limitations exist and this study serves as starting point for future work. First, the reliability of the demographic and criminal history data is unknown. Data were collected by various agency staff and entered into two different database systems for administrative purposes and may be incomplete or inaccurate. Demographic data were provided by both systems, however, and no discrepancies were noted when compared. Social work interaction data were checked by public defender staff for accuracy. It is unlikely that charge class data were inaccurate since multiple checks for accuracy would have occurred throughout the client's time in the criminal justice system (attorneys would have verified accuracy, accuracy would have been determined by court staff at disposition, etc.). A random check of the data for reliability was not possible. Second, criminal history information was available for one specific county, though I am aware that clients often incur criminal charges and convictions in other counties and states. A more comprehensive summary of each client's criminal history would have been helpful. Third, social work referral information was limited (for example, were they based on legal need, personal need, both, referred by attorney, self-referral?). I was unable to differentiate between social work interactions (interactions directly with the client, interactions on behalf of the client) and I was unable to determine specific services that were offered to clients. Finally, and most importantly, while I introduced a comparison group, PSA is not a substitute for random assignment. The limited number of covariates used in this study were variables available in the data. Important confounding variables may have been omitted. Examples of covariates of interest to be included in future studies to ensure results are not attributable to selection bias include income, education,

employment history, interactions with outside social services agencies, history of mental health and/or substance abuse treatment attempts, and time served in custody. Additionally, variables describing incarceration(s) during the two-year study period were omitted. Some clients may have been incarcerated during the entire two-year study period, others may have spent as little as one or two nights incarcerated. Variables accounting for incarceration(s) during the study period should be included in future studies when attempting to equate groups.

Conclusion

Social work has made great strides in being integrated into the public defense setting, with the relationship shifting over time from antagonistic and uneasy (Sloane, 1967) to positive and receptive (Steinberg, 2013; Michigan State Appellate Defender's Office, 2014). Social work is a valued partner and an integral component of various models of defense (Steinberg, 2013; Travis County Justice Planning, 2016). The impact of social work services on both public defense clients and the overall public defense system is generally unknown, though.

Beginning steps to understand public defense clients and the differences between groups of clients have been taken with this study, but questions remain. Clients receiving social work services had more overall misdemeanor charges, but a lower probability of incurring new misdemeanor charges and incurred fewer misdemeanor charges during the two-year time period. How do they differ in terms of life circumstances that could not be captured (for example, employment, education, interactions with other agencies), though? Were social workers providing specific services based on the requested assistance type? If so, what were the services and what had the most impact? Do clients who have predominantly incurred misdemeanor charges generally receive different services/assistance than clients who have predominantly incurred felony charges? Does the lower probability to incur misdemeanor charges remain over

time? The ongoing development of potential methods of measuring the impact of social work services is critical as the social work profession continues to integrate into public defense settings.

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set of reporting guidelines. *European Journal of Trauma and Emergency Surgery*, 1-11.

Chapter III Appendix: Tables and Figures

Table 3.1
Charge classes.

Charge Class	Potential Sentence(s)
First Degree Murder	Life with parole, life without parole, death
Class A Felony	Not less than fifteen (15) nor more than sixty (60) years in prison. In addition, the jury may assess a fine not to exceed fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000), unless otherwise provided by statute
Class B Felony	Not less than eight (8) nor more than thirty (30) years in prison. In addition, the jury may assess a fine not to exceed twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000), unless otherwise provided by statute
Class C Felony	Not less than three (3) years nor more than fifteen (15) years in prison. In addition, the jury may assess a fine not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), unless otherwise provided by statute
Class D Felony	Not less than two (2) years nor more than twelve (12) years in prison. In addition, the jury may assess a fine not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000), unless otherwise provided by statute
Class E Felony	Not less than one (1) year nor more than six (6) years in prison. In addition, the jury may assess a fine not to exceed three thousand dollars (\$3,000), unless otherwise provided by statute
Class A Misdemeanor	Not greater than eleven (11) months twenty-nine (29) days in jail or a fine not to exceed two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500), or both, unless otherwise provided by statute
Class B Misdemeanor	Not greater than six (6) months in jail or a fine not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500), or both, unless otherwise provided by statute
Class C Misdemeanor	Not greater than thirty (30) days in jail or a fine not to exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00), or both, unless otherwise provided by statute

Table 3.2
Demographic information.

	Legal (<i>n</i> = 886)			Social Work (<i>n</i> = 1039)		
	<i>n</i>	Percent	Missing Data	<i>n</i>	Percent	Missing Data
Sex			0.11%			0%
Male	597	67.5		674	64.9	
Female	288	32.5		365	35.1	
Race			0.23%			0.10%
African American	211	23.9		251	24.2	
European American	673	76.1		787	75.8	
Marital Status			2.60%			2.12%
Married	179	20.7		189	18.6	
Unmarried	684	79.3		828	81.4	

Table 3.3

Differences between groups.

	<i>n</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	χ^2	<i>p</i>
Sex	1924	1.12	0.92, 1.36	1.43	0.23
Race	1922	0.98	0.80, 1.21	0.03	0.87
Marital Status	1880	0.87	0.69, 1.10	1.38	0.24
Age	1925	1.00	0.99, 1.01	0.11	0.74
Total Misd	1925	1.01	1.00, 1.02	5.11	0.02
Total Fel	1925	1.01	0.99, 1.04	1.04	0.31
Misd C	1925	1.01	1.00, 1.02	1.66	0.20
Misd B	1925	1.04	1.01, 1.07	5.80	0.02
Misd A	1925	1.02	1.00, 1.04	5.90	0.02
Fel E	1925	1.02	0.97, 1.07	0.40	0.53
Fel D	1925	1.03	0.97, 1.08	0.95	0.33
Fel C	1925	1.01	0.95, 1.07	0.03	0.85
Fel B	1925	1.02	0.92, 1.14	0.16	0.69
Fel A	1925	1.14	0.92, 1.40	1.42	0.23

Table 3.4

PreFY13 charges: legal clients.

Percentile	Total Misd (6,266)	Total Fel (1,438)	Misd C (2,022)	Misd B (1,329)	Misd A (2,915)	Fel E (507)	Fel D (372)	Fel C (399)	Fel B (126)	Fel A (34)
10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
40	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
50	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
60	5.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
70	7.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
80	11.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	5.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
90	19.00	5.00	6.00	5.00	9.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
<i>M</i>	7.07	1.62	2.28	1.5	3.29	0.57	0.42	0.45	0.14	0.04
<i>95% CI M</i>	6.29, 7.93	1.38, 1.88	1.86, 2.83	1.29, 1.71	2.97, 3.64	0.48, 0.68	0.32, 0.52	0.35, 0.57	0.09, 0.20	0.01, 0.07
<i>SD</i>	12.22	4.00	7.48	3.07	5.17	1.54	1.53	1.66	0.91	0.47
<i>Mdn</i>	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>95% CI Mdn</i>	2.00, 3.00	0.00, 0.00	0.00, 0.00	0.00, 0.00	1.00, 2.00	0.00, 0.00	0.00, 0.00	0.00, 0.00	0.00, 0.00	0.00, 0.00
<i>Skew (S.E.)</i>	4.60 (0.08)	5.06 (0.08)	13.47 (0.08)	3.53 (0.08)	2.77 (0.08)	4.07 (0.08)	7.29 (0.08)	10.00 (0.08)	10.56 (0.08)	20.47 (0.08)
<i>Kurtosis (S.E.)</i>	37.90 (.16)	38.35 (0.16)	253.95 (0.16)	15.67 (0.16)	9.77 (0.16)	20.51 (0.16)	76.88 (0.16)	151.55 (0.16)	142.17 (0.16)	490.99 (0.16)
<i>IQR</i>	9	1	3	2	4	0	0	0	0	0
<i>% with 1+</i>	67.7	34.5	43.8	40.6	61.6	21.4	15.7	17.9	5	1.6
<i>% with 0</i>	32.3	65.5	56.2	59.4	38.4	78.6	84.3	82.1	95.0	98.4

Table 3.5
PreFY13 charges: social work clients.

Percentile	Total Misd (9,424)	Total Fel (1,886)	Misd C (3,399)	Misd B (1,928)	Misd A (4,097)	Fel E (649)	Fel D (519)	Fel C (481)	Fel B (164)	Fel A (71)
10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
30	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
40	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
50	4.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
60	7.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
70	10.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
80	13.00	2.00	4.00	3.00	6.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
90	21.00	5.00	7.00	5.00	10.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
<i>M</i>	9.07	1.82	3.27	1.86	3.94	0.62	0.5	0.46	0.16	0.07
<i>95% CI M</i>	7.69, 10.45	1.56, 2.07	2.13, 4.41	1.65, 2.06	3.56, 4.33	0.50, 0.75	0.38, 0.62	0.38, 0.55	0.11, 0.21	0.03, 0.10
<i>SD</i>	22.68	4.13	18.72	3.3	6.28	2.03	1.95	1.37	0.82	0.57
<i>Mdn</i>	4.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>95% CI Mdn</i>	4.00, 5.00	0.00, 0.00	1.00, 1.00	0.00, 1.00	1.00, 2.00	0.00, 0.00	0.00, 0.00	0.00, 0.00	0.00, 0.00	0.00, 0.00
<i>Skew (S.E.)</i>	14.41 (0.08)	4.62 (0.08)	19.61 (0.08)	3.44 (0.08)	4.80 (0.08)	7.47 (0.08)	9.64 (0.08)	7.26 (0.08)	8.85 (0.08)	14.86 (0.08)
<i>Kurtosis (S.E.)</i>	276.17 (.15)	31.28 (0.15)	424.22 (0.15)	17.57 (0.15)	42.47 (0.15)	80.48 (0.15)	127.93 (0.15)	93.41 (0.15)	102.28 (0.15)	289.96 (0.15)
<i>IQR</i>	10	2	3	2	5	0	0	0	0	0
% with 1+	76.6	40.4	53.3	50.2	69.3	22.1	19.6	20.5	6.6	2.8
% with 0	23.4	59.6	46.7	49.8	30.7	77.9	80.4	79.5	93.4	97.2

Table 3.6

Social work assistance (n = 1,021) & interactions (n = 953).

Percentile	Total Interactions (9,531)	Total Assistance Requests (1,537)
10	1.00	1.00
20	2.00	1.00
30	3.00	1.00
40	4.00	1.00
50	5.00	1.00
60	7.00	1.00
70	9.00	2.00
80	14.00	2.00
90	24.00	3.00
<i>M</i>	10.00	1.48
<i>95% CI M</i>	9.08, 10.92	1.43, 1.53
<i>SD</i>	14.46	0.77
<i>Mdn</i>	5.00	1.00
<i>95% CI Mdn</i>	5.00, 5.00	0.00, 1.00
<i>Skew (S.E.)</i>	4.15 (0.08)	1.41 (0.08)
<i>Kurtosis (S.E.)</i>	27.44 (0.16)	2.31 (0.15)
<i>IQR</i>	9	1
% with 1+	100.0	100.0
% with 0	0.0	0.0

Table 3.7

Standardized mean differences.

	Before Matching	After Matching
Race	-0.01,	-0.04
Age	0.02,	-0.04
Marital Status	-0.05,	-0.02
Felony	0.04,	0.00
Misdemeanor	0.11,	0.02

Table 3.8

Treatment effect: sum of post-FY13 charges.

	Total Misd	Total Fel	Misd C	Misd B	Misd A	Fel E	Fel D	Fel C	Fel B	Fel A
<i>Treatment Effect</i>	-0.81	-0.002	-0.42	-0.04	-0.36	-0.001	-0.108	-0.043	0.048	-0.005
<i>z</i>	-2.03	-0.14	-1.23	-0.59	-2.18	-0.01	-1.38	-0.62	1.1	-0.24
<i>p value</i>	0.042	0.888	0.22	0.56	0.029	0.994	0.167	0.539	0.273	0.81
<i>95% CI</i>	-1.60, -.03	-.03, .03	-1.08, .25	.16, .08	-.68, -.04	-.26, .26	-.26, .04	-.18, .09	-.04, .14	-.05, .04
<i>Mean, SD: Treatment</i>	4.60, 7.36	1.38, 2.94	1.81, 5.85	0.77, 1.25	2.01, 2.5	0.50, 1.77	0.30, 0.94	0.38, 1.10	0.16, 1.03	0.04, 0.40
<i>Mean, SD: Control</i>	5.41, 10.65	1.50, 3.83	2.22, 9.44	0.81, 1.24	2.37, 3.36	0.50, 1.38	0.41, 1.56	0.43, 1.60	0.11, 0.58	0.04, 0.46

Table 3.9

Treatment effect: dichotomized post-FY13 charges.

	Total Misd	Total Fel	Misd C	Misd B	Misd A	Fel E	Fel D	Fel C	Fel B	Fel A
<i>Treatment Effect</i>	-0.038	0.079	-0.040	-0.019	-0.069	0.028	0.011	0.022	-0.007	0.002
<i>z</i>	-2.03	2.94	-1.45	-0.73	-2.85	1.20	0.56	1.01	-0.59	0.36
<i>p value</i>	0.042	0.003	0.148	0.463	0.004	0.229	0.578	0.312	0.556	0.72
<i>95% CI</i>	-0.07, -0.00	0.03, 0.13	-0.09, 0.01	-0.07, 0.03	-0.12, -0.02	0.02, 0.07	0.03, 0.05	-0.02, 0.06	-0.03, 0.02	-0.01, 0.02
<i>Mean, SD: Treatment</i>	0.85, 0.36	0.45, 0.50	0.49, 0.50	0.42, 0.49	0.70, 0.46	0.25, 0.43	0.16, 0.37	0.20, 0.40	0.05, 0.22	0.02, 0.14
<i>Mean, SD: Control</i>	0.88, 0.32	0.37, 0.48	0.53, 0.50	0.44, 0.50	0.76, 0.42	0.22, 0.41	0.15, 0.36	0.18, 0.38	0.06, 0.24	0.02, 0.13

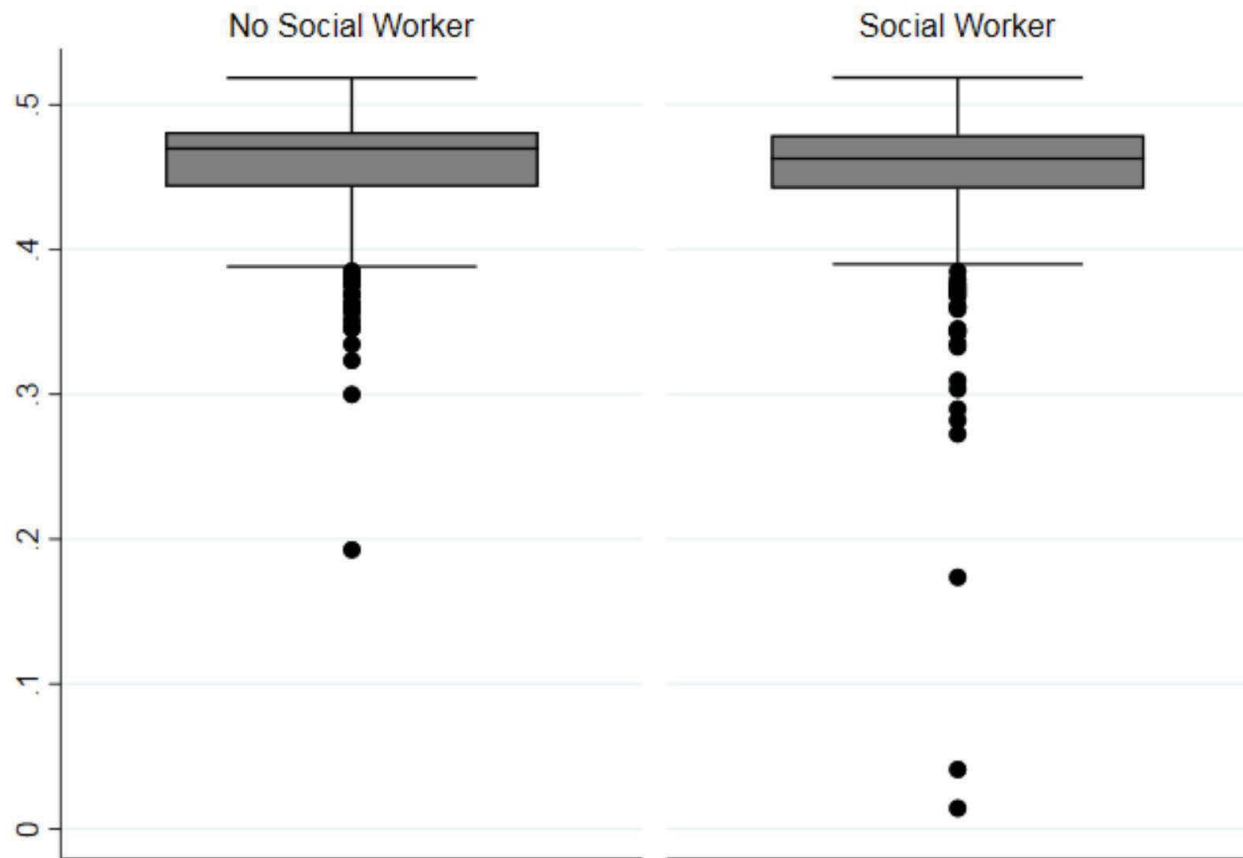


Figure 3.1
Overlap.

Conclusion

My dissertation takes a step forward in addressing some of the methodological and substantive limitations in previous research. Chapter one provided a review of the literature that reflects beginning steps at understanding roles, services, and practice outcomes. I described the lack of consistency across studies given varying evaluative purposes. I provided detail about inadequate samples and the lack of comparison groups, standardized measures and statistical analyses. I also discussed the lack of information about social work training, credentials, licensure, experience, and evidence-based practice. It's clear that cost savings are being attributed to social work programs and services and that social work intervention is desired. A better understanding of the client population is needed, though, to understand how to tailor services and target interventions.

Chapter two took steps to address the need for a better understanding of client populations and supported the argument that an understanding of the population, their needs, and their barriers to community stability is necessary to understanding potential services and targeted interventions that can be offered. A clear picture emerged of the typical social work client in one public defense setting. Two groups emerged when I explored whether there are distinct types of clients served by the social workers: 1) the smaller group, comprised of clients who have predominantly incurred low-level misdemeanor charges, and 2) the larger group, comprised of clients who have also incurred a high number of low-level misdemeanors, but have incurred a higher number of charges, in general, and are more likely to have incurred more serious charges. The two groups aligned with what had been observed at the public defender's office prior to data analysis, which led to a staffing structure conducive to the needs of these two distinct populations and enabled social workers to best utilize their skills to meet the needs of the clients

in the most time-efficient manner. I argued that next steps include a better understanding of whether social work and non-social work clients and client outcomes differ.

Chapter three addressed the need for a better understanding of client differences by introducing a comparison group and measuring the impact of social work services. Differences between social work and non-social work clients served by a client-centered, holistic public defense practice were described. A description of a social services program and the services offered by social workers was provided. Propensity score findings indicated that social work and non-social work clients were similar in terms of demographics. Clients in both groups were more likely to have incurred misdemeanor charges, but clients in the social work group experienced more, suggesting greater life disruption and more psychosocial concerns. The primary difference between groups is that clients with misdemeanor charges had a higher likelihood of being in the social work group, but a lower probability of incurring a new misdemeanor charge.

My dissertation takes a step forward in understanding social work practice in public defense by assessing the current body of knowledge, describing a population of clients, and introducing a comparison group - but questions remain. As I argued in chapter three, the ongoing development of potential methods of measuring the impact of social work services is critical as social work continues to integrate into public defense settings. Additionally, though, a better understanding of the scope of the practice is needed. How many public defense systems have added social workers to their practices? Where? What models are being used? What services are offered? Why?

The public defense system made a commitment to social work when it developed models of practice that rely on social work intervention, but social work has been slow to respond. Practice standards based on clear, measurable outcomes are needed. Steps should continue to be

taken to better understand the role of social work in the public defense setting, the potential services that can be offered, and the impact those services have on the client, the legal team, and the community.

Appendix



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THE KNOX COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER'S COMMUNITY LAW OFFICE

April 20, 2016

Sarah Buchanan, MSW, LCSW
3000 Gibbs Drive, Knoxville, TN 37918

Dear Ms. Buchanan,

Please accept this letter as confirmation of the Knox County Public Defender's Community Law Office's (CLO) intent to participate in your study, "Impact of Social Work Services Within the Holistic Defense Model". The CLO will find analysis of the model very useful.

The data furnished to you will be de-identified by CLO staff and provided to you in an excel file. The file will not contain client identifying information. An identification number separate from the case or IDN assigned by the county will be created by our office. This procedure will allow us to provide basic demographic information (date of birth, sex, race, and marital status) and recidivism information while maintaining the confidentiality that we require.

Thank you for addressing this important issue in the criminal justice system. Do not hesitate to call if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger M. Nooe", is written over a light yellow rectangular background.

Roger M. Nooe, Ph.D.
Director of Social Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Stephens", is written over a light yellow rectangular background.

Mark Stephens

May 24, 2017

Sarah Beck Buchanan,
UTK - College of Social Work - College of Social Work

Re: UTK IRB-16-03038-XP

Study Title: Impact of Social Work Services Within the Holistic Defense

Model Dear Sarah Beck Buchanan:

The UTK Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed your application to **continue** your previously approved project, referenced above. It has determined that your application is eligible for **expedited** review under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1). The IRB reviewed your renewal application and determined that it does comply with proper consideration for the rights and welfare of human subjects and the regulatory requirements for the protection of human subjects.

Therefore, this letter constitutes approval of your renewal application (closed to enrollment-data analysis only). Approval of this study will be valid from May 24, 2017 to May 25, 2018.

Any revisions in the approved application must also be submitted to and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. In addition, you are responsible for reporting any unanticipated serious adverse events or other problems involving risks to subject or others in the manner required by the local IRB policy.

Finally, **re-approval** of your project is required by the IRB in accord with the conditions specified above. You may not continue the research study beyond the time or other limits specified unless you obtain prior written approval of the IRB.

Sincerely,



Colleen P. Gilrane, Ph.D.
Chair

Vita

Sarah Buchanan graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Social Work from the University of Tennessee in 2010. She then entered an advanced standing program and completed her Master of Social Work at the University of Michigan in 2011. She completed field placements at the State of Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole, the Knox County Public Defender's Community Law Office (CLO), and the State of Michigan Center for Forensic Psychiatry. Sarah returned to East Tennessee and worked as a clinical therapist in community mental health in a rural Appalachian community before joining the CLO staff as a forensic social worker in 2012. She completed requirements for clinical licensure in 2014 and is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in the State of Tennessee. Sarah returned to the University of Tennessee in 2014 to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Social Work. She returned to the CLO as Director of Social Services in July 2016 and graduated with her PhD in Social Work in December 2017.