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PARENT-CHILD RELATIONS AND OFFENDING DURING YOUNG ADULTHOOD

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ABSTRACT

There is a long tradition of studying the association between parent-child relations and adolescent delinquency. However, the association between parent-child relations and criminal offending during young adulthood is less well understood. Although the developmental tasks of young adulthood tend to focus on intimate relationships, employment, and family formation, the parent-child bond persists over the life course and likely continues to inform and shape behavior beyond adolescence. Using data from the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS),we investigate the influence of parental involvement on patterns of offending among respondents interviewed first as adolescents and later as young adults is examined. The influence of both early and later in the life course parenting factors such as support, monitoring and conflict on young adults' criminal are examined. Results show that early monitoring and ongoing parental support are associated with lower offending in young adulthood. These effects persist net of peer influence and prior delinquency. This suggests the importance of examining multiple ways in which parental resources and support influence early adult behavior and well-being.

INTRODUCTION

Criminologists interested in adolescent delinquency (e.g., Moffitt, 1993; Warr, 2007), and adult criminality (e.g., Laub and Sampson, 2003) have frequently examined the importance of family relationships. Research on delinquency has assessed the role of parents during early childhood development and parental monitoring during the more turbulent adolescent years. Research on offending during adulthood has typically focused on ways in which marriage influences criminal desistance. These emphases assume that as the individual transitions to adulthood, the adult marriage bond is primary and the family of origin no longer plays a large role. As Schroeder, Giordano and Cernkovich (2010) noted recently, criminology has in large part either ignored or openly dismissed parents as an influential factor in the lives of adults.

The current study uses longitudinal data to evaluate in what ways parents might "matter" beyond adolescence with regard to criminal offending, as young people transition into adulthood. We drawing on recent theoretical work on emerging adulthood, (e.g., Arnett, 2000; Shanahan, 2000; Aquilino & Supple, 2001; Galambos, Turner, & Tilton-Weaver, 2005), using a contemporary sample of young adults. We explore the role of adolescent parenting but also on-going relations between parents and their adult children as factors associated with life course patterns of criminal continuity and change.

BACKGROUND

Parents and Delinquency

Regarding adolescent delinquency, two primary views of the ways in which parents influence child behavior and well-being have emerged. A latent-trait perspective assumes the existence of some underlying predisposition that is tied to early antisocial behavior. Perhaps no

theory better exemplifies this perspective than Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) theory of low self-control,which continues to inform much of the contemporary literature on parents and delinquency. Low self-control theory argues that parents' failure to adequately monitor their children's behavior and provide the necessary corrective discipline ultimately leads to poor impulse control. This lack of self-control results in defiant and risk-taking behavior and a desire to associate with similar individuals. Primacy is placed on the early formative years (birth to approximately age 8), with the theory arguing that once low self-control is established, it remains relatively stable over the life course. The latent-trait perspective while modeling paths from early childhood antisocial behavior to factors beyond adolescent conduct problems (i.e. quality of parenting, school commitment and deviant peers), does not model paths from these factors to adolescent delinquency (Simons, Johnson, Conger & Elder, 1998). More simply, there is no need to model the influence of parents, school, and peers on delinquency as it is assumed that early antisocial behavior impacts all of these factors. Consequently, any effect of parenting on delinquency is merely a reflection of the underlying latent-trait (i.e. low self-control) and therefore, parents are of little consequence during adolescence and even less salient as the focus shifts to young adulthood.

The life-course perspective assumes that the social milieu impinges upon early antisocial behavior to create variation in outcomes. While acknowledging that early antisocial behavior is likely to influence relations with parents and peers, life-course models include examinations of the effects of parent and peer relations on delinquency (Simons, Johnson, Conger & Elder, 1998). Further, it is assumed that continued involvement in criminal behavior is a result of the inability to form meaningful attachments in adulthood (Cernkovich & Giordano, 2001). The life-course framework provides a suitable environment for theories such as social learning or differential association which focus on parents' ability to monitor and supervise their children

during adolescence. Such theories argue that parents' failure to discourage their offspring's affiliation with deviant peers results in the acquisition of attitudes and definitions favorable to delinquent behavior (Elliot, Ageton and Canter, 1979; Warr, 2007). Thus, parents are viewed as important agents of informal social control, influencing delinquent behavior indirectly via their ability to impinge upon their children's peer networks.

Additional research has considered the combined influence of parental attachment and control on delinquency. Such research shows that authoritative parenting (high in support and high in monitoring), produces better adolescent outcomes in terms of safeguarding against depression, delinquency and poor academic achievement (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg and Dornbusch, 1991; Simons and Conger, 2007; McKinney and Renk, 2008). While there is a strong research tradition acknowledging parents' influence in adolescence, there is little work that considers the long-term impact of parenting behaviors during adolescence and how current relations with parents may continue to be relevant in young adulthood.

Research on Informal Social Controls and Crime Patterns in Adulthood

Laub and Sampson (1993, 2003) focus on the influence of social institutions including marriage, work and the military, arguing that these social institutions provide informal social controls that promote pro-social behaviors and work against continued adult criminality. Specifically, they argue that these informal controls act as "turning points" and work in concert with social capital to explain changes in criminality that occur within the adult life course. Laub and Sampson find that as social capital accrues through investment in prosocial activities and relationships such as work and marriage, the more individuals have to lose by engaging in behaviors deemed as inappropriate. Social institutions also serve to introduce and structure routine activities, thereby reducing opportunities for engaging in deviant behavior (Laub and Sampson, 1993, 2003). Furthermore this structure may discourage association with deviant peer

networks, thereby reducing criminal opportunities (Warr, 1998). While identifying important mechanisms associated with adult declines in criminal involvement, this line of inquiry, too, has largely ignored parental influence on early adulthood criminal offending and/or desistance from offending.

Although criminological research has centered on marriage and its influence on reducing crime, demographers note that the median age of first marriage has continued to rise over the last decade and is 25.6 and 27.4 for women and men respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). A partial explanation for this rise, according to Arnett (2004) is that young adults are cautioned that committing too early without the benefit of experiencing a variety of romantic relationships is "unhealthy, a mistake, a path likely to lead to disaster" (p. 73). Consequently, for many in their early twenties, marriage, and its attendant stabilizing and prosocial influences are less common. Yet while young adults are postponing marriage, they are not necessarily postposting relationships, as evidenced by the increasing rates of cohabitation among adults in their 20s (Goodwin, Mosher & Chandra, 2002; Arnett, 2004; Lonardo et al., 2011). Some research has begun to explore the role of cohabiting as an influence on offending patterns (Lonardo et al., 2011), but it is also important to examine the impact of parents during this phase of the life course.

Young Adults and Parents

The second half of the twentieth century saw notable shifts in demographic patterns, such as postponement of marriage and a greater length of time in school, suggesting that young people take longer to accomplish the transition to adulthood compared to previous decades (Fussell & Furstenberg, 2005). Arnett (2000), argues that the time period from ages 18 to 25 represent an in-between period that is neither adolescence nor adulthood. Rather, this phase which he refers to as "emerging adulthood" constitutes a distinct stage of the life course. This

transition period from adolescence to adulthood is characterized by intense self-focus, instability in residence, work, school and romantic relationships, and is influenced by cultural contexts (Arnett, 2004). As argued by Shanahan (2000), today's Western societies demonstrate increasing variability in opportunities, access and desire to embrace traditional adult roles, thus allowing individuals to "exercise more agency in the construction of their biographies"(2000:670). Consequently, today's young adults may eschew quickly pursuing traditional adult roles in favor of identity and relationship exploration (Galambos, Turner & Tilton-Weaver, 2005).

Most young adults anticipate leaving home between the ages of 18 and 25 (Settersten, 1998), either to attend college or to live on their own while working. Consequently, parents have considerably less control over the activities of their offspring, and more importantly, less knowledge of their activities. According to Arnett (2004), for many parents this is a positive development. Parents' lack of knowledge of their children's social lives may result in fewer contentious issues reducing parent-child conflict. The parent/child hierarchy eventually fades away promoting a relationship that is based more on mutual respect, attachment and support (see also Youniss & Smoller, 1985).

As a result of the instability that often characterizes emerging adulthood, the lack of informal social controls would seem to predict greater involvement in crime. Yet as originally argued by Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983), delinquency peaks around age 15 to 17, with delinquency dropping off by early adulthood. They argue that this simply reflects the "inexorable aging of the organism" (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990: 141). Sampson and Laub (2003) present results suggesting that aging out of crime is likely due to social processes such as the social bonding that occurs by investing in adult roles. Given that most young adults are in the *process* of transitioning to these institutionalized adult roles, however, it seems likely that other factors (such as parents) may influence the drop off in delinquency during this time period

when informal social controls are minimal. As noted by Schroeder, Giordano and Cernkovich (2010), it is important to explore the character of parental relations across the life course and how such relations influence ties to conventional norms, thereby promoting patterns of criminal desistance.

Parental bonds are unique in that there is a permanency not present in social bonds with non-related others such as peers, intimate partners, teachers and employers (Grusec & Davidov, 2007). Parents stand apart in the on-going socializing of adult children in ways that that potentially affect young adults' self-regulation, the acquisition of cultural standards for behavior and the development of role-taking skills (Arnett, 2007). While much literature has focused on parents as agents of socialization during childhood and adolescence, there is a growing body of research examining the continual influence of parents on the lives of their adult children (Aquilino, 1997; Schulenberg & Zarrett, 2006; Renk et al., 2006).

Parents' monitoring of young adults' social activities may influence self-regulation. Behavioral self-regulation during young adulthood is important as there are increases in risky behaviors related to criminal involvement such as substance use (Arnett, 2005), and binge drinking (Chassin, Pitts & Prost, 2002). Work conducted by Padilla-Walker and her colleagues demonstrated that parental monitoring does help to predict lower drug and alcohol use among young adult children (Padilla-Walker, Nelson, Madsen & Barry, 2008). This suggests that ongoing socialization efforts by parents may be needed as young adults continue the psychosocial maturational process.

Prior research has found that relations between parents and their offspring tend to improve over time (Aquilino,1997). In the eventuality that conflict continues into early adulthood, such conflicts are fairly mundane and do not represent serious familial dysfunction (Renk, et al., 2006). Yet research that has examined more serious forms of family conflict such

as physical and emotional abuse have been linked to several deleterious adult outcomes including depression, early pregnancy and poor marital stability (Mullen, Martin, Anderson, Romans & Herbison, 1996). Very little, however, is known about how ongoing conflict with parents is related to continued criminal offending in early adulthood.

In addition to monitoring, the transition to young adulthood may be an especially vulnerable time where parental support is valued and needed as young people develop the autonomy necessary for adult life (Kenyon and Koerner, 2009). Given that the transition from adolescence to adulthood is marked by uncertainty and change, positive parental relations may continue to work to smooth this transition and reduce the likelihood of engaging in deviant behaviors.

Current Investigation

This study examines whether three parenting strategies – the provision of support, monitoring, and conflict - influence delinquent behavior. We build on studies that have examined the influence of dynamic family processes such as support (i.e. "warmth and caring"), monitoring and family conflict on deviant behavior that occurs during the adolescent period (Hirschi, 1969; Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987; Hay, 2003). This work extends the social control literature, however, by considering the degree to which early parental processes such as support, monitoring and conflict influence criminal behavior in early adulthood. While our primary concern is the influence of the current parent-child relationship on offending, we also consider the long term consequences of early parenting behaviors. Further, examining parenting in the contexts of adolescence and young adulthood concurrently we assess whether current parent-child relations influence offending during adulthood net of the earlier parenting background. Such an examination is consistent with a life course perspective which acknowledges the dynamic nature of human lives and their links to significant others. We hypothesize that due to

the exploratory and experimental nature of young adulthood, positive relationships with parents during adulthood will be associated with lower levels of criminal involvement in young adulthood, net of prior delinquency and earlier parenting quality, while conflict will be associated with higher levels of criminal offending in early adulthood.

METHODS

Data

We draw on waves 1, 3 and 4 from the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS). The data are well suited for this paper because they are longitudinal and consist of rich questions on parenting and deviant behavior. Other studies such as the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) include some questions regarding parental relations, these questions in young adulthood have been reduced to include only items regarding closeness and monetary support and do not include monitoring, identity support and conflict.

The TARS data set is a stratified, random sample of 7th, 9th and 11th grade students drawn from 2000 enrollment records from Lucas County, Ohio (N=1316), and includes oversamples of African American and Hispanic adolescents. TARS used enrollment records from Lucas county as its sampling frame, but school attendance was not a requirement for inclusion in the sample, reducing noncoverage error. The sampling frame for TARS consisted of 15,188 eligible students. The final sample totaled 1,316 at wave 1. Wave 4 respondents were recruited from all respondents completing Wave 1, (N = 1088) with a retention rate of 82.8% from Wave 1. For the majority of respondents at each wave, the survey was administered with the aid of a laptop computer, allowing respondents to enter information privately for more sensitive questions, while those of a more general nature were asked and entered into the laptop by the interviewer. Data for additional respondents were collected via telephone and mail-in surveys. The analytical

sample is limited to those individuals who participated in all three waves, and reported their racial status as white, black or Hispanic constituting a final sample size of 1009.

Measures

The dependent variable for the analysis is *respondent delinquency* at wave 4. This scale, an adapted version of the 26-item inventory by Elliot and Ageton (1980), is constructed from how frequently the respondents engaged in various deviant behaviors including drug use, theft (minor and major), breaking and entering, assault and battery, property damage, selling drugs, public drunkenness, and carrying a hidden weapon.[1] The responses for each item are coded 0 for never, 1 for once or twice a year, 2 for once every 2 to 3 months, 3 for once a month, 4 for once every 2 to 3 weeks, 5 for once a week, 6 for 2 to 3 times a week, 7 for once a day, and 8 for more than once a day. The Cronbach's alpha for the wave 4 delinquency scales is 0.74.

<u>Parenting Variables</u>

The primary independent variables are comprised of several scales that tap the quality of the parent/child relationship and are drawn from wave 1 (parenting in adolescence) and wave 3 (parenting in young adulthood) to permit analysis of processes measured prior to offending at wave 4. The mean age of respondents at waves 1 and 3 are 15 and 18 years of age respectively. *Parental support* at wave 1 is constructed from seven items asking respondents how much they agreed with the following statements, 1) my parents trust me, 2) my parents give me the right amount of affection, 3) I feel close to my parents, 4) I am closer to my parents than most kids my age, 5) my parents often ask about what I am doing in school, 6) my parents sometimes put me down in front of other people and 7) my parents seem to wish I were a different type of person". Items 6 and 7 were reverse coded so that high scores reflect a higher degree of support. *Parental*

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[1] Alcohol use was not included in the delinquency measure for wave 4 since nearly half of the sample at that time was 21 years of age or older. Therefore simply consuming alcohol could no longer be considered as deviant or illegal behavior.

support at wave 3 was a scale constructed from these same items, however, the fifth item was dropped as not all respondents were attending school. Responses are measured using a five-point likert scale with 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha score for each wave are 0.78 and 0.80.

Parental monitoring consists of seven items that are reverse coded such that higher scores reflect higher degrees of monitoring. Respondents are asked how often their parents let them make their own decisions about, 1) the time you must be home on weekend nights, 2) the people you hang around with, 3) what you wear, 4) your social life, 5) who you can date, and 6) how often you can date. Responses are measured as 1 for never, 2 hardly ever, 3 sometimes, 4 often, and 5 very often. The last item asks respondents how much they agree with the statement 7) my parents are clueless about a lot of things I do. Responses are measured using a five-point likert scale with 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha for each wave are 0.76 and 0.84.

Overt conflict by parent is constructed from three items which asks the respondent when they have disagreements with their parents how often does their parent 1) call you names or insult you, 2) push, slap or hit you, and 3) yell at you. Responses range from 1 for never, 2 hardly ever, 3 several times a year, 4 twice a month, 5 once a week and 6 two of more times a week. This scale is used across both waves with Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.72 and 0.65.

Control Variables

In addition to the variables described above, several control variables are also used. *Age* is a continuous variable, providing the age of respondent at the time of the wave 4 interview. *Gender* is a dummy-coded variable with males as the contrast category. *Race and ethnicity* is composed of White non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, and Hispanic. Dummy variables are created for each race/ethnic category, with White as the reference category.

Employment status is composed of three dummy variables assessing whether the respondent is unemployed, employed part-time or employed full-time at wave 4. Unemployed serves as the reference category. *Educational attainment* measures the highest level of schooling achieved as of wave 4. Respondents who have dropped out of high school are coded as "less than 12 years" those who have graduated high school, attained their GED or are currently enrolled in high school are coded as "high school student or graduate," and those who are currently enrolled in college, have completed some college or graduated with a college degree are coded as "some college or graduate." "High school student or graduate" is used as the reference category in the models.

Current living arrangement is comprised of four dummy variables indicating who the respondent is living with at wave 4. The categories are "live alone or with friends," "live with parent(s)," "live with spouse or partner," and "other living arrangement." "Live with parent(s)" is used as the reference category.

Mother's education is used as a proxy for socioeconomic status. Using the parent questionnaire, if the adolescent's mother was the parent filling out the questionnaire, the response to the question, "how far did you go in school?" was used. If the responding parent was male, he was asked "how far did your spouse or partner go in school?" Responses indicating the highest level of mother's education are recoded into categories representing "less than high school," "high school education," and "more than high school." Dummy variables are constructed for each response with "high school education" as the reference category in the models.

Family structure is composed of four dummy variables indicating the household type in which the adolescent reported living in during their adolescence at wave 1. The classifications

are “two-biological-parent,” “single parent,” “step-parent” and “other” at wave 1. Dummy variables are created with “two biological-parent” households as the contrast category.

Peer delinquency is based on a series of questions asked of the respondents about their friends’ involvement in the same delinquent behaviors as measured in the respondent delinquency question. This is measured at wave 3 and has Cronbach’s alpha of 0.86. Finally, *previous delinquent behavior* at wave 1 is included. This scale is the same as the respondent delinquency at wave 4, except that it also includes a question regarding the consumption of alcohol. Cronbach’s alpha for this scale is 0.88.

Analytic Strategy

The study consists of two sets of analyses. The first examines the effects of early parenting on wave 4 offending net of demographic controls, association with deviant peers and prior delinquent behavior. In addition to the zero-order relationships, mutlivariate models are estimated. Models 1 through 3 include each wave 1 parenting variable independently to assess its effect on adult offending net of the control variables. Model 4 includes all three of the wave 1 parenting variables. The second analysis consists of regression models examining whether in addition to the previously mentioned controls, net of these early family predictors, the character of adult parent-child relationships is significantly associated with variability in adult criminal behavior. Models 1 through 3 include all of the wave 1 parenting variables while introducing each wave 3 parenting variable independently. Model 4 presents a full model with all of the wave 1 and wave 3 parenting variables.

Regressions are performed using a tobit model. The dependent variable, delinquency, is highly skewed to the right, meaning that most respondents reported little to no delinquent involvement. Consequently, the skewed nature of the dependent variable violates a basic assumptions of OLS regression that the dependent variable will be normally distributed and

could potentially lead to biased estimates (Long, 1997). Tobit has been shown to provide accurate estimates of the parameters when dealing with potentially censored data (Osgood, Finken & McMorris, 2002) and is often used in analyses of delinquency (Hagan & McCarthy, 1992; Jarjoura, Triplett & Brinker, 2002; Piquero, Gover, MacDonald & Piquero, 2005).

RESULTS

Descriptive Results

Table 1 presents the weighted means and percentages for the dependent and independent variables. Scores for offending at wave 4 range from 1 to 6.11 with a mean of 1.38 indicating a low level offending. Parental support appears to have increased slightly from wave 1 to wave 3, while parental monitoring and conflict by parents have slightly decreased between waves. The age range for respondents is 17 to 24, with a mean of 20 years of age. The analytical sample is virtually evenly distributed by gender, two-thirds of the sample are White, 25% Black and 7% Hispanic. Employment status is fairly evenly distributed among the three categories. Nearly half of the sample report the highest level of education as 12 years.[2] Among the remaining respondents, 12% report dropping out of high school, while 38% have pursued or attained post-secondary education. Examination of current residential status shows that over half the sample continue to reside in the parental home. Among those living independently, 15% live alone or with friends, and while 17% live with their spouse or romantic partner, 13% are cohabiting as opposed to married.

In terms of background factors, approximately 35% of respondents' mothers completed high school, 10% have less than a high school education, with the balance reporting postsecondary education. More than half of the respondents report living with both biological parents at wave 1, 17% lived with a stepparent, 25% with a single parent and the remaining

[2] 50 respondents report being currently enrolled in high school. This represents less than 5% of the analytical sample.

respondents reported living with other relatives, in foster care or some other arrangement involving friends, or romantic partners. Scores for delinquency among peers range from 1 to 8.33 with an average score of 1.81. Scores for prior delinquency range from 1 to 8, with a mean of 1.27.

(TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE)

Early Parenting and Later Offending Behaviors

Table 2 presents the results of the tobit regression of respondent offending at wave 4 on the wave 1 parenting variables (parenting in adolescence) and accompanying controls. Column 1 displays the zero-order relationships of the independent variables and respondent offending. Early parent support (b = -0.217; $p < .01$), and monitoring (b = -0.219; $p < .001$), are negatively associated with later offending. Overt conflict by parent at wave 1 (b = 0.116; $p < .001$) is positively associated with later offending. These findings are consistent with the adolescent delinquency literature.

Age displays a significant positive effect on offending (b = 0.072; $p < .001$). This is not surprising given that the offenses that are common to our sample (i.e., public drunkenness and drug-related offenses), are those that are likely to decline more slowly and display a flatter age curve (Steffensmeier, Allan, Harer &Streifel, 1989). Consistent with the extant literature, females report lower levels of offending behaviors (b = -0.352; $p < .001$). Race and employment status are not significantly related to offending. Respondents who dropped out of high school (b = 0.334; $p < .01$), were raised in single parent homes (b = 0.202; $p < .05$), or in other living arrangements (b = 0.301; $p < .05$), and those who live alone or with friends (b = 0.252; $p < .01$) report higher levels of offending. Young adults with deviant peer networks (b = 0.384; $p < .001$) and a history of delinquent behaviors (b = 0.527; $p < .001$) also experience higher offending.

(TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE)

Model 1 examines the effect of parent support net of the control variables and the coefficient for parent support is reduced to non-significance. Further analysis indicates that this is primarily due to the inclusion of peer delinquency and prior delinquent behavior. This suggests that early parental support exerts its negative impact on later offending indirectly by inhibiting earlier delinquent involvement and the development of deviant peer networks. Female remains negatively associated with offending, though the estimate is reduced by almost half. While Blacks and Whites share similar offending levels in the zero order model, a modest race effect (-0.136; $p < .10$) emerges once the controls are added suggesting a suppression effect. Additional analyses revealed that inclusion of the family structure variables at wave 1 allow the race effect to emerge as marginally significant in the model. While dropping out of high school was significantly associated with greater offending at the zero order, the effect is reduced to non-significance once peer delinquency or prior delinquency is included in the model. Controlling for prior delinquency enhances the effect of mother's education such that it is significant in Model 1, when it was not at the zero order. The effects of family structure persist in the multivariate model. The significant effect of living alone or with friends is reduced to non-significance once peer delinquency and prior delinquency are introduced into the model. However, living with a spouse or partner which was not significant at the zero order, is negatively and significantly related to offending in the Model 1. Controlling for age, family structure and prior delinquency allow the negative effect of living with a spouse or partner on later offending to emerge. Not surprisingly, peer delinquency and prior delinquency continue to exert positive and significant effects on offending in the model.

Model 2 appraises the effect of parent monitoring at wave 1, which remains significantly and negatively associated with adult offending (b=-0.102; $p < .05$) in the multivariate model.

This implies that parents' investment in supervising their adolescent children's activities continues to yield dividends even as they age into early adulthood. The associations between the control variables and offending are similar in model 2 as Model 1. One exception is that Black respondents share similar levels of offending as Whites.

Results presented in Model 3 indicate that parental conflict is no longer significantly related to offending in the multivariate model. Additional analysis reveals that peer delinquency mediates the effect of parental conflict on later offending, suggesting that poor relations with parents is related to a greater likelihood of associating with deviant peers, which in turn increases offending. The control variables operate in a similar manner in Model 3 as in Model 1.

Model 4 includes all of the parenting variables along with the control variables. Parent monitoring remains significantly associated with offending ($b = -0.107$; $p < .01$), even after taking into account the other parenting dimensions and early delinquency. Thus, greater parental monitoring in adolescence is associated with lower offending in early adulthood. The control variables sustain the same relationships to offending as those demonstrated in Model 2.

Parenting in Young Adulthood and Later Offending Behaviors

Table 3 builds upon the previous models by introducing the wave 3 parenting variables (parenting in young adulthood). At the zero order level, the wave 3 parenting variables display the same pattern as those for wave 1. Wave 3 parent support ($b = - 0.241$; $p < .001$), and monitoring ($b = - 0.132$; $p < .001$) are negatively associated with wave 4 offending. In contrast, overt conflict by parent ($b = 0.086$; $p < .05$) exerts a significant and positive effect on adult offending.

Model 1 introduces parent support at wave 3 net of the wave 1 parenting and control variables. Parent support at wave 3 demonstrates a modest negative effect ($b = - 0.096$; $p < .10$) on wave 4 offending. Similarly, Model 2 shows that parental monitoring at wave 3 ($b = - 0.052$;

p < .10) is significantly tied to lower young adult offending. Additional analyses reveal that the inclusion of peer delinquency in the model mediates much of the effect of parental support. Model 3 shows that parent conflict is not associated with offending at wave 4. As was demonstrated in the model examining the early parental conflict, inclusion of peer delinquency serves to reduce the estimate to a level of non-significance.

Model 4 includes all three of the wave 3 parenting variables simultaneously along with the wave 1 parenting variables. In this model, parental support at wave 3 remains significantly associated with reduced offending (b = - 0.124; p < .05), as does wave 3 monitoring (b = - 0.049; p < .10). Additional analyses reveal that inclusion of wave 3 parent conflict operates to slightly bolster the effect of parental support, while parental support operates to reduce the effect of parental monitoring.

(TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE)

DISCUSSION

Parents have long been a subject of interest to criminological scholars as an influential source in early socialization (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Moffitt, 1993), and there is extensive research on parenting in adolescence and teenage delinquency (e.g., Sampson & Laub, 1993; Hay, 2001; Scaramella, Conger, Spoth & Simons, 2002; Simons, Simons, Burt, Brody & Cutrona, 2005). Research has also focused on parents' relations with their young adult children including studies of instrumental support (Schoeni & Ross, 2005), quality of parent-child relations (Aquilino, 1997; Thornton, Orbuch & Axinn, 1995), parents as sources of emotional support (Kenny, 1987) and as a continuing force of informal social control (Padilla-Walker et al.2008). This paper builds on these two bodies of work to examine how parent-child relations might continue to influence the behavior of their adult children with respect to offending outcomes.

We find that the early parenting measures of support, monitoring and conflict influenced criminal offending among young adults. The effects of conflict and support were explained by peer delinquency and prior delinquency in the multivariate model. Thus, parental monitoring during adolescence is associated with long lasting effects that extend beyond the teenage years. While much of socialization occurs during early childhood and sets the stage for later parent-child interactions, adolescence is the time of both testing and pushing the boundaries of this early socialization (Gecas & Seff, 1990). Consequently, parental control that is not overly punitive and is consistent with early socialization, is likely to result in lower involvement in delinquent activities during adolescence (Wright & Cullen, 2001). Consistent with findings from Warr (1993), effective parental monitoring during these younger years may work to reduce opportunities to develop delinquent peer networks during adolescence, and consequently restrict opportunities for offending as young adults.

Parental support, monitoring and conflict that extends into the late teen years and beyond when respondents were 17 to 24 years of age, continues to influence offending in young adulthood. The effect of parental conflict is explained by peer delinquency in the multivariate model. Results for parental support and monitoring hold true net of earlier parenting and control variables. Peer delinquency mediated much of the effect of parental support on young adult offending thus demonstrating that parental support operates indirectly on adult offending via delinquent peers. This is consistent with a social learning perspective which argues that parents help to shape the peer networks of their offspring and limit the time they spend with deviant others. However, for young adults it appears that parents are more likely to accomplish this through caring and trust, rather than control and supervision. Thus, support from parents matters more in late adolescence and early adulthood than monitoring. It is to be expected that monitoring becomes less salient as young people grow older and move out of the parental home

thereby promoting greater autonomy. Although young people may enjoy the increase in freedom, emotional attachment to parents undoubtedly remains a priority. Empirical evidence from the developmental literature suggests that ongoing parental attachment produces positive outcomes, in terms of identity development and overall well-being in young adulthood (Kenny, 1987; Samoulis, Layburn & Schiaffino, 2001). Taken together, early and later parental monitoring, and later parental support are associated with lower levels of offending.

Consistent with delinquency research, peer delinquency and wave 1 delinquency are tied to later offending (Sampson & Laub, 1993; Moffitt, 1993; Haynie & Osgood, 2005). We find living with a spouse or partner was negatively and significantly related to offending. However, we do not observe this relationship at the zero-order. This suggests that consistent with Laub and Sampson (1993) living with a spouse or partner does indeed offer a protective benefit against continued offending. However, such effects may be contingent upon the presence of other risk factors (specifically prior delinquency and family structure).

It is possible that offspring who are less delinquent to begin with are more likely to elicit affection and support from parents. The use of longitudinal data is an asset here in that this permits processes measured at wave 3 to predict offending at wave 4. This does not however, fully identify reciprocal relationships between parental behavior and subsequent offspring behavior and address the question of causal order. It is possible that a positive or negative feedback loop exists whereby conforming behavior by the child is rewarded with affection and support by the parent, which in turn reinforces continued prosocial behaviors on the part of the offspring. Conversely, delinquent behavior may elicit negative feedback from parents which fosters further deviant behavior. An additional limitation that should be noted is that the current study used only reports from offspring to assess the parent-child relationship. Ideally, a comprehensive examination of such relations would include those of both parent and child.

However, given that our primary interest is on an outcome associated with the child, the child's own perceptions of the relationship would seem to be most pertinent. Finally, the current study is limited to a sample in one region, and further work with nationally representative samples is warranted.

Our study showcases that parenting influences young adult offending behavior. Furthermore, previous work examining the ongoing influence of parents in young adulthood has made use of small, college-based samples (e.g. Samuolis, Layburn & Schiaffino, 2001; Padilla-Walker et al., 2008). Such samples tend to be predominantly White and score higher on socioeconomic status. Additionally, delinquent adolescents may experience educational interruption and select into early employment, and in some cases fail to complete high school or attain G.E.D. (Chung, Little, & Steinberg, 2005). Consequently, studies that restrict their sample to college students are likely to be missing those who are most likely to be engaged in offending behaviors. The current study possesses the advantage of having examined the influence of parents on their adult children using a more diverse sample of young people in terms of race/ethnicity, educational attainment and socioeconomic status.

Future research efforts should seek to identify and explore the specific processes and mechanisms through which parental support and control influence offspring behavior. In particular, it would useful to examine how parental support and monitoring efforts alter as their children grow increasingly autonomous. One way in which parents may continue to provide support is through material assistance (Schoeni & Ross, 2005). Additionally, parents with children in semi-autonomous living arrangements (i.e. living away at college), may need to adapt their supervisory and control efforts. Material assistance, including parents' willingness to allow adult children to return home in times of need, may be a means for providing both support and control. To date, no studies exist that specifically examine how parents use their financial

resources to discourage deviant behavior among their young adult offspring. As noted by Shanahan and his colleagues , there is some evidence to suggest that the sequencing of adult transitions such as marriage, career commitment, and establishment of an independent household are becoming increasingly divergent (Shanahan, Porfeli, Mortimer & Erickson, 2005). Consequently, some young people accomplish the transition to adulthood more smoothly than others (Schwartz, Côtè & Arnett, 2005). How parents respond and adapt as their offspring negotiate the transition remains a fertile area for exploration.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (N = 1009)

Variable	Mean/%	SD	Range Min	Range Max
Dependent Variable				
Offending - Wave 4	1.38	0.64	1.00	6.11
Parenting Variables				
Parent Support - Wave 1	3.97	0.63	1.00	5.00
Parent Support - Wave 3	4.06	0.66	1.00	5.00
Parent Monitoring - Wave 1	2.42	0.82	1.00	5.00
Parent Monitoring - Wave 3	2.35	1.08	1.00	5.00
Overt Conflict by Parent - Wave 1	2.11	1.01	1.00	5.00
Overt Conflict by Parent - Wave 3	1.95	0.94	1.00	5.00
Control Variables				
Age	20.25	1.71	17.00	24.00
Gender				
Male	50.48%			
Female	49.52%			
Race				
White	67.54%			
Black	25.28%			
Hispanic	7.18%			
Employment Status				
Unemployed	35.82%			
Part-time	32.25%			
Full-time	31.93%			
Educational Achievement				
Dropped out of high school	12.08%			
Current H.S. student or graduate	49.57%			
Some college or graduate	38.35%			
Mother's Education				
Less than H.S.	10.11%			
High school	35.20%			
More than H.S.	54.69%			
Family Structure at wave 1				
Both bio parents	52.38%			
Step-parent	17.08%			
Single parent	25.05%			
Other Living Arrangement	5.48%			
Current Living Arrangement				
Live alone or with friends	14.92%			
Live with parent(s)	52.10%			
Live with spouse/partner	17.18%			
Other Living Arrangement	15.80%			
Peer Delinquency - Wave 3	1.81	1.16	1.00	8.33
Prior Delinquency - Wave 1	1.27	0.59	1.00	8.00

Source: Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study

Table 2. Tobit Results for Respondent Offending at Wave 4 Regressed on Wave 1 Parenting Variables and Controls (N = 1009)

Variable	Zero Order	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept		- 0.691	- 0.329	- 0.856*	- 0.034
Parenting in Adolescence					
Parental Support	- 0.217**	- 0.030			- 0.054
Parental Monitoring	- 0.219***		- 0.102*		- 0.107**
Overt Conflict by Parent	0.116***			0.005	- 0.007
Controls					
Age	0.072***	0.044*	$0.032^{\dagger}$	0.045*	$0.030^{\dagger}$
Gender					
(Male)	------	------	------	------	------
Female	- 0.352***	- 0.188**	- 0.182**	- 0.190**	- 0.178**
Race					
(White)	------	------	------	------	------
Black	- 0.048	$-0.136^{\dagger}$	- 0.104	$- 0.138^{\dagger}$	- 0.099
Hispanic	0.116	- 0.044	- 0.024	- 0.050	- 0.014
Employment Status					
(Unemployed)	------	------	------	------	------
Part-time	- 0.091	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013
Full-time	-0.039	-0.045	-0.039	-0.046	-0.038
Educational Attainment					
Dropped out of high school	0.334**	0.060	0.061	0.063	0.057
(Current H.S. student/graduate)	------	------	------	------	------
Some college/graduate	0.119	0.049	0.043	0.047	0.046
Mother's Education					
Less than high school	0.125	0.126	0.136	0.127	0.134
(High school graduate)	------	------	------	------	------
More than high school	0.076	0.144*	0.138*	0.144*	0.137*
Family Structure					
(Both biological parents)	------	------	------	------	------
Step-parent	0.074	0.013	0.030	0.019	0.020
Single parent	0.202*	0.214**	0.210**	0.215**	0.206**
Other living arrangement	0.301*	$0.263^{\dagger}$	$0.255^{\dagger}$	0.269*	$0.246^{\dagger}$
Current Living Arrangements					
Live alone/with friends	0.252**	0.085	0.079	0.085	0.079
(Live with parent(s))	------	------	------	------	------

Live with spouse/partner	- 0.109	- 0.190*	- 0.202*	- 0.190*	- 0.204*
Other living arrangement	0.072	0.096	0.087	0.099	0.080
Peer Delinquency	0.384***	0.319***	0.318***	0.319***	0.317***
Prior Delinquency	0.527***	0.284***	0.274***	0.289***	0.265***
Sigma		0.813	0.810	0.813	0.810
Log Likelihood		- 945.220	- 942.206	- 945.434	- 941.691

Source: Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study
† p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Table 3. Tobit Results for Respondent Offending at Wave 4 Regressed on Wave 3 Parenting Variables and Controls (N = 1009)

Variable	Zero Order	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept		0.214	0.063	0.069	0.592
Parenting in Young Adulthood					
Parental Support	- 0.241***	- 0.096†			- 0.124*
Parental Monitoring	- 0.132***		- 0.052†		- 0.049†
Overt Conflict by Parent	0.086*			- 0.031	- 0.065
Parenting in Adolescence					
Parental Support	- 0.217**	- 0.013	- 0.052	- 0.060	- 0.012
Parental Monitoring	- 0.219***	- 0.111**	- 0.098*	- 0.105**	- 0.101*
Overt Conflict by Parent	0.116***	- 0.014	- 0.007	0.002	0.005
Controls					
Age	0.072***	0.032	0.030	0.028	0.027
Gender					
(Male)	------	------	------	------	------
Female	- 0.352***	- 0.184**	- 0.170**	- 0.175**	- 0.172**
Race					
(White)	------	------	------	------	------
Black	- 0.048	- 0.102	- 0.099	- 0.099	- 0.103
Hispanic	0.116	- 0.015	- 0.006	- 0.015	- 0.011
Employment Status					
(Unemployed)	------	------	------	------	------
Part-time	- 0.091	0.013	0.010	0.012	0.008
Full-time	- 0.039	- 0.038	- 0.044	- 0.040	- 0.048
Educational Attainment					
Less than 12 years	0.334**	0.045	0.054	0.064	0.054
(Current H.S. student/graduate)	------	------	------	------	------
More than 12 years	0.119	0.057	0.051	0.043	0.057
Mother's Education					
Less than high school	0.125	0.138	0.139	0.138	0.151
(High school graduate)	------	------	------	------	------
More than high school	0.076	0.131*	0.145*	0.138*	0.139*
Family Structure					
(Both biological parents)	------	------	------	------	------
Step-parent	0.074	0.017	0.025	0.022	0.022
Single parent	0.202*	0.207**	0.208**	0.208**	0.212**

Other living arrangement	0.301*	0.235†	0.249†	0.236†	0.213
Current Living Arrangements					
Live alone/with friends	0.252**	0.075	0.088	0.082	0.087
(Live with parent(s))	------	------	------	------	------
Live with spouse/partner	- 0.109	- 0.214*	- 0.184*	- 0.201*	- 0.192*
Other living arrangement	0.072	0.065	0.085	0.082	0.069
Peer Delinquency	0.384***	0.307***	0.318***	0.322***	0.311***
Prior Delinquency	0.527***	0.269***	0.261***	0.263***	0.262***
Sigma		0.808	0.809	0.810	0.807
Log Likelihood		- 940.065	- 939.860	- 941.350	- 937.144

Source: Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$