

Identifying social risk factors of criminal behavior in Suriname

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Abstract

The concern about the development of crime in Suriname is frequently highlighted in the news. In order to understand crime the inducement has to be researched. Within sociology there are many causal theories about criminal behavior. The applicability of amongst others Sutherland's Differential Association Theory, Tarde's Theory of Imitation, Hirschi's Social Bond Theory and Merton's Strain Theory were tested according to the circumstances of Surinamese recidivists. Sixty recidivists detained in the Penitentiary Institution Duisburg (Paramaribo, Suriname), were interviewed about their social circumstances prior to committing crimes. Using semi-structured questionnaires characteristic social factors were identified. They indicated that the following factors influenced their criminal behavior: coming from a low economic class, having a low level of education, growing up in a single parent home, having friends engaged in crime, using and trafficking in drugs and living in deprived neighborhoods. All mentioned factors were subjected to the selected sociological theories. These theories turn out to be applicable because the causal indicators were in accordance with the collected data; thus the social risk factors were identified. There seems to be no single decisive factor to explain criminal behavior; many factors seem to be risk factors. The multiplicity of influential social risk factors identified in this study, confirm that in order to develop an effective and evidence-based policy to reduce and prevent crime, all these risk factors must be taken into consideration.

Key words: recidivists, social risk factors for criminal behavior, crime in Suriname

1. Introduction

For centuries Criminal behavior has been studied by different disciplines and from several points of view within the academic world. (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 2006). As Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, Van Kammen & Farrington (1991) state, scientists agree on one thing: there is no single cause to establish a complex phenomenon such as delinquency. The reasons for studying criminal behavior are usually caused by the need to reduce crime in society and increase the safety of its citizens. This also applies to Suriname, since the issue on crime has drawn special attention of President Desire Bouterse. He stated that justice needs to handle crime with a tougher approach because former attempts have failed (waterkant.net, 2010). This gives all the

more reason to attempt a different approach.

In order to reduce crime from a scientific point of view, an evidence-based policy needs to be developed. Therefore the origin of criminal behavior of Surinamese delinquents should be studied. Swart (2010) states that sociological theories are at the heart of explaining the causes and development of criminal behavior patterns and are particularly valuable in creating an empirical understanding that could be applied in the early determination of risk of criminal and violent behavior, implementation of appropriate intervention methods, and supporting public safety. According to the National Institute of Justice of the United States recidivism is an important feature when considering the core criminal justice topics of incapacitation, specific deterrence and rehabilitation (National Institute of Justice of the U.S., 2012).

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On this note, the unique perspective of recidivists on criminal behavior was used to test causal theories on criminal behavior for this sociological study. Recidivists are preferred over first offenders as respondents, because they have experienced the similar situation more than once as well as the possible effects of incarceration. Sixty recidivists were questioned about their social-economic situation before they committed crimes. Offenders are seen as citizens characterized by norms and values that are deviant from the dominant culture, therefore their insights are new to society and can clarify certain aspects of criminal behavior. This perspective is derived from the ethnography.

According to Spradley (1980), ethnography describes a culture and emphasizes that rather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people. Maltz (1994) suggests that with alternative sources of data alternative methods can be developed. Through the perspective of the recidivists new insights on the world of crime were collected. This expanded understanding of crime can make a useful contribution to an effective policy in order to reduce crime.

This research had three goals. Firstly to test the applicability of sociological theories for crime in Suriname, secondly to derive social risk factors and thirdly to contribute to an evidence based policy in order to reduce crime and to prevent youth at risk from becoming involved in crime.

2. Theoretical framework

The selection of theories of Beirne and Messerschmidt (2006) forms the basic outline of the theoretical framework. They state that the origins of criminal behavior can be traced back to the writings of Enlightenment philosophers in the second half of the eighteenth century.

For this research the theoretical quest about the causes of crime starts with Durkheim, because of his broad approach to anti-social behavior. Scholars before and after him have attempted to find the "cause" for crime in external factors, while Durkheim maintained that an explanation lies in the very nature of society. For Durkheim crime results from social interaction (Beirne and Messerschmidt, 2006). Seen from this perspective, trying to eliminate crime is not worth striving for, and managing crime within acceptable boundaries is a more realistic goal. In order to manage criminal behavior, familiarity with the inducement is essential.

Among the many theories that have made an attempt to explain what causes individuals to commit

crime, Sutherland's Differential Association Theory has been one of the most fertile causal accounts of crime (Lundin 1958). According to this theory persons commit crime because they have associated, socially and culturally, more (in frequency, duration, priority and intensity) with pro-criminal patterns than with anti-criminal patterns. These pro-criminal patterns are not characterized, nor accepted, by society.

Most citizens disapprove of offenders, while social acceptance is essential to (re-)integrate them successfully in society. The Labeling Theory by Becker addresses this process. The Labeling Theory assumes a reversal of causality, in which the offender reoffends because he has been labeled as an offender by society. This results in a self-fulfilling prophecy in which the offender reoffends and society is strengthened in its belief that its initial label was correct (Bovenkerk & Leuw, 2007).

The Rational Choice Theory by Matza considers delinquent behavior as 'natural' and obvious. This theory looks for explanations of criminal behavior whereby both the characteristics of the offender and society are abstracted. By the Rational Choice Theory, the offender is seen as a calculating individual; he commits crime because the costs and risks of such behavior according to his views do not outweigh the benefits of it (Bovenkerk & Leuw, 2007).

Tarde's Theory of Imitation gives a learning perspective on deviance. The view that people learn from one another through the process of imitation takes centre stage (Bovenkerk & Leuw, 2007). This theory is part of Hirshi's Control or Social Bonding Theory, which explains conventional and socially-adjusted (i.e. non-criminal) behavior from the degree of integration and involvement in the conventional society.

According to this theory when people have more to lose because of their social position, they will be more motivated to adapt their behavior to the dominant norms and values of a society. The degree of self-control that one person exercises over his social behavior, is determined by four aspects of involvement in conventional society: attachment (emotional attachment to significant others), commitment (the material interest in a conventional social position), involvement (the degree of involvement in conventional activities) and beliefs (the degree of belief in the validity of the conventional value system). The process of learning is continuous and therefore also present during incarceration. The possible negative effects of learning from other prisoners are described by the criminogenic effect of incarceration, although the

magnitude of the impact of imprisonment is questioned by some (Singh Bhati & Piquero, 2007).

According to the Social Strain Theory these generally accepted objectives can (almost) only be achieved by means (education, relationships, etc.) that are unequally distributed. This results in a position associated with a social tension between the needs according to the dominant culture and the means to satisfy those needs. According to the Social Strain Theory delinquency is one of the solutions to eliminate this tension. Delinquency is seen as a form of 'innovation', an adjustment mechanism whereby the offender keeps the conventional goals valid, but uses alternative (i.e. delinquent) resources to achieve those goals. Other reactions provided by the Social Strain Theory imply to a greater or lesser extent a conflict between the individual and society. In conformity and ritualism (the individual has accepted his lack of success but continues to conform to conventional means) conflict is minimal. In retreatism (withdrawal) both goals as means are

rejected. Finally, the Social Strain Theory also describes rebellion as a form of individual resistance to both the purposes and the means of conventional society (Bovenkerk & Leuw, 2007).

When opportunities to engage in crime and stress are combined, this has influence on the risk to commit a crime. This process is described by the Opportunity Theory, which is derived from the Social Strain Theory. The Opportunity Theory explains criminal behavior by situational characteristics, such as neighborhoods where drugs and weapons are easy to access, that either promote or reduce the probability of the occurrence of an offense.

Derived from Merton's Social Strain Theory, the institutionalized norms of offenders are considered part of a subculture. The Subculture Theory assumes that in these groups an alternative system of values and rules of conduct exists. Deviant behavior is to gain recognition and respect in their circles. Delinquency may be the legitimate means according to that group.

Table 2.1 Overview of selected theories with associated sociologists, causality for criminal behavior and influential factors of social interaction processes within society

Theory and sociologist	Causality for criminal behavior	Derived possible influential social factors/ interview items
Societal level		
Anomie Theory by Durkheim	Tension between means and goals in society	- Economic situation - Employment - Level of education
Labeling Theory by Becker	Effect of labeling by society	- Unemployment - Stigmatization due to criminal record
Social Strain Theory by Merton	Unbalanced relation between stress, means, goals and opportunities	- Role models - Financial situation - Opportunities offered
Social Learning Theories		
Sub-cultural Theory from the Chicago school	Criminal world is a subculture where illegal methods to achieve goals are accepted	- Crime as accepted method to achieve goals
Differential Association Theory by Sutherland	Frequency, duration, priority and intensity with pro-criminal patterns	- Family members and friends engaged in crime - Crime in neighborhood - Experiences previous incarceration
Social Bond Theory by Hirschi	Control mechanisms and social bonds (attachment, commitment, involvement and belief)	- Social bonds with family and friends

Imitation theory by Tarde (during detention: criminogenic effect)	People learn within a social context. It is facilitated through concepts such as modeling and observational learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negative role models - Offenders in the family - Friends engaged in crime - Experiences previous incarceration
Individual level		
Rational Choice Theory by Matza	Individual is a reasoning actor who weighs means and ends, costs and benefits, and makes a rational choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perception on the probability of getting caught - Length of sentence

3. Method

The research design was established after research on a selection of publications on studies on criminal behavior. The approval of the Ministry of Justice and Police was requested to gain access to the study objects. The selection of the research population depended on the prison population with the highest recidivist rate. Apart from the many Police cells, Suriname has three penitentiary institutions: 'Penitentiare Inrichting Duisburg' (PID) and 'Centrale Penitentiare Inrichting Santo Boma' located outside the capital Paramaribo, and 'Penitentiare Inrichting Hazard' in district Nickerie. The PID is the highest security prison in Suriname and detains offenders sentenced for the most severe crimes. In the PID 40% of the offenders were detained for armed robbery, while 21% were convicted of drug related crimes. In 2011 the PID detained 223 prisoners of which 48% were recidivists (Annual report, 2011). Compared to the other penitentiary institutions, the PID had the highest recidivist rate and therefore this prison population was selected to conduct the research.

The management of the PID cooperated fully and provided a list in alphabetical order, of all 95 recidivists who were incarcerated at that time, regardless of the type of offence and the number of times they were incarcerated. Initially all 95 recidivists were included for the research, but 12 recidivists were excluded after transfer to another institution. Of the 83 remaining, only 14 refused explicitly to participate. Finally the research results are based on 48 fully completed and processed interviews. This decline of useful interview data is due to incompleteness of several cases; because of the amount of times these recidivists reoffended. Some recidivists had a criminal record of more than five penalties over the past fifteen years and were not able to recall the details of each incarceration. Nevertheless, all 60 cases were taken into account for their contributions to the larger entity.

The interviews took place during October and November 2011 by one researcher. In order to convince the incarcerated recidivists to participate, their sense of responsibility to contribute to society was called upon. It was explained that by sharing their story, new insights on crime could be gathered which could be useful for the development of a policy on crime that would refrain youngsters from following their path in life.

The validity of answers gathered from offenders in general is often discussed. Therefore it is to be noted that the perception of the recidivists takes a central role in this research. Whether their answers represent the truth, is secondary to the fact that it is their truth: in the end it was their experience and perception of a situation that was decisive for their behavior. The chance of getting socially desirable answers in this context is less evident than during police interrogations since it was extensively explained that responses did not have any legal consequences.

4. Results

The Anomie Theory and Social Learning Theories

According to the Anomie Theory crime is imminent to society. Within a society a dominant culture and several subcultures can be distinguished. The 'world of crime' can be seen as a subculture in society where the norms and values deviate from the dominant culture. Social learning theories state that people learn within a social context. The social context is embedded in a culture. Criminal behavior should therefore be present in the social context from which recidivists come. According to the social learning theories individuals raised within such a culture are more likely to exhibit criminal behavior, because of their exposure to, familiarity with, normalization of, socialization by and opportunities to engage, in crime.

Results show that some neighborhoods were overrepresented; a lot of the recidivists grew up in the neighborhoods 'Abra Broki', 'Kasabaholo' and 'Ephraimzegen'.

These results are within accordance with the theories mentioned above, since these neighborhoods can be characterized as underprivileged. Of the recidivists 53% indicated that their average income was not sufficient to provide themselves with a decent living. In continuation of this, the recidivists were also questioned about employment. Results show that 44% had a steady job during the time they committed the first crime, while 22% were unemployed. The rest had no steady job. These were low wage jobs, greatly due to their low level of education. Regarding education, 31% of the recidivists had only attended elementary school and many were not in possession of that diploma, while 11% never even attended school. A minimal of 6% had reached a certain class of the extended lower secondary education (MULO), also without a diploma. Part of the interconnectivity of influential factors becomes visible: the link between neighborhoods (affordable housing), education and employment is clear.

The Social Strain Theory and the Opportunity Theory

In the cases where the father and mother of the recidivist lived in one house, 75% both had jobs. Even so, this group of respondents stated that their economic situation during childhood was far from ideal. In single parent households, where 42% of the recidivists grew up, their caregiver (usually their mother) had one or more jobs and was not at home most of the time. Even though their parent (s) worked very hard, 58% indicated that the salaries earned were barely enough for the primary necessities such as food and clothing. This is partly due to the fact that in 78% of the cases the families consisted out of, on average, 5 members per household. In combination with a low income due to the low educational level of their parents, this led to circumstances that made the financial situation very poor. Not surprisingly 50% of the recidivists indicated economic grounds for leaving school early.

Other studies have shown that while illiteracy and poor academic performance are not direct causes of criminal behavior, young people who have received inadequate education or who exhibit poor literacy skills are disproportionately found within the criminal justice system (Open Society Institute) and [...] that children with lower academic performance offended more frequently, [...] and persisted in their offending (Maguin & Loeber, 1996). These findings are supported by the research results of Surinamese recidivists. Their poor

education was influential when facing opportunities to become engaged with criminal behavior.

Within the culture of underprivileged neighborhoods survival on a financial level is a daily concern. Research results show that in the neighborhoods where the recidivists grew up, engaging in illegal acts is not an unfamiliar way to handle financial problems. Even within the family environment criminal acts were detected; research results indicate that 71% of the recidivists had at least one family member in jail. And drug dealers could easily be found in their neighborhoods, especially for those in need of money. Furthermore appealing offers to make 'quick money' were made by friends who were already engaged in crime. Some recidivists stated that they made a combination: they kept their regular job but dealt drugs on the side. Of the respondents 30% were involved with drugs, either as a Marijuana dealer or user. Many of the recidivists who were involved in drugs stated that now they looked back on their lives, drugs formed a barrier to positive developments in their lives. The presence of crime and drugs, in combination with opportunities and the lack of social control were decisive factors for the recidivists in PID.

The Opportunity Theory, the Imitation Theory, the Social Strain Theory and the Rational Choice Theory

Many recidivists indicated that they had a strong urge to provide for themselves during puberty. Before this phase of adolescence they were often obliged to do so and started to 'hustle' at a very young age because of their economic background. Examples of the lack of financial support to attend school, either because of their enrolment fee, transportation, clothing or school supplies were given by many respondents. Aside from these basic necessities, many recidivists also indicated they wanted money to buy 'nice' things which they saw on others. Most of the time these were older guys in the neighborhood who were involved in crime. Due to their poor education, the salary earned with the legal minimum wage job, could not support the high standard they wished to live by.

This relates to tension between means and goals pointed out by the Social Strain Theory. The neighborhoods they lived in provided a solution for their 'problem'. A lot of quick and easy money could be made, but not without risk. The Rational Choice Theory considers the offender to be a calculating individual to whom an opportunity is offered. Many recidivists said that they thought they would not get caught. And often they were not: on the question whether they ever got away with an offense, most of them laughed and nodded. They did not wish to go

into details about this, assumedly out of fear of legal consequences. In the context of deterrence: though the length of the sentences was not discussed in detail, many recidivists did state that their sentence was too long for the crime they committed and they did not expect this length of sentence. The opportunities offered, previous illegal activities and expectation to get caught influenced the choices of the recidivists.

The Differential Association Theory, the Subculture Theory and the Social Bond Theory

The Social Bond Theory also emphasizes educational and socialization processes in the juvenile period. For practical crime prevention emphasizes the importance of conventional social relationships, stable personal relationships, having a job and (institutionalized) leisure (Bovenkerk & Leuw, 2007). All the characteristic factors mentioned are valid for Surinamese recidivists. Results show that recidivists hardly have conventional social relationships since their family ties were weak, while bonds with friends in the illegal circuit were strong.

Meanwhile, during puberty their need to lead their own lives increased and the ties with friends engaged in criminal activities strengthened. Recidivists stated that even though their mothers accepted their gifts and money, these still asked too many questions when they came home with their latest purchases.

By the age of 21 a total 58% of the recidivists had moved out of their parental homes. For Suriname standards this is quite young, since most children live with their parents until they have saved enough money to rent or build a house of their own. With an average legal Surinamese salary this usually happens at the age of 30. The 14% of the recidivists, who moved in with their friends, stated that they had a strong social bond with their friends. These friends were often peers with the same domestic background and were already engaged in crime. That is why they could afford to live on their own; they lived together in groups in so called 'bunny houses' where violent robberies were planned and prepared. Such houses also functioned as hiding places from the police in times of need. Bonds with these kinds of friends did not encourage the norms and values of the dominant culture, but rather encouraged the norms and values of a subculture where criminal acts were an accepted means to reach goals.

Concerning weak family bonds, research results show that in 70% of the cases there was no parent present when they came home from school. Of the recidivists 47% did not go straight home after school, but hung about on the streets, compared to the 44% of the recidivists who had to be in the house by six

o'clock at night. If they were late 57% got a beating from their parents; of which 28% got a beating with whatever object was within reach. Usually these beatings came from their mothers, since in most cases fathers were hardly present. Institutionalized leisure activities were rare in the neighborhoods where the respondents grew up. Most recidivists indicated that they played sports with friends on empty premises; well educated instructors were absent. And for 25% of the recidivists, illegal activities were the main leisure time activities during their childhood.

The Imitation Theory and the Criminogenic Effect of Incarceration

Many respondents indicated that their detention period was one of learning for them. Considering the development of severity of the crimes, the criminogenic effect might have been of influence. For the first offence 40% were incarcerated for theft, and for the second offence 50% for robbery, so the level of the use of violence had increased.

According to the Imitation Theory, criminal acts had become institutionalized means to achieve their goals. This reaction to cope with the unequal division of means and goals (Anomie Theory) led to a social strain that resulted in innovative deviant adaptation. Innovation is deviant behavior that uses illegitimate means to achieve socially accepted goals. According to the Social Strain Theory this is the most common deviant response.

This is not only typical for the criminal subculture in society, but also inside the Penitentiary Institution. Of the respondents 46% indicated that while incarcerated they learned how to do illegal things (even better), while 27% stated they learned nothing and 15% said they learned good and bad things inside. According to the criminogenic effect of incarceration, this exposure to crime has a negative effect on the offenders. According to the research results an increase in the number of crimes committed with friends can be noted. During the first offence 34% committed a crime with friends and for the second time 46% violated the law with friends. During their stay 48% of the recidivists stated that they made friends, even if the friendships only lasted during the time inside. Friends can also have a very positive influence on each other and even stimulate, for example, educational participation but research results do not support this.

According to studies in the Netherlands and the United States education makes an essential contribution to prevention and intervention techniques of crime (Bovenkerk & Leuw, 2007). Although the recidivists testified otherwise, education programs are offered in the Penitentiary Institution Duisburg according to the PID

management. The director did however mention that the participation rate was low. One of the respondents described that *'the biggest gangsters in here can't even write their own name; tough guys don't go to school'*. Of all the recidivists that were incarcerated in different Penitentiary Institutions, 63% stated never to have participated in an educational program. According to the director of the PID it is false shame that keeps them from participating. The 'gangster' attitude is part of their subculture and is not only a barrier for their development in this penitentiary institution, but also in their neighborhood and their life in general.

According to Chinlund there is an enormous need for people in prison to be reminded every day of their own value as human beings (2006). Aside from this, social contact during incarceration with individuals with a legal background would reduce the chance of re-offending according to the Social Differentiation Theory. During their current imprisonment 64% did not receive any visitors. Only 4% got weekly visits. This means that the only contacts the recidivists had were with the guards and other inmates. Therefore they lack positive role models.

Re-offending: Circumstances after the First Incarceration

Just after release, at the critical moment of re-entry, results show that 13% did not have any one to turn to. The absence of a social safety net is not favorable for the prevention of re-offending. Furthermore the absence of guidance of a parole

officer concerned 79% of the ex-detainees, of which 25% stated their preferred their guidance. Furthermore 44% of the recidivists were not even familiar with this option. In addition 44% of the recidivists felt stigmatized after their first release; 45% stated that they had problems after their first release, just as before their imprisonment; 55% still had the same friends; 48% went back to do the same, often illegal, work; 64% went to live in the same neighborhood again and 42% went back to using or dealing drugs. These research results show that the circumstances after incarceration are often similar to those before they were incarcerated. Alongside this, legal employment became a problem partly due to their criminal record.

The Labeling Theory

Recidivists stated that according to many employers they were not trustworthy and therefore only got jobs with low responsibilities, and therefore low wages. These circumstances led to the resurgence of the situation responsible for their first confinement. During this difficult period of reentry, the offers of friends engaged in criminal activities in the neighborhood became, once again, very appealing. Given the fact that the recidivists stated they had problems after their first release and their social circumstances were similar to their situation prior to imprisonment, the circle was round: the same factors are influential and form a risk to get engaged in criminal activities.

Table 5.1 gives an overview of the research results according to the selected theories.

Table 5.1 research results according to the selected theories

Theory	Research results of Surinamese recidivists
Anomie Theory by Durkheim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 53% came from a poor economic situation - 44% were employed before imprisonment, but the salary not sufficient to realize goals - 31% had low level of education and 11% were illiterate
Social Bond Theory by Hirschi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Had weak family bonds - Had strong bonds with friends engaged in crime
Differential Association Theory by Sutherland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only had contact with guards and inmates - Had at least one family member in jail: 71% - Had friends engaged in crime, who became their partners in crime - During incarceration 63% had never participated in an educational project, 46% learned more crime inside
Social Strain Theory by Merton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hardly knew any positive role models - 53% had a bad economic situation - Had seen drugs dealers in the neighborhood, 30% was involved in drugs

	- Had opportunities to make 'quick money'
Labeling Theory by Tarde	- Had difficulty finding and keeping a job after incarceration due to their criminal record
Subcultural Theory by Chicago school	- Had seen criminal behavior and drugs in their neighborhood
Rational Choice Theory by Matza	- Did not expect to get caught

In response to these research results, the social factors that were derived from the selected theories and formed the base of the interview items are now scientifically proven to have been characteristic for the recidivists.

5. Conclusions

There is an overlap of the different sociological theories that have been used for this research; therefore some identified social risk factors can be led back to more than one theory. Thus the conclusions also overlap. The economical aspect, achieving goals in life, is found within the Anomie Theory, the Labeling Theory, the Social Strain Theory and the Sub-cultural Theory. The influence of the social aspects of the life of an individual is represented by the Differential Association Theory, the Social Bond Theory and the Imitation Theory. The surroundings, the experiences, the network of people and the ties that arise contribute to the formation of an individual's norms and values. Depending on these norms and values, one's frame of reference is constituted and ratio is developed. The Rational Choice Theory considers individual reasoning as decisive for behavior that is in conflict with the law. Aside from ratio and personal characteristics behavioral standards, e.g. concerning finances, are also determined by the upbringing, education and milieu.

This overlap is also visible in the research results. The fact that 53% of the recidivists come from a poor economic situation and 14% had a job with which they did not earn enough to support their life standard creates a climate where alternative means to reach goals will be considered (Anomie Theory). The combination of the lack of social control (Social Bond Theory), few or no positive role models (Differential Association Theory and Social Bond Theory) and low education, seems to result in extra vulnerability to the influence of friends engaged in crime according to the Social Strain Theory. Especially 'successful' drugs dealers on the street corners in their neighborhood (Sub-cultural Theory) make it even more tempting to take chances (Social Strain Theory). Once they have been arrested, their network of friends engaged in crime expands, they

are pushed more to the margins of society by the stigmatization (Labeling Theory) and the possibilities to develop themselves financially decrease because of their weak position on the labor market. In addition, during incarceration, they limit themselves by hardly participating in the educational programs (Rational Choice Theory), are exposed to more experienced detainees (Criminogenic Effect) and their family ties are weaker than ever before. Therefore the delinquents stay vulnerable for the deceptive attraction of the world of crime.

Concerning the first goal, testing the applicability of the selected theories, the research results make it acceptable to assume that the theories are indeed applicable for the recidivist population of this study in Suriname in 2011.

The second goal of this research that concerns the identification of social risk factors could therefore be derived. The following factors can be identified as risk factors for individuals who live under the same set of circumstances, which are: low education, underprivileged neighborhoods, large households with only one provider, friends engaged in crime, lack of positive role models, weak social bonds with parent(s), offenders in the family, labeling by employers, presence of drugs, leisure time activities without guidance, contact with other offenders, low income jobs, unemployment, experiences of previous imprisonment and lack of guidance from social workers. Of course there are many more influential factors, but because of the complexity of criminal behavior only part of these factors were studied. Therefore it is advisable that this study be extended and elaborated upon.

More research results lead to an evidence-based policy. It is to be expected that measures taken based on these results will be more effective to prevent youth at risk from becoming involved in crime because the indicators are derived from real life stories. Therefore it is recommended that these factors be taken into consideration when developing a prevention, repression and re-socialization - policy to manage crime in Suriname.

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