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Gender Differences In Factors Contributing To Frequency Of Victimization Among Youth In Residential Placement

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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO FREQUENCY OF
VICTIMIZATION AMONG YOUTH IN RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT

By

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Bachelor of Science, University of North Dakota, 2014

A Thesis

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of the

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This thesis, submitted by Chelsey A. Hukriede in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.



Dr. Elizabeth Legerski

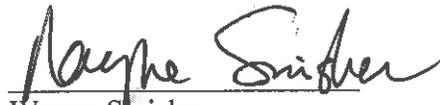


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This thesis is being submitted by the appointed advisory committee as having met all of the requirements of the School of Graduate Studies at the University of North Dakota and is hereby approved.



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Chelsey Hukriede
4/25/16

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To my loving and supportive parents Troy and Charlene

ABSTRACT

Violence and victimization are common aspects of life for incarcerated individuals, even youth, with a large majority of offenders reporting experiences of some form of victimization during their stay in custody. Routine activities theory argues that most criminal acts require a convergence of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and the absence of capable guardianship. The purpose of this study is to explore quantitatively, facility and individual level factors that may affect experiences of robbery, physical and sexual assault victimization among youth in residential custody, and how these factors might vary by gender. To answer my research question, secondary data from The Survey of Youth in Residential Placement (2003) was analyzed. The final sample included 4,842 male and 1,529 female youth aged 10-20. Findings indicate that for both males and females, time in the facility was consistently related to frequency of victimization. For male youth, individual factors such as experiencing emotional abuse, and the characteristics of other inmates, mattered more in predicting experiences of victimization. While some individual factors were also significant for female youth, facility factors, such as facility type were more consistently significant in predicting victimization in custody.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Mass incarceration is a prevalent issue in the United States. According to the most recent statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (2016), over 2.2 million adults were incarcerated in U.S. federal and state prisons and county jails in 2013. When studying incarcerated individuals, it is important not to forget about the large number of youth who are also in custody. The most recent statistic from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2015) reported a total of 54,148 juvenile offenders were held in residential placement facilities in 2013. However, over 100,000 youth were confined to juvenile detention in 2003, the year the current study takes place (Sedlak and Bruce 2010). With such large numbers of both adults and juveniles incarcerated, one area of growing concern has been the treatment and conditions of those in confinement.

The daily life of an incarcerated individual is drastically different from daily life ‘on the outside.’ In particular, rates of personal and property victimization are higher inside prison than in the general community (Catalano 2005). Most of the existing literature on victimization among incarcerated populations focuses on the experiences of adults. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act requires the separation of adults and juveniles in custody for safety (Sedlak and McPherson 2010). Relative to adult facilities, juvenile facilities are smaller, have much lower inmate-to-staff ratios, and place a greater emphasis on treatment, counseling, education and the mentoring of inmates (Kupchik 2007). Despite this, research by Mendel

(2015) found that the heavy reliance on correctional confinement exposes youth to maltreatment, results in high levels of recidivism, and incarcerates children who do not pose a threat to the public. Institutionalization also often means inadequate provision of mental health, educational, substance abuse and other necessary programming for youth (Mendel 2015).

A study by Katz and researchers (2011) found that the majority (over 77 percent) of youth in custody reported being victimized at least once in their lives (not limited to experiences in a correctional facility). Unfortunately, peer-on-peer violence is a frequent aspect of custodial life for many youth in custody (Peterson-Badali and Koegl 2002). A study by Sedlak and researchers in 2013 found that 56 percent of youth in custody experienced one or more types of victimization (theft, robbery, physical assault and/or sexual assault). Approximately one-sixth of youth in custody reported experiencing one or more types of violent victimization, including being robbed, being injured in a physical assault, or being sexually assaulted (Sedlak, McPherson, and Basena 2013). Of these victims, 61 percent report being injured during their experiences, while less than half (47 percent) say they received medical care for their injuries. Studied collectively, different forms of violence tend to occur to the same youth, meaning youth who report any type of victimization are much more likely to report another type (Sedlak et al. 2013). It is important to study the underlying patterns and relationships between victims and their risk of victimization because previous studies have shown inmates who are victimized have a more difficult time adjusting to the institution as well as transitioning back into society and they are also more likely to recidivate (Mendel 2015; Wooldredge 1998).

Unfortunately, research on youth in custody typically ignores gender differences. Not surprisingly, the juvenile justice system is dominated by male youth. Approximately 85 percent of all youth in residential placement are male (Sedlak and Bruce 2010; Sickmund 2004).

However, females in custody tend to be younger than their male counterparts. For example, one study in the early 2000's suggested that of all youth in custody 30 percent of females were younger than age 15 compared with 21 percent of males (Sickmund 2004). Female offenders typically have more problems with mental health and substance abuse as well as worse abuse histories. Female youth report almost twice the rate of physical abuse (42 percent vs. 22 percent) prior to incarceration, and more than four times the rate of prior sex abuse (35 percent vs. 8 percent) compared to males (Sedlak and McPherson 2010). Due to these differences, females are typically placed in residential treatment programs that provide onsite mental health services.

One theory that has been used in the delinquency literature to explain delinquent behavior is routine activities theory. This theory argues that most criminal acts require convergence in space and time of likely offenders, suitable targets, and the absence of capable guardians (Cohen and Felson 1979). This theory can also be used to explain the risk of youth victimization in custody, a unique contribution of this study. To test this theory I will explore both institutional- and individual-level risk factors for victimization, paying particular attention to how the significance of these factors may vary by gender. Youth in custody are vulnerable and are in the presence of motivated offenders, likely increasing the chances of also being a suitable target. Knowing whether institutional or individual factors impact risk of victimization for boys and girls, and to what extent, is important for reducing youth's future risks while in custody.

This study seeks to examine gender differences in the relationship between facility and individual-level risk factors and victimization experiences among incarcerated youth. Research utilizing routine activities theory has not explored the role of gender in shaping victimization, but the delinquency literature clearly demonstrates gender is associated with an individual's risk of victimization. Not only is there a pervasive affect of gender on victimization, but gender shapes

an individual's daily routines and could create a gender-specific relationship with victimization (Popp and Peguero 2011). Female youth in custody are typically viewed as physically unimpressive and could be limited emotionally due to being younger on average, increasing the chances of other inmates viewing them as suitable targets for victimization. The findings of this study could offer valuable guidance to the field because if significant gender differences in risk factors for victimization are identified, then appropriate policies could be used to protect youth from victimization, especially in residential facilities.

Research Question

What are the factors that shape frequency of victimization for youth in custody and how might these factors vary by gender? In order to answer these questions I will examine data from the 2003 Survey of Youth in Residential Placement (SYRP). The SYRP is ideal for this study because it is the only nationally representative survey that asks youth in custody directly about their individual characteristics, the facility environment and their victimization experiences while in the facility. Frequency of victimization, the dependent variable in this analysis, will include experiences while in a residential facility such as having property taken with the use of force or threat (robbery), being beaten up or threatened (physical assault) and being forced into sexual activity (sexual assault). Each of these types of victimization will be explored separately because the risk factors related to these types of violence may be different, especially for each gender. The facility level independent variables I will explore are facility type, facility size, whether the facility is coed or same-sex, and number of youth who share their sleeping room, as well as proportion of violent offenders, and proportion of gang members in their living unit. Individual level factors are also included as independent variables and they consist of youth's gang membership, age relative to the oldest resident in their living unit, history of prior abuse, length

of stay in their current facility, frequency of family contact and youth's offense severity compared to other youth in their living unit.

Organization of the Next Chapters

The remainder of this thesis is organized as follows: Chapter Two will introduce the theoretical perspective guiding this research as well as review previous literature regarding risk of victimization and experiences of youth in custody. The quantitative analysis is described in Chapter Three. Chapter Four includes the results from the statistical analyses. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the results in relation to previous literature. Limitations to this research as well as implications are also discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research shows that violence and victimization are ever-present and persistent problems in United States correctional facilities. In a study exploring multiple forms of victimization, researchers found that 48 percent of inmates reported victimization (Wooldredge 1998). According to another survey assessing allegations of sexual violence against inmates, slightly more than half of incidents involved sexual misconduct by staff (Beck and Harrison 2007). Inmates who are victimized have a more difficult time adjusting to both the institution and back into society; in addition they are more likely to recidivate (Adams 1992; Hochstetler, Murphy, and Simons 2004; Langan and Levin 2002; Walters 2003). Because of these findings, it is important to understand what factors shape risk of victimization for youth in custody and how these factors might vary by gender.

Theoretical Perspective

Routine activities theory is a prominent theory in the juvenile delinquency literature that may help explain the variation in risk of victimization among youth in custody. This theory was first introduced by Cohen and Felson (1979). Routine activities can be defined as any reoccurring activities that provide for basic population and individual needs, and are often described as an aspect of daily life (Arnold, Keane, and Baron 2005). This theory looks at how criminal behavior correlates with everyday patterns of social interaction. Rather than focusing only on a motivated offender, like most research on delinquent behavior, this theory also focuses

on suitable targets, such as things worth stealing, a person to assault, a home to break into, and lack of guardianship - the absence of anyone or anything to prevent the offense from occurring (Arnold et al. 2005).

Cohen and Felson (1979) argue that most criminal acts require the convergence in time and space of motivated offenders and suitable targets, in the absence of capable guardians. The lack of any of these elements is sufficient to prevent the occurrence of a successful direct-contact predatory crime. The likelihood of this convergence is greatly influenced by an individual's routine activities. Routine activities influence criminal opportunities by bringing together both offenders and victims. Direct-contact predatory violations occur when there is direct physical contact between at least one offender and one person or object which the offender attempts to take or damage (Cohen and Felson 1979). This theory also considers the proximity and exposure to victimization. Proximity refers to the physical distance between areas where potential targets of crime reside and where populations of potential offenders are found, while exposure is the visibility and accessibility of possible targets within risky environments (Madero-Hernandez and Fisher 2013).

According to the theory, by accounting for variations in routine activities, it is possible to account for potential delinquent behavior. This then suggests that individuals can change their propensity for delinquent behavior by altering their routine activities and lifestyles (Arnold et al. 2005). Similarly, if potential victims were to change their behaviors to reduce their risk of victimization, potential offenders would have to be versatile and engage in other types of criminal acts in other locations (Arnold et al. 2005). As a result, this theory has also been applied to risk of victimization. Such studies apply routine activities theory to analyze how changes to causal factors might affect the risk of victimization. Arnold and researchers (2005) found that

within the general population, demographic characteristics such as being male, young, unmarried, and unemployed increase risk of victimization. Other studies also found that being the victim of any crime increases the likelihood of being victimized in the future for individuals in the general population (Farrell 1995; Lauritsen and Quinet 1995). Arnold and researchers (2005) also found that respondents with a high risk of one form of victimization tended to have a high risk of others; the same was true for respondents with low risks of victimization.

Routine activities theory may also be helpful in explaining incarcerated youths' risk of victimization for many reasons. Delinquent youth in custody are more likely than youth in the general population to be exposed to situations that are conducive to victimization (Chen 2009). First, youth in custody are exposed to potential offenders through both their peers and the other youth in their living unit. Second, delinquent youth are more likely to be perceived as suitable targets by potential offenders because they are unlikely to report incidents to authorities (Chen 2009). Youth may not report incidents of victimization out of fear of exposing their own behaviors or being labeled a 'snitch' by other inmates. Finally, youth in custody lack direct guardianship from their own parents and caregivers. For youth in custody, families are forced to rely on the supervision of correctional staff to watch over these youth which becomes especially difficult in facilities experiencing over-crowding (Chen 2009). Although youth in custody cannot alter their routines entirely, identifying the factors that shape youth's routine activities, and thus risk of victimization, provides an opportunity to introduce new policies and procedures in facilities to reduce victimization among youth in custody.

Previous Literature

Victimization of Youth in Residential Custody

Researchers have studied preexisting individual risk factors and institutional risk factors and their relationship to adjustment in custody. Studies found that risk factors operate cumulatively, indicating that youth who report one type of violent victimization are more likely to report other types of victimization as well (Cesaroni and Peterson-Badali 2005; Sedlak et al. 2013). In one study, preexisting risks refer to some of the psychological problems more prevalent in incarcerated youth such as learning disabilities or psychiatric disorders (Cesaroni and Peterson-Badali 2005). Researchers found that preexisting risk or vulnerability, worry about victimization, and experiencing conflicts with inmates significantly predict a youth's adjustment to custody (Cesaroni and Peterson-Badali 2005). Youth who struggle adjusting to custody are also at a higher risk of victimization. Offenders typically select youth who are seen as weak and suitable targets, either because they are physically unimpressive or because they are limited emotionally or intellectually (Cesaroni and Peterson-Badali 2005).

In this study, frequency of victimization includes three measures: robbery, physical assault, and sexual assault. A previous study utilizing the SYRP data analyzed in the present study has already established the prevalence of victimization for youth in custody. First, researchers found that about 46 percent of youth in custody reported having personal property stolen at least once when they were not present (Sedlak et al. 2013). They also found that robbery was less frequent with only ten percent of youth reporting that someone used force or threat to steal their personal property (Sedlak et al. 2013). Approximately 24 percent of robbery victims said they were forced to give up their property only once while living in their facility,

although the majority reported multiple episodes. On average, youth who were unharmed when they were robbed reported fewer episodes of robbery than victims who were injured.

They also explored incidents of physical and sexual assault. Of youth in custody, 29 percent reported being beaten up or threatened (Sedlak et al. 2013). When weapons were used, most youth said it was a sharp object other than a knife. It is also important to note, of the youth who reported incidents of assault or threat, they reported an average of nine or more during their current stay in the facility. They also found that between 4 and 8 percent of confined youth reported at least one incidence of sexual victimization. Of these victims, more reported the perpetrator being facility staff versus non-consensual contact with other youth (Mendel 2015; Sedlak et al. 2013). Much like the other forms of victimization, sexual assaults are not isolated occurrences. Victims of sexual assault reported an average of six or more similar events during their stay.

Institutional Factors that Shape Risk of Victimization

Institutional factors may shape a youth's routine activities and risk of victimization while in custody. The facility size and type, as well as the type of offenders youth are housed with, will all influence the likelihood of youth being seen as a suitable target, in the absence of capable guardianship and presence of motivated offenders. The guiding principle is to house juvenile offenders in the "least restrictive placement alternative" (Sickmund 2004: 16) but there are many different types of juvenile residential placement facilities with different characteristics that may shape risk of victimization. Detention units, compared to other facility types, are more likely to use makeshift beds which are temporary sleeping locations used to house youth beyond the facility's built capacity (cots, rollout beds, mattresses and sofas). Youth in detention programs typically have shorter stays in custody (Sedlak et al. 2013). Youth in correctional units have less

frequent family contact, experience more forms of physical control and are more likely to say that the rules are not applied fairly (Sedlak et al. 2013).

The population of youth varies across facility types, and Gover and MacKenzie (2003) found that youth in traditional facilities had a significantly higher number of prior arrests compared to youth in boot camps, indicative of a population of motivated offenders. Boot camps, which place an emphasis on military philosophy, have been a popular correctional option for juvenile offenders (Gover and MacKenzie 2003; Morash and Rucker 1990). Yet skeptics worry about the appropriateness of this focus for youth with a history of maltreatment. Researchers have found that the confrontational approach of boot camps may inhibit positive psychological adjustment and rehabilitation of youth (Gover and MacKenzie 2003). Camp programs hold the majority of youth charged with property offenses, while drug and public order offenders are in either detention or camp programs. Youth with the most serious offenses such as rape or murder are typically sentenced to corrections or residential treatment programs (Sedlak and McPherson 2010).

The size of facilities is another important factor to consider because facilities with a large number of residents could increase the presence of potential offenders and reduce the effectiveness of guards in deterring crime. A survey by Mendel (2015) found that sexual victimization rates were higher in facilities that house more than 100 youth compared to smaller facilities housing 25 or fewer youth. According to the 2000 Juvenile Residential Facility Census, about 40 percent of the facilities reported their residents exceeded the number of available beds (Sickmund 2000). Crowding is based on a predetermined limit based on facility square footage, utility use, or even fire codes. These crowded facilities were also more likely than other facilities

to report having to transport youth to an emergency room in the last month due to injuries from a conflict with another individual (Sickmund 2000).

Sleeping arrangements also vary greatly by facility type and security level and may impact risk of victimization. Youth who are locked in during the day are more likely to have private sleeping rooms compared to youth who are not locked in. Approximately 60 percent of youth in detention programs have their own sleeping room while over half of youth in camp programs share their rooms with 10 or more other youth (Sedlak and McPherson 2010). Sleeping arrangements are an important measure of routine activities because youth are likely to have reduced guardianship during the night hours and could be housed with motivated offenders increasing their risk of being seen as a suitable target.

Another important facility level factor to consider is the presence of gangs. When gangs are present in a facility, conflicts and disruptions are exacerbated, complicating facility operations and placing youth at risk. A cycle of retaliatory violence is evident among youth who are actively involved in gang crime because they have limited access to mechanisms of formal social control (Katz et al. 2011). Gang members are prepared to defend and expand ‘turf’ and fight when told. Gang membership has been found to significantly increase prison violence and other forms of prison misconduct (Wolff, Shi and Sigel 2009). Based on the victimization literature, I propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Facility level factors will be significant in determining the presence of motivated offenders and availability of capable guardians, therefore shaping risk of victimization for youth in custody.

Individual Level Factors that Shape Risk of Victimization

In addition to institutional factors, individual level factors may also shape routine activities and thus affect risk of victimization. As described above, researchers have found that gang members reported more personal crime victimization than non-gang members (Fox, Lane, and Akers 2012). Gang members may be more likely than non-gang members to be victimized because of their risky lifestyles. Studies that have focused on the gang-victimization link suggest that gang members are significantly more likely to be victimized than non-gang members for several reasons: youth may join gangs for protection from violence, may be known to engage in risky activities (e.g., drug use and drug sales), may be victimized by rival gangs (e.g., drive-by shootings and assault) or even by their own gang as part of initiation rites or punishment for misbehavior (Fox et al. 2012; Katz et al. 2011). Gang processes often include exposure to a risky lifestyle and routine activities that could increase youth's risk of victimization through retaliation as well (Katz et al. 2011).

Another particularly important individual factor is experiences of childhood abuse. Previous literature has found that a high percentage of youth who come in contact with the criminal justice system, compared to those in the general population, have histories of childhood maltreatment. Childhood abuse is strongly correlated with both juvenile delinquency and adult victimization and criminality (Gover and MacKenzie 2003). One study found that out of 1,500 male inmates reporting physical victimization, about two-thirds also reported experiences of childhood physical abuse (Wolff et al. 2009).

The consequences of physical and emotional abuse for youth can be permanent and damage the stress response system (Silva, Grana, and Gonzalez-Cieza 2013). Youth who have a damaged stress response system are more likely to lack feelings of guilt or remorse, be

unconcerned with the feelings of others, react less to punishment, and are at a higher risk of developing severe, aggressive patterns of antisocial behavior (Silva et al. 2013). Researchers have found that compared to youth who did not have a history of abuse, abused youth had levels of aggression, anxiety/depression, delinquent behavior, posttraumatic stress disorder, and social withdrawal that were twice as high (Silva et al. 2013). Clinicians have also reported that a youth's normal coping or reactive responses to their prior experiences of abuse could lead to improper socialization, which leads to an increase in their risk of victimization (Chu 1992; Cloitre 1998; DePrince 2005; Dietrich 2000, 2007; Messman and Long 1996). Researchers have found that youth who report experiencing physical or sexual abuse before their current stay in a facility, are significantly more likely to report experiences of violent victimization while in custody (Sedlak et al. 2013). Youth who have a history of abuse prior to incarceration have already been victimized and thus may be viewed as a suitable target for further victimization.

The length of time in a facility may also shape risk of victimization. Multiple factors can determine the amount of time youth will spend in a facility, such as the nature and severity of their offense(s), time spent in detention prior to their conviction, and their commitment status (Sedlak and Bruce 2010). Among the SYRP sample, approximately 35 percent of the youth sampled had been held between 61 and 180 days, while roughly 10 percent of youth had been in their facility for over a year. In addition, they found that youth who stayed in their facility longer than a year had a higher risk of experiencing violence (Sedlak et al. 2013). On the other hand, other researchers argue that time served is inversely related to victimization, suggesting that risk of victimization decreases as time served increases (Perez et al. 2010). The length of time in a facility may shape a youth's routine activities. Youth who are new to the facility and adjusting to life in custody are more likely to be viewed as suitable targets compared to youth who have spent

a year or more ‘on the inside.’ On the other hand, routine activities theory suggests that youth in custody are constantly in the presence of motivated offenders, therefore increasing opportunities for victimization.

The nature of a youth’s offense may also shape risk of victimization. Youth can be put in custody for a number of offenses ranging from truancy to murder. Greater percentages of females than males are in placement for status offenses and assaults (Sedlak and Bruce 2010). Among youth in custody, one-third report one offense, one-third indicate two or three offenses, and the remaining one-third report more than four offenses leading to their current stay in a facility (Sedlak and Bruce 2010). When youth with drastically different offense histories are housed together, officials get concerned about the safety of the less serious offenders. However, housing youth with the same type of offense (e.g., robbery, felony drug, or rape) could have a reinforcing effect and increase recidivism (Sedlak and McPherson 2010). Offense type may be an important measure to include in analyses of victimization because youth who are accused of petty offenses may be labeled as weak and therefore as targets. In addition, some offenses carry a stigma in custody (e.g., sex crimes) and could also place youth at risk for victimization.

A youth’s age may also shape their risk of victimization. Youths age 16 and 17 account for almost half of all arrests of youth under age 18, nearly 40 percent of delinquency court cases, and represent over half of all juveniles in residential placement (Sedlak et al. 2013; Sickmund 2004). Younger youth have been found to have significantly higher risk for any type of violence (Perez et al. 2010; Sedlak et al. 2013). Yet a study by Fox et al. (2012) found that while younger inmates were significantly more likely to report personal victimization, older inmates were more likely to report property victimization. Routine activities theory would suggest that younger

youth are less experienced and less able to defend themselves than older youth and therefore more likely to be targets of victimization.

Researchers estimate that 35 percent of the population of youth in custody are White, and 65 percent of incarcerated juveniles are minority youth (Sedlak and Bruce 2010; Sickmund 2004). Researchers have found that different races and ethnicities tend to be held in different facility types. Hispanic youth are typically in camp programs, while Black/African American youth tend to be in corrections programs and White youth are more often in residential treatment programs (Sedlak and McPherson 2010). In addition, others have found significant differences in risk of victimization by race. For example, a study by Fox et al. (2012) found that White inmates were significantly more likely to report personal victimization compared to non-White youth. Based on previous literature, I propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Individual level factors will be significant in determining target suitability and therefore shaping risk of victimization for youth in custody.

Gender and Risk of Victimization

Little is reported in the delinquency literature about gender differences in risk of victimization among youth in custody. The juvenile justice system predominately consists of male youth, making up over 80 percent of all youth in residential placement (Sedlak and Bruce 2010; Sickmund 2004). Previous research has found that compared to males, females are more likely to be in placement for petty crimes such as status offenses and assaults (Sedlak and Bruce 2010). Females also enter custody at a younger age than their male counterparts (Sickmund 2004), and so it would not be surprising to discover females and males have different victimization experiences in custody. Researchers have found that male inmates are more likely

to report personal victimization (Fox et al. 2012) and in the general population, males are more likely than females to report violent victimization, except for violence by intimate partners and sexual assault (Lauritsen and Carbone-Lopez 2011). Females in custody may be at risk for different forms of victimization compared to their male counterparts due to their suitability as targets for different crimes. A study by Wolff and Shi (2011) found that sexual victimization was more commonly reported by females (22 percent vs. 4 percent) but males were significantly more likely to report victimization perpetrated by staff. Routine activities theory would suggest that prison guards victimizing youth are jeopardizing the opportunities for legitimate guardianship. In a recent study examining gender differences in adult prisoner victimization, Wooldredge and Steiner (2016) found that background (individual-level) factors were more important than confinement (facility-level) factors for influencing assaults on females while both sets of factors were significant for men. While important, this study was limited to adult prisoners. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that in order to get an accurate portrait of risk of victimization utilizing routine activities theory, it is important to explore which institutional- and individual- level risk factors may be important for boys' and girls' risk of victimization.

Based on the victimization literature I propose the following exploratory research question:

RQ1: Are the individual and facility level factors that shape risk of victimization different for male and female youth in residential placement?

In the next chapter I will discuss the dataset and sample, including a description of the data collection process, the measurement of each variable, and the statistical strategy used to analyze the data.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Data and Procedures

The 2003 Survey of Youth in Residential Placement (SYRP) will be used to explore gender differences in the facility and individual level factors that influence youth's frequency of victimization during their stay in custody. The SYRP was conducted in 2003 by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). This survey joins two ongoing data collections by the OJJDP, the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement and the Juvenile Residential Facility Census to provide updated statistics on youth in custody within the juvenile justice system. The SYRP 2003 sample includes a total of 204 facilities located in 36 states across the United States. A total of 7,073 youth completed the survey out of the 25,429 offenders listed on the facility rosters at the time interviews were conducted. There were 9,495 eligible youth sampled to participate in the SYRP 2003, yielding a youth-level response rate of 74.5 percent. After outliers and cases with missing data were excluded from analysis the final sample size for this study includes 6,371 incarcerated youth.

The interviews took place between March and June of 2003. Using the ACASI method, youth were escorted to the survey room in groups of up to ten. The youth put on headphones and listened as a pre-recorded interviewer's voice read the words displayed on the screen. Youth then touched their responses on the computer screen. Interviews took an average of 35 to 40 minutes. The SYRP is ideal for the present study because it is the only nationally representative survey

that asks incarcerated youth directly about their individual characteristics, the facility environment, and their victimization experiences while in custody. Sedlak and researchers (2013) also analyzed SYRP data to determine the nature and risk of victimization, but their logistic regression analysis only examined whether or not youth experienced victimization rather than the frequency of victimization experiences. Knowing that different forms of violence tend to occur to the same youth, it is worth analyzing how frequently youth in custody are the victims of robbery, physical assault and sexual assault. Utilizing a continuous measure of victimization is one of the contributions of this study. In addition, Sedlak and researchers (2013) did not explore gender differences in risk of victimization. Knowing that there are gender differences in an individual's risk of victimization among adult prisoners (Wooldredge and Steiner 2016), it is critical to include gender when testing the applicability of routine activities theory for a full understanding of victimization among youth in custody.

Measures

Dependent Variables

When youth are placed in a correctional facility, they are often housed with other juvenile offenders. Youth are at risk for a range of victimization offenses ranging from petty theft or emotional abuse to sexual assault or even death. For the purposes of this study I explore three forms of victimization: *Robbery*, *Physical Assault*, and *Sexual Assault*. Robbery is measured by asking youth the number of times another person used force or threat in order to steal their personal property. Physical assault includes the number of times youth have been beaten up or threatened in the facility. Sexual assault is measured by asking youth to report the number of times they were forced into sexual activity while in the facility. These are continuous variables coded to count the number of times youth have experienced each form of victimization.

Independent Variables

As described above, previous research shows there are differences in risk of victimization between males and females. This study will explore the facility and individual factors that contribute to the variation in victimization experiences between male and female youth in custody. *Gender* is a dummy variable coded 1 = male and 0 = female and analyses are run separately in order to examine differences in the institutional and individual level risk factors related to frequency of victimization.

Routine activities theory suggests that there are facility level factors that may shape risk of victimization. To measure whether youth currently live in an all-male/female or mixed gender facility, *Coed Facility* is a dummy variable coded 0 = no and 1 = yes. Although there are numerous types of youth facilities, this analysis includes measures of five categories of facilities: *Detention Facility*, *Correction Facility* (or training schools), *Community Facility* (including shelters, group homes, halfway houses, and independent living facilities), *Residential Facility*, and *Boot Camp* (including boot camps and ranch or forestry camps), which are each dummy variables coded 1 = youth currently resides in this facility type, and 0 = youth currently resides in some other facility type. Correction facilities serve as the reference group in this analysis. *Facility Size* is a continuous variable to measure the number of youth in the facility. *Sleeping Room* measures the number of residents that share a sleeping room. This is a categorical variable coded 0 = no residents share youth's sleeping room, 1 = 1 resident, 2 = 2 residents, 3 = 3 residents, 4 = 4-9 residents, 5 = 10-14 residents, 6 = 15-25 residents, 7 = more than 25 residents share a sleeping room.

Measures are also included to determine the type of offenses others in their living unit have been convicted of. *Proportion of Violent Offenders* is the proportion of youth living in the

same living unit with a history of a violent offense. Violent offenses include crimes such as manslaughter, rape, domestic violence and kidnapping. *Proportion of Gang Members* includes the proportion of residents in the youth's living unit that identify as gang members.

Routine activities theory also suggests that certain individual risk factors are brought into the facility with an inmate that may increase their risk of victimization. For this reason, individual level factors are also included in this analysis. *Length of Stay* is a continuous variable that asks youth to report the number of days they have been in placement within their current facility. *Age Gap* is measured in a relative way by indicating the number of years the respondent is younger than the oldest resident in their living unit – the larger the age gap between the respondent and the oldest resident, the higher the number. *Gang Membership* is included to measure whether youth identify as a member of a gang, coded 0 = no and 1 = yes. *Offense Severity* is measured by comparing the respondent's most serious career offense to the most serious co-resident's career offense in their living unit. Offense severity is coded so 1 = respondent's offense is most serious, 2 = respondent's offense is less serious by 1 level, and 3-12 = respondent's offense is less serious by 2-11 levels. Meaning, youth with higher scores are housed with offenders that have offenses more serious than their own.

Three types of prior abuse are included in this analysis as dummy variables: physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse. *Physical Abuse* asks youth whether they experienced physical abuse while growing up, coded 1 = yes, 0 = no. *Emotional Abuse* is measured by asking youth if they experienced emotional abuse while growing up, coded 1 = yes, 0 = no. *Sexual Abuse* refers to youth's experiences of sexual abuse while growing up, coded 1 = yes, 0 = no. No existing research on risk of victimization includes measures of family contact. Routine activities theory suggests that the presence of capable guardians could reduce the risk of victimization so

the frequency of a youth's contact with family may help act as a protective factor. *Family Contact* is a categorical variable that measures the frequency of family visits since youth entered the facility. Family contact is coded 0 = never, 1 = family visits less than once per week, 2 = once per week, 3 = twice per week, and 4 = family visits three or more times per week.

In addition to these variables, race is included as four dummy variables coded 1 = yes, 0 = no for *White (non-Hispanic)*, *Black (non-Hispanic)*, *Hispanic*, and *Other Race* (which includes non-Hispanic American Indian, Asian, Hawaiian Pacific Islander, and individuals who reported more than two races). The comparison group in this analysis is *White*.

Analysis

The purpose of this thesis is to quantitatively explore possible gender differences in the facility and individual level factors that associated with frequency of victimization among youth in residential custody. First, the descriptive statistics of the sample will be analyzed by gender. Descriptive statistics include measures of central tendency, which provide details about the average or typical case in the distribution, and measures of dispersion detailing how similar or different the scores within the sample are. Independent samples *t* tests will also be analyzed to compare means within the sample.

I am interested to see if facility factors or individual factors are more predictive of victimization experiences, and if this relationship is similar for males and females. Using SPSS, separate OLS regression models will be run for males and females for each form of victimization (robbery, physical assault, and sexual assault). In addition, although not shown, separate OLS regression models will be run including only facility and only individual level factors by gender (available upon request). In order to control for the possibility of over-reporting of victimization

experiences (see Sedlak 2010) any outliers that exceeded two standard deviations for robbery, physical assault, or sexual assault victimizations were excluded from analysis. Once these outliers were excluded from analysis the final sample size included 1,529 female and 4,842 male youth. In Chapter Four the descriptive statistics and results from the linear regressions will be presented.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

There were three dependent variables examined in this research, each a separate measure of victimization among youth in residential placement: frequency of robbery, physical assault, and sexual assault. Independent variables were included to analyze both facility-level risk factors and individual-level risk factors. Descriptive statistics by gender and *t* test results are presented in Table 1. Results from the *t* tests indicated significant differences between means for boys and girls for all variables except correctional facilities. The sample included mostly male youth ($N = 4,842$) living in either Detention facilities (28%) or Correction facilities (39%). A total of 1,529 female youth were also included in this analysis. The majority of females also resided in either Detention facilities (38%) or Correction facilities (37%). A larger proportion of girls reported that they lived in a coed facility (61%) compared to boys (39%). Boys lived in facilities with a larger population on average ($M = 196.59$, $SD = 179.81$) and typically shared a sleeping room with at least two people ($M = 2.03$, $SD = 2.47$), compared with females who lived in slightly smaller facilities on average ($M = 168.89$, $SD = 163.62$) and typically shared a sleeping room with one other individual ($M = 1.14$, $SD = 1.71$). Male youth, on average, resided in living units with a higher proportion of likely motivated offenders compared to their female counterparts. Specifically, male youth shared living units that consisted of 42 percent violent offenders ($SD = .24$), and 24 percent gang members ($SD = .22$) on average, while girls had slightly lower

proportions of violent offenders (33%, $SD = .20$) and gang members (14%, $SD = .13$) in their living units on average.

Both male and female youth reported their family visited once per week, on average (males: $M = 2.27$, $SD = 1.30$; females: $M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.32$). Male youth reported being in the facility for an average of 5 months at the time of the survey ($M = 192$ days, $SD = 255.15$), which was about a month longer than female youth ($M = 162$ days, $SD = 225.78$). Both boys ($M = 1.38$, $SD = 1.28$) and girls ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 1.35$) reported being at least one year younger than the oldest resident in their living unit on average. Approximately 24 percent of male youth and 13 percent of female youth identified as members of a gang. Youth's career offense relative to the most serious co-resident in their living unit was similar for both boys and girls. Specifically, respondent's career offense, on average, was less serious than their most serious co-resident by at least 2 levels for both males ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 2.42$) and females ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 2.21$). Over half of girls in custody reported experiencing physical abuse (55%) or emotional abuse (55%) prior to their stay in custody and one-third reported prior sexual abuse (35%). Male youth also experienced prior physical (31%), emotional (23%), and sexual abuse (6%), but at notably lower rates than the girls. The majority of male youth in custody identified as Hispanic (35%) or Black (30%). Female youth, on the other hand, identified as mostly White (31%) or Hispanic (28%).

The dependent variables in this analysis included the number of times youth reported being victims of robbery, physical assault, and sexual assault while in custody. Male youth reported more incidents of both robbery ($M = .27$, $SD = 1.19$) and physical assault ($M = 1.48$, $SD = 3.71$) on average compared to females ($M = .18$, $SD = .86$; $M = 1.25$, $SD = 2.95$, respectively). However, females reported over twice as many incidents of sexual assault ($M = .13$, $SD = .68$) on average compared to their male counterparts ($M = .06$, $SD = .50$).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and *t* test Results (*N* = 6,371)

<i>Variables</i>	BOYS (<i>n</i> = 4,842)			GIRLS (<i>n</i> = 1,529)		
	<i>Range</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
Coed Facility	0-1	.390	-	0-1	.610***	-
Detention Facility	0-1	.278	-	0-1	.382***	-
Correction Facility	0-1	.391	-	0-1	.375	-
Community Facility	0-1	.115	-	0-1	.081***	-
Residential Facility	0-1	.075	-	0-1	.152***	-
Camp Facility	0-1	.141	-	0-1	.011***	-
Facility Size	6-886	196.590	179.810	8-804	168.890***	163.625
Sleeping Room	0-7	2.030	2.471	0-7	1.140***	1.707
Prop. of Violent Offenders	0-1	.419	.241	0-1	.325***	.200
Prop. of Gang Members	0-1	.237	.217	0-1	.138***	.130
Offense Severity	1-12	3.570	2.425	1-12	3.800**	2.211
Length of Stay	15-2038	191.970	255.153	15-1870	162.270***	225.783
Age Gap	0-8	1.380	1.276	0-7	1.670***	1.350
Gang Membership	0-1	.239	-	0-1	.133***	-
Physical Abuse	0-1	.306	-	0-1	.554***	-
Emotional Abuse	0-1	.231	-	0-1	.546***	-
Sexual Abuse	0-1	.061	-	0-1	.348***	-
Family Contact	0-4	2.270	1.303	0-4	2.350*	1.317
Hispanic	0-1	.347	-	0-1	.283***	-
White	0-1	.258	-	0-1	.310***	-
Black	0-1	.300	-	0-1	.265**	-
Other Race	0-1	.075	-	0-1	.111***	-
Robbery	0-12	.273	1.190	0-12	.183**	.855
Physical Assault	0-26	1.476	3.709	0-26	1.245*	2.947
Sexual Assault	0-8	.063	.503	0-8	.132***	.678

Data Source: Survey of Youth in Residential Placement (SYRP) 2003

Note: **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001

Using SPSS I performed separate OLS regressions for male and female youth to determine the association between the independent variables and risk of victimization, controlling for other variables. The OLS regression results are shown in Tables 2, 3 and 4. Standardized β are presented in the text. In the following summary I focus on the variables that were significantly related to risk of robbery, physical assault, and sexual assault victimization.

First, the results for the regression analysis of robbery victimization are presented in Table 2. The standardized coefficients showed the relative influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable, while holding the other variables constant. The R^2 value of .024 shows that approximately 2.4% of the variance in the number of times boys are robbed while in custody can be explained by the combined influence of all the independent variables. One facility level variable and six individual level factors were significant for boys, which provided more support for Hypothesis Two than Hypothesis One. The number of residents youth shared a sleeping room with ($\beta = .05, p < .01$) was the only significant facility variable for boys in the robbery model. The positive coefficients suggested that as the number of residents in the living unit increased, so too did the frequency of robbery victimization among boys. Several individual level factors were significant. Time spent in placement was positive and significantly related to frequency of robbery victimization for male youth in custody ($\beta = .04, p < .05$) which indicated that the more time boys spent in custody, the more their robbery victimization also increased. Boys' age gap ($\beta = .03, p < .05$) and prior experiences of emotional abuse ($\beta = .05, p < .01$) and sexual abuse ($\beta = .06, p < .001$) were also positively related to incidents of robbery victimization. Frequency of family contact ($\beta = -.06, p < .001$) had a significant negative relationship, suggesting that youth who had greater family contact reported fewer experiences of robbery in the facility. Male youth who identified as Hispanic ($\beta = -.0, p < .01$) also reported fewer incidents of robbery victimization compared to Whites.

The regression analysis for girls is also presented in Table 2. Approximately 5.2% ($R^2 = .052$) of the variance in robbery victimization can be explained by the independent variables. For female youth, two facility level factors were significant in predicting robbery victimization, providing limited support for Hypothesis One. Living in a residential facility ($\beta = .06, p < .05$)

was significant and positive for females in the robbery model. This indicated that females in residential facilities reported more experiences of robbery in the facility compared to females living in correctional facilities. The number of youth females shared sleeping rooms with was also significant and there was a positive relationship which indicated that the more individuals girls shared a sleeping room with, the more experiences of robbery they reported in the facility ($\beta = .09, p < .01$). Two individual level risk factors were also significant, which provided more support for Hypothesis Two. For female youth, length of stay ($\beta = .16, p < .001$) and age relative to the oldest in the living unit ($\beta = .06, p < .05$) were positively related to experiences of robbery victimization. For female youth, the longer they stayed in the facility and the larger the age gap between the resident and the oldest person in the living unit, the more frequent their experiences with robbery victimization.

Results from a separate regression analysis (not shown), which included only facility level factors, found living in detention, community, and camp facilities to be significant for male youth. However, when the individual level factors were included in the full model (shown in Table 2), these factors were no longer significant which provided further support for Hypothesis Two that individual level factors were more important in boys' experiences of robbery victimization in custody. In addition, the standardized beta coefficients showed that for male youth, the strongest associations with frequency of robbery victimization were individual level factors: Hispanic, frequency of family contact and prior experiences of sexual abuse. Separate regression analysis for facility and individual level factors (not shown) did not produce different results for girls. The standardized beta coefficients shown in Table 2 show that for females in custody, their strongest associations with frequency of robbery were length of stay, an individual

level risk factor, and number of youth who shared sleeping rooms and those who lived in residential facilities, both facility level risk factors.

Table 2. Regression Analysis Results for Robbery by Gender

Variables	BOYS			GIRLS		
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	β
(Constant)	.362***	.084	-	-.066	.101	-
Coed Facility	-.010	.052	-.004	-.073	.054	-.041
Detention Facility	-.049	.062	-.019	.093	.060	.053
Community Facility	-.102	.065	-.027	.024	.088	.008
Residential Facility	-.076	.074	-.017	.143*	.070	.060
Camp Facility	-.111 [†]	.065	-.032	.034	.219	.004
Facility Size	.000	.000	.011	.000	.000	.009
Sleeping Room	.024**	.008	.051	.045**	.013	.090
Proportion of Violent Offenders	-.029	.077	-.006	-.053	.128	-.012
Proportion of Gang Members	-.036	.096	-.007	.261	.198	.040
Offense Severity	-.010	.007	-.021	-.012	.010	-.031
Length of Stay	.000*	.000	.036	.001***	.000	.158
Age Gap	.031*	.014	.033	.035*	.016	.055
Gang Membership	.072	.046	.026	.075	.069	.030
Physical Abuse	-.019	.043	-.007	.080	.054	.047
Emotional Abuse	.139**	.047	.049	-.052	.053	-.031
Sexual Abuse	.276***	.074	.056	.060	.051	.034
Family Contact	-.054***	.014	.059	-.006	.017	-.009
Hispanic	-.158**	.046	-.063	-.052	.057	-.028
Black	-.010	.046	-.004	.113 [†]	.057	.058
Other Race	.011	.070	.002	-.012	.075	-.004
<i>R</i> ²	.024			.052		
<i>F</i>	5.817***			4.115***		
<i>N</i>	4842			1529		

Note: Comparison groups are Correctional Facility and White.

[†]*p* < .1, **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001

These findings indicated limited support for Hypothesis One which predicted facility level factors would be significant in determining the presence of motivated offenders and the availability of capable guardians, shaping risk of victimization for youth in custody. There were

two facility level factors significant for female youth (residential facility and sleeping room) while only one (sleeping room) was significant for male youth in custody. I found more support for Hypothesis Two, especially for male youth. Hypothesis Two predicted that individual level factors would be significant in determining target suitability and shaping risk of victimization for youth. The model for robbery found two individual level factors significant for female youth (length of stay and age gap) and six individual level factors were significant for boys (length of stay, age gap, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, family contact, and Hispanics). The results also showed some differences in risk factors for boys and girls, which indicated that there is some gendered difference in experiences of victimization in residential placement facilities. For example, while the models for both boys and girls showed a significant relationship between sleeping room, length of stay, age gap, and the occurrence of robbery, for girls, living in a residential facility also mattered. While for boys, prior experiences of emotional abuse, sexual abuse, frequency of family contact, and Hispanics was also significant.

Table 3 presents the results of the analysis predicting experiences of physical assault. Just over 5 percent ($R^2 = .053$) of the variance in number of times boys are physically assaulted in custody can be explained by the independent variables included in this analysis. Two facility level risk factors were significant in predicting male youth's physical assault victimization, which provided limited support for Hypothesis One: living in a community facility ($\beta = -.04, p < .05$), and the proportion of youth in their living unit with a violent offense ($\beta = .03, p < .05$). These findings suggest that male youth who resided in a community facility reported fewer experiences of physical assault compared to youth who resided in a correctional facility. Male youth who shared living units with a large proportion of violent offenders, also reported more experiences of physical assault.

Numerous individual level risk factors were also significant for male youth, which supported Hypothesis Two. Number of days spent in the facility ($\beta = .04, p < .05$), youth's age gap ($\beta = .03, p < .05$), offense severity ($\beta = -.04, p < .05$), prior experiences of emotional abuse ($\beta = .11, p < .001$), and sexual abuse ($\beta = .05, p < .01$), all had a positive relationship with physical assault. According to the physical assault model, the more time male youth spent in the facility, the greater their experiences of physical assault victimization. As the age gap between the respondents and the oldest youths in their living unit increased, so too did their experiences of physical assault. Surprisingly, the greater the gap in offense severity between respondents and the most severe offenders in the living unit, the fewer the reports of physical assault victimization. Meaning youth with offenses less severe (by several levels) than others in the living unit reported fewer experiences of physical assault victimization. There was a positive relationship between prior experiences of both emotional and sexual abuse and frequency of physical assault victimization for male youth. Male youth who had been previously victimized, reported more instances of physical assault. Youth's frequency of family contact ($\beta = -.04, p < .01$) indicated a negative relationship. For male youth in custody, more frequent family contact was related to fewer experiences with physical assault. Hispanic male youth ($\beta = -.12, p < .001$) reported significantly fewer experiences of physical assault compared to Whites, and Black male youth ($\beta = -.07, p < .001$) also reported fewer experiences of physical assault compared to Whites.

Table 3 also presents the results of the regression analysis for female youth and reports of physical assault. The R^2 value of .078 means about 7.8 percent of the variance in female youth experiences of physical assault in custody can be explained by all the independent variables. For female youth, three facility level risk factors had a significant relationship with physical assault

experiences in the facility: female youth who lived in a coed facility ($\beta = -.08, p < .01$), community facility ($\beta = -.06, p < .05$), and residential facility ($\beta = .06, p < .05$), which provided some support for Hypothesis One. Female youth who lived in a coed facility, reported fewer experiences of physical assault on average, compared to youth who lived in female only facilities. Girls who lived in community facilities reported fewer experiences of physical assault, while those who lived in residential facilities reported more physical assault victimizations compared to girls in correctional facilities. Five individual level factors were also significant in the physical assault model for female youth, which provided more support for Hypothesis Two. Length of stay ($\beta = .12, p < .001$) and prior experiences of sexual abuse ($\beta = .08, p < .01$) were both positively related to experiences of physical assault in custody for girls. Among female youth, those who stayed in the facility longer, and experienced sexual abuse before entering the facility, reported more incidents of physical assault victimization. Female youth who identified as Hispanic ($\beta = -.09, p < .01$), Black ($\beta = -.07, p < .05$), or indicated another race ($\beta = -.06, p < .05$) reported fewer experiences of physical assault compared to White girls.

Hypothesis One predicted that facility level factors would be significant in predicting the number of times youth experienced physical assault. These results indicated that some facility factors were in fact important for both male and female youth, but also showed that the individual level factors that were significant for boys and girls were unique. Hypothesis Two predicted that individual level factors would also be significant. The regression analysis supported this hypothesis too, and also showed that individual level risk factors seemed to be more significant for male youth. For example, the facility-level risk factor that was significantly related to the frequency of physical assault for both boys and girls was living in a community facility, while for boys the proportion of violent offenders was also significant. For female youth,

living in a coed or residential facility was also significant, which supported Hypothesis One. In addition, length of stay, prior experiences of sexual abuse, Hispanic and Black were significant individual-level factors for both boys and girls. Offense severity, age gap, prior experiences of emotional abuse, and family contact were also significant for male youth, while identifying as another race was also significant for girls in custody. A separate regression that included only facility level factors and frequency of physical assault (not shown) found camp facilities to be significant for male youth and detention facilities also became significant for both genders. However, when the individual level factors were added to the analysis these were no longer significant, further supporting the importance of individual factors in determining experiences of victimization for youth in custody. These findings also showed variations in the factors related to experiences of victimization for male and female youth in custody. While the beta coefficients displayed in Table 3 show that the strongest associations for physical assault were observed among individual level factors for both genders, for male youth these variables included Hispanic, Black, and prior experiences of emotional abuse, while for females, their strongest associations were length of stay, Hispanic, and co-ed facility (a facility level risk factor).

Table 3. Regression Analysis Results for Physical Assault by Gender

Variables	BOYS			GIRLS		
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	β
(Constant)	1.845***	.257	-	1.027**	.343	-
Coed Facility	-.204	.161	-.027	-.487**	.183	-.080
Detention Facility	-.127	.191	-.015	-.184	.203	-.030
Community Facility	-.460*	.198	-.040	-.596*	.299	-.055
Residential Facility	-.352	.226	-.025	.513*	.239	.062
Camp Facility	-.364 [†]	.200	-.034	-1.283 [†]	.743	-.044
Facility Size	.000	.000	-.007	.001	.001	.039
Sleeping Room	.038	.024	.025	.038	.044	.022
Proportion of Violent Offenders	.487*	.237	.032	-.145	.433	-.010
Proportion of Gang Members	.117	.296	.007	1.243 [†]	.672	.055
Offense Severity	-.055*	.022	-.036	-.031	.034	-.023
Length of Stay	.001*	.000	.037	.002***	.000	.118
Age Gap	.090*	.042	.031	.048	.055	.022
Gang Membership	.034	.143	.004	.449 [†]	.234	.052
Physical Abuse	.227 [†]	.133	.028	.280	.183	.047
Emotional Abuse	.981***	.143	.111	.215	.179	.036
Sexual Abuse	.718**	.228	.046	.483**	.174	.078
Family Contact	-.117**	.042	-.041	-.032	.057	-.014
Hispanic	-.968***	.141	-.124	-.611**	.193	-.093
Black	-.595***	.142	-.073	-.466*	.195	-.070
Other Race	-.027	.214	-.002	-.520*	.255	-.056
<i>R</i> ²	.053			.078		
<i>F</i>	13.552***			6.348***		
<i>N</i>	4842			1529		

Note: Standardized coefficients shown. Comparison groups are Correctional Facility and White.

[†] $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Lastly, Table 4 shows the results for the regression analysis of sexual assault victimization experiences for both boys and girls. The R^2 tells us that 2.7 percent of the variance in sexual assault victimizations can be explained by the independent variables in this analysis. No facility level factors were significant for boys in this regression analysis, which provided no support for Hypothesis One. Five individual level variables were significant, which provided support for Hypothesis Two. Offense severity had a negative relationship with frequency of sexual assault ($\beta = -.03$, $p < .05$). This means that the larger the gap between a respondent's

offense severity and the most severe offender in the living unit, the fewer experiences of sexual assault victimization. Among male youth in custody, identifying as a gang member ($\beta = .04, p < .05$) was associated with increased frequencies of sexual assault. Prior experiences of both emotional abuse ($\beta = .04, p < .05$) and sexual abuse ($\beta = .13, p < .001$) were also significantly related to experiences of sexual assault victimization; male youth who experienced emotional abuse or sexual abuse prior to entering the facility, reported more sexual assault victimization during their stay. Black male youth ($\beta = .04, p < .05$) and those who indicated another race ($\beta = .04, p < .01$) also reported more sexual assault victimization in comparison to White male youth.

The models predicting risk of sexual assault among female youth in custody ($R^2 = .052$) show that 5.2 percent of the variance in sexual assault experiences while in custody can be explained by the independent variables. There was only one significant facility level factor, but several significant individual factors, which indicated limited support for Hypothesis One, but greater support for Hypothesis Two. For girls in custody, living in a coed facility ($\beta = -.09, p < .01$) was negatively related to sexual assault victimization. This means that living in a coed facility reduced the frequency of sexual assault victimizations for girls in custody. Time spent in placement ($\beta = .06, p < .05$) was positive and significantly related to frequency of sexual assault. For female youth this indicated that a longer stay in the facility could also mean more experiences of sexual assault victimization. Gang membership ($\beta = .12, p < .001$), as well as experiencing sexual abuse growing up ($\beta = .08, p < .01$) were both positively related to experiences of sexual assault in custody. This indicated that female youth who were gang members, or previously experienced sexual abuse, reported more experiences of sexual assault during their stay in custody. Female youth who identified as other race ($\beta = -.06, p < .05$) reported fewer experiences of sexual assault in comparison to White girls in custody.

Among male and female youth in custody, few facility level and some individual level risk factors were significant in predicting sexual assault victimization while in custody. These findings provided limited support for Hypothesis One and more support for Hypothesis Two. My primary research question asked if there were gender differences in the affects of facility and individual level factors. The results showed that the single institutional-level factor that was significant in the sexual assault models was unique; living in a coed facility was related to sexual assault experiences for girls only. These results showed that some similar individual factors were significant for male and female youth, when explaining the frequency of sexual assault in custody. For both boys and girls, gang membership, prior sexual abuse, and other race mattered, but for boys, offense severity, prior emotional abuse, and being Black also mattered, while for girls length of stay was significant. For boys especially, more individual level risk factors were found to be significant. An additional regression analysis (not shown) provided further support for this finding. When only facility level factors were included in the model, proportion of violent offenders was significant for male youth and proportion of gang members became significant for female youth. However, when individual level factors were controlled for, the facility level factors were no longer significant, which indicated greater importance of individual level factors in determining experiences of sexual assault among youth in custody. In addition, the strongest measures of association for the sexual assault model were also individual risk factors except female youth had a strong association between coed facilities and experiences of sexual assault. For male youth, their strongest associations were prior experiences of emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and identifying as other race, while the strongest associations for female youth were gang membership and prior experiences of sexual abuse.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results for Sexual Assault by Gender

Variables	BOYS			GIRLS		
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	β
(Constant)	.024	.035	-	.185*	.080	-
Coed Facility	-.002	.022	-.002	-.127**	.043	-.091
Detention Facility	.007	.026	.006	-.033	.047	-.024
Community Facility	.003	.027	.002	-.056	.070	-.022
Residential Facility	.017	.031	.009	.088	.056	.046
Camp Facility	-.003	.027	-.002	-.063	.173	-.009
Facility Size	.000	.000	-.017	.000	.000	-.007
Sleeping Room	.003	.003	.017	.000	.010	.000
Proportion of Violent Offenders	.028	.033	.013	-.152	.101	-.045
Proportion of Gang Members	-.024	.041	-.010	.293 [†]	.157	.056
Offense Severity	-.006*	.003	-.030	-.007	.008	-.022
Length of Stay	.000	.000	.010	.000*	.000	.057
Age Gap	.005	.006	.013	-.014	.013	-.029
Gang Membership	.041*	.020	.035	.236***	.055	.118
Physical Abuse	-.006	.018	-.006	.020	.043	.015
Emotional Abuse	.046*	.020	.038	.010	.042	.008
Sexual Abuse	.263***	.031	.126	.115**	.040	.081
Family Contact	.000	.006	.000	-.006	.013	-.011
Hispanic	-.023	.019	-.021	-.015	.045	-.010
Black	.040*	.020	.036	.037	.045	.024
Other Race	.080**	.029	.042	-.138*	.060	-.064
<i>R</i> ²	.027			.052		
<i>F</i>	6.808***			4.104***		
<i>N</i>	4842			1529		

Note: Standardized coefficients shown. Comparison groups are Correctional Facility and White.

[†] $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Organization of the Next Chapter

In Chapter 5 I will provide an in depth discussion of the results and analyses. In summarizing the findings of this thesis, the results will be related to routine activities theory. I will then demonstrate how this research contributes to the current literature on victimization and its implications. I will report the limitations of the research and expand on areas future research should explore regarding experiences of robbery, physical assault, and sexual assault among youth in custody. Finally, a conclusion will be provided briefly summarizing the study.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to examine which individual and facility-level factors shape the frequency of victimization for youth in custody and how these factors vary by gender. Utilizing data from the 2003 Survey of Youth in Residential Placement (SYRP) I was able to explore youth's experiences of robbery, physical assault, and sexual assault victimization specifically. Facility and individual level risk factors were included in the OLS regression analysis. According to routine activities theory I expected to find facility-level factors to be significant in determining the presence of motivated offenders and availability of capable guardians, and individual-level factors to be significant in determining target suitability, therefore shaping experiences of victimization for youth in custody. I found minimal support for Hypothesis One. Only a few facility-level variables were significant in predicting frequency of robbery and sexual assault victimization, while more facility factors were found to predict physical assault. However, the results provided consistent support for Hypothesis Two with several individual-level factors predicting all three forms of victimization. I observed some gender overlap in significant factors related to frequency of victimization, but there were some notable differences as well.

Discussion of Results

Facility-Level Factors that Shape Risk of Victimization

Overall, the findings of this study point to some important gender differences: for female offenders, the type of facility they lived in was significant but for boys in custody, the characteristics of other offenders in their living unit were more significant in predicting experiences of victimization. Among male youth, facility level factors such as the number of youth who shared a sleeping room and the proportion of violent offenders were related to the frequency of robbery and physical assault victimization (respectively). Having a large number of youth sleeping in the same room could be troublesome for facility staff to provide adequate guardianship during the night hours, while youth who have been charged with a violent offense have already established that they are both capable and willing to commit acts of violence, indicative of a population of motivated offenders.

While the number of youth in girls' sleeping rooms was also related to the frequency of robbery, several other facility level variables were also significant that were not significant in the model for boys. Specifically, girls who lived in residential facilities experienced more frequent robbery and physical assault victimization compared to girls in correctional facilities. Previous research shows that youth with the most serious offenses (e.g., murder, rape, kidnapping) are often sentenced to corrections or residential treatment programs. Since detention and corrections programs typically use three or more locks to confine youth (Sedlak and McPherson 2010), routine activities theory would suggest female youth in residential facilities may lack the "guardianship" locks seem to provide youth in correctional facilities. In addition, one of the surprising findings of this study is that living in a coed facility was associated with fewer reports of physical and sexual assault for girls compared to living in all-female facilities. Approximately

35 percent of juvenile facilities are coed programs (Sedlak and McPherson 2010), and could offer more structured movement throughout the facility and closer monitoring by staff to protect females from more violent youth in their living units. It is possible that female youth in coed facilities are anticipated to be targets of victimization and as a result, protective measures are taken to prevent youth from being viewed as suitable targets. However, it is also possible that heterosexual girls in coed facilities have a sexual outlet by having contact with male offenders (i.e., passing notes, consensual sex) resulting in fewer sexual assaults compared to girls in same-sex facilities.

Individual-Level Factors that Shape Risk of Victimization

The findings of this analysis provided more consistent support for the importance of individual-level factors in predicting experiences of victimization for youth in custody. For example, length of stay was one of the most consistent predictors of victimization for both boys and girls in custody. As youth spent more time in custody, their experiences of robbery, physical assault, and for girls, sexual assault, also increased. This finding does not support a previous finding by Perez et al. (2010) which found that risk of victimization decreased as time served increased, but it is consistent with routine activities theory which would suggest that the longer youth are in custody and in the presence of motivated offenders, the more the opportunities for victimization. Another consistent predictor of victimization was experiencing sexual abuse prior to incarceration. For youth who experienced sexual abuse prior to their stay in custody, their experiences of physical assault, sexual assault, and for boys, robbery, also increased. Research utilizing this data by Sedlak and McPherson (2010) noted that female youth reported more than four times the rate of prior sex abuse compared to males; this could be reflective of female youth being seen as suitable targets for victimization. Although boys experienced sexual abuse less

than girls on average, it may be important to think about boys' sexual abuse in terms of its effects on later victimization as previous studies have found that risk factors operate cumulatively, meaning youth who report one type of violent victimization are more likely to report other types (Cesaroni and Peterson-Badali 2005; Sedlak et al. 2013).

These findings also suggested that several other individual-level variables were important in shaping the frequency of victimization for both boys and girls in custody, but were less consistent across models in their effects. For example, youth who had a large age gap between themselves and the oldest resident in their living unit reported more experiences of robbery and for boys, physical assault victimization as well. This finding supported previous research that has shown younger youth have a significantly higher risk of being the victim of any type of violence (Perez et al. 2010; Sedlak et al. 2013). My findings showed that gang membership was another individual-level variable that shaped the frequency of both boys' and girls' experiences of sexual assault, although similar effects were not observed for robbery or physical assault (which was marginally significant for girls). It is possible gang members are more reluctant to report incidents of robbery or physical assault, which are perceived to be normal aspects of gang processes, compared to sexual assaults. Previous research has also noted that gang members reported more personal crime victimization than non-gang members (Fox et al. 2012) and gang membership increased prison violence and other forms of prison misconduct (Wolff et al. 2009). Gang processes often involve exposure to routine activities that could increase victimization experiences through initiation rites, punishment for misbehavior, or retaliation (Katz et al. 2011). Finally, my results also showed that race was a significant individual-level factor for both boys and girls at times. For example, Hispanics and Blacks, reported significantly fewer experiences of physical assault in comparison to White youth of both genders. This finding supported

research by Fox and researchers (2012), which found that White inmates were significantly more likely to report personal victimization compared to other races. This may be because minority youth have substantially greater custody rates (Sedlak and Bruce 2010), and as a result, Whites are seen as a minority and thus more suitable targets for assault ‘behind bars.’

Gendered Differences in Risk of Victimization

The primary research question for this study asked if there were gender differences in the affects of facility and individual level factors predicting victimization experiences for youth in custody. As described above, I observed some overlap in factors related to the frequency of victimization for boys and girls. For example, sleeping room, length of stay, and age gap were significant in predicting robbery victimization for both boys and girls. Next, residing in a community facility, length of stay, prior experiences of sexual abuse, and identifying as Hispanic or Black were significant for boys’ and girls’ experiences of physical assault. Lastly, for sexual assault victimization, gang membership, a history of sexual abuse, and identifying as other race were significant for both genders. However, I also found some notable gender differences in the factors that were significant.

As described previously, for male youth in custody, the characteristics of other youth in the facility seemed to matter more in some cases with facility factors such as the proportion of violent offenders being significant for boys’ experiences with physical assault. While for girls, the type of facility seemed to matter more with factors such as residing in a coed or residential facility, being significant for girls’ and not for boys’ experiences of physical and sexual assault victimization. The findings of this analysis showed that girls who resided in a coed facility actually experienced less frequent physical and sexual assault victimization than youth who resided in all-female facilities. The more frequent experiences of both physical and sexual assault

among girls in same-sex facilities may support research by Beck and Harrison (2007) who found that more than half of incidents of assault against inmates involved sexual misconduct by staff. Housing female youth together could increase the perception of them being suitable targets, especially for physical and sexual assaults, while in custody. Future research should control for who the perpetrators of violence are – whether they are staff or other youth offenders in the facility.

Another important finding of this study is that emotional abuse and family contact were often significant for boys, but not for girls. Prior experiences of emotional abuse was positively related to the frequency of all three forms of victimization for male youth. This supported findings from Sedlak and researchers (2013) that different forms of violence tend to occur to the same youth and youth who reported any type of victimization were more likely to report other types as well. Routine activities theory would suggest youth who report any type of victimization are viewed as suitable targets. Yet a similar effect was not observed for girls. It is possible male youth externalize the effects of their abuse histories by acting aggressively or committing criminal acts, while girls are more likely to internalize their histories of abuse. If boys act aggressively in custody, especially toward other motivated offenders, it is possible they might experience more instances of victimization. Having a history of abuse could also cause boys to lack confidence or assertiveness increasing their target suitability, which might also have profound consequences for their risk of future victimization.

Race was also significant in different ways for both genders at times. In particular, among boys, experiences of sexual assault in custody were more common among Black youth and those of other races, compared to Whites. But for female youth, members of other minority races reported fewer incidents of sexual assault victimization in custody. Routine activities theory

would suggest motivated offenders choose their targets based on perceived target suitability, which may be influenced by ideas about race and gender. In this case, the findings suggest that minority males and White females are perceived to be more suitable targets.

Overall, the findings of this research challenge findings by Wooldredge and Steiner (2016) who looked at facility- and individual-level factors in adult prisons. They found that background factors were more important than confinement factors for influencing assaults on females, while both factors were significant for men. However, my findings indicated that for male youth, individual level factors were more important in determining frequency of victimization, while both individual and some facility level factors were significant for female youth in custody. My findings also indicated that incarcerated youth may have different experiences with victimization compared to adults in custody. It is possible that for youth, individual characteristics are more important in determining their victimization experiences, whereas for adults, who have had the opportunity to adapt and possibly accept their individual histories, facility factors outside of their control may matter more for their experiences of victimization in custody.

Implications

It is intended that the findings of this study could lead to the implementation of policies that will protect youth from victimization, especially in residential facilities. Although the findings of this analysis provide limited support for the effects of institutional-level factors in shaping risk of victimization, the implications of these findings do suggest several things could be done to improve the safety of youth in custody who may be viewed as suitable targets. For example, facilities should take precautions to protect more vulnerable youth, such as enhancing staff monitoring and structuring living arrangements to minimize the extent to which vulnerable

youth are exposed to older and more aggressive youth (Sedlak et al. 2013). One specific example is length of stay, which was consistently significant in predicting experiences of robbery, physical assault, and girls' experiences of sexual assault. If youth who stay in the facility longer are more likely to experience these types of victimization, the implication is to release youth back into society sooner and therefore reduce their risk of victimization. However, individual level risk factors may also increase experiences of victimization for youth outside of the facility as well, so social service providers should implement programming options such as counseling, group therapy or other outlets for youth to learn coping mechanisms and other skills (such as identifying motivated offenders, finding capable guardians, or ways to leave situations where they feel they could be targets) to help protect themselves from further victimization in the future.

Previous research has acknowledged the need for emotional health services for girls but the findings of this analysis showed that prior experiences of emotional abuse is particularly significant in predicting risk of victimization for male youth. Facilities should make it a priority to screen for abuse histories among boys as well and provide access to adequate mental health services in order to reduce experiences of victimization for youth in custody. Frequency of family contact also seems to act as a protective factor for boys in custody. If keeping in touch with family and friends while youth are in custody serves as a form of guardianship and reduces victimization experiences, youth should be provided with more opportunities to maintain contact with the outside world. Facilities could implement more options for calling or writing home, housing youth in facilities close to their parent/guardians' residence or even allowing for more visitation time.

For female youth in custody, the type of facility they reside in seemed to be more significant in predicting risk of victimization. Specifically, girls experienced more frequent robbery and physical assault victimization in residential facilities. This could be because these types of facilities are more likely to be over-crowded or understaffed, so female youth should be placed in other facility types that would offer more protection from victimization. Effort should be made to explore the characteristics of residential facilities that may place girls at greater risk of victimization. In addition, all-female facilities reported more frequent physical and sexual assault victimization in comparison to co-ed facilities. This could be due to closer monitoring and more structured movement in co-ed facilities in attempt to protect female youth from their male counterparts. Implementing greater supervision of youth in same-sex facilities and greater efforts to minimize potential victimization by staff should also be considered.

Limitations and Future Research

As with any research, this study has a few limitations that are worth noting. First, my study relies on self-reports of victimization. Researchers utilizing self-report data are often concerned with issues of both over- and under-reporting. There are multiple reasons youth in custody may not report experiences of victimization: they could be labeled as weak, a snitch, or fear retaliation from other inmates, to name a few. At the same time, other researchers have been concerned that youth in custody may over-report victimization at times (Sedlak 2010). Although outliers were excluded in the analysis, the results of this study rely on the accuracy of self-reported victimization. In addition, the measure of frequency of physical assault, one of the dependent variables in this analysis, includes a wide range of incidents, such as youth who have been beaten up *or* threatened while in custody. Future research should include separate measures for threats of violence and youth who have been physically beaten up.

Another limitation of this research is that the robbery, physical assault, and sexual assault models explain a small amount, less than 8 percent, of the variance in frequency of victimization experiences, which suggests that some other, unmeasured factors might be helpful for explaining victimization among youth in custody. In addition, routine activities theory suggested that all of the variables should be significant in predicting frequency of victimization but the results showed otherwise. It is possible that there are other measures of risk factors, especially at the facility level, that should be taken into consideration. For example, measures of youths' perceptions of staff, controls used by staff to punish inmates, and whether rules are applied fairly could be among some other better facility level predictors of victimization experiences. Finally, guardianship intensity is an important component of routine activities theory. Guardianship intensity refers to whether or not a potential guardian is available, capable, and willing to intervene (Madero-Hernandez and Fisher 2013). Utilizing secondary data, I was unable to include variables that were able to measure guardianship intensity directly. Future research should explore the impact guardianship intensity has on risk of victimization.

Conclusion

Research showed that delinquent youth are more likely to be exposed to situations that are conducive to victimization compared to youth in the general population (Chen 2009). In this study, while only a few facility-level factors were significant in determining the presence of motivated offenders and availability of capable guardians, multiple individual-level factors were significant in predicting frequency of robbery, physical assault, and sexual assault victimization experiences, especially important was youth's length of stay. The findings of this analysis suggest that routine activities theory may be helpful in explaining risk of victimization for youth in custody by identifying some of the factors that increased the risk of youth being perceived as a

suitable target. In addition, while there was some overlap in significant predictors for both male and female youth, some risk factors were unique to each gender. For boys in custody, individual level factors such as prior experiences of emotional and sexual abuse and frequency of family contact were significant in predicting victimization experiences. While for girls, facility type (coed, community or residential facility) was more important in determining frequency of victimization. Future research should continue to explore gender differences in individual and facility-level factors that contribute to the victimization experiences of those in custody so that inmates, especially youth, may be rehabilitated safely and quickly before their re-entry into society.

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