

3-2017

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Citation Details

Motz, R., Labrecque, R. M., & Smith, P. The Effect of Gang Affiliation on Post-Solitary Confinement Institutional Misconduct. Presented in March at the annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences in Kansas City, MO. March 2017

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The Effect of Gang Affiliation on Post-Solitary Confinement Institutional Misconduct

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Presented at the 54th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences
on March 24, 2017 in Kansas City, MO

Gang Affiliated Inmates

- The negative effects of prison gangs on the safety and security of prisons is well documented
 - Linked to higher likelihood of violent misconduct (e.g., Griffin & Hepburn, 2006; Pyrooz et al., 2016)
 - Disproportionately involved in distribution of contraband and drugs (e.g., Fischer, 2001; Fleisher & Decker, 2001)
 - Noncompliant with rehabilitative programming (e.g., Colon, 2004; Sheldon, 1991)
 - Connected to the escalation of prison riots (Useem & Reisig, 1999)

Solitary Confinement (SC)



The Debate Over the Use of SC

- Fueled by discussions of the constitutionality and humanitarian concerns related to its use, as well as its utility as a management tool (Labrecque & Smith, 2013)
- Proponents of SC
 - Increases safety, promotes order, and expands control in prison
 - Believe it is the best currently available tool to reduce criminality and demonstrate that “crime does not pay”
- Critics of SC
 - “Cruel and unusual punishment”
 - Believe SC increases the criminogenic risk of those who are exposed to it

Effects of SC: What Does the Research Say?

- A review of the research on SC reveals an unimpressive literature base (Gendreau & Labrecque, 2015; Labrecque et al., 2013)
- Few studies have investigated the influence of SC on behavioral outcomes in and out of prison
 - Even fewer have looks at behavioral outcomes inside prison
- Studies on the effect of SC suggest that SC appears to have a weak-to-nonexistent effect on subsequent inmate misconduct (e. g., Labrecque, 2015; Morris, 2016)
 - **Virtually no studies on how SC effects specific inmate populations**

Current Study

- There is a pressing need to investigate the effects of SC on special populations of inmates (Piquero et al., 2011)
- *Are gang affiliated inmates more likely to engage in institutional misconduct within six months of being released from SC compared to non-gang affiliated inmates?*
- *Does gang affiliation significantly influence the effect of any risk factors on post-SC institutional misconduct?*

Data

- Official data obtained from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC)
- Sample includes male inmates admitted into ODRC between 2007 and 2011 who had served more than 365 consecutive days in prison and who had served time in disciplinary segregations (DS)
 - Final sample size of 11,936 inmates

Prevalence of Institutional Misconduct

- Defined here as an inmate being found guilty by the ODRC Rules Infraction Board of violating the inmate rules of conduct within six months of being released from DS
- Misconduct was further divided into three separate outcomes
 - Violent (e.g., physical assault)
 - Nonviolent (e.g., property offenses and security offenses)
 - Drug (e.g., possession of drugs and/or alcohol)
- Operationalized dichotomously (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*)

Past or Present Gang Affiliation

- All inmates documented by ODRC as having a past or present association with a known gang from a list of security threat groups (STG)

Additional Risk Factors for Misconduct

- Days spent in SC
- Age at intake
- Race
- Mental health diagnosis
- Sentence length
- Custody supervision level
- Most serious offense for which an inmate was sentenced
 - Violent offense
 - Nonviolent offense
 - Drug offense
- Prior incarceration

Measure	Gang affiliated inmates	Non-gang affiliated inmates
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Dependent variables		
Prevalence of violent misconduct	.26 (.44)	.15 (.36)
Prevalence of nonviolent misconduct	.47 (.50)	.37 (.48)
Prevalence of drug misconduct	.10 (.30)	.07 (.25)
Predictor variables		
Days spent in SC	11.87 (11.92)	11.13 (11.09)
Age at intake	25.22 (6.78)	29.89 (10.14)
Black	.57 (.50)	.52 (.50)
Mental health diagnosis	.32 (.46)	.34 (.47)
Most serious offense type:		
Violent	.67 (.47)	.62 (.49)
Nonviolent	.26 (.44)	.28 (.45)
Drug	.07 (.26)	.10 (.30)
Prior incarceration	.54 (.50)	.50 (.50)
Sentence length (months)	61.96 (67.27)	65.88 (73.92)
Custody supervision level	2.25 (.61)	1.99 (.66)
	<i>n</i> = 3,886	<i>n</i> = 8,050

Logistic Regression Results for Factors Predicting Prevalence of Different Types of Misconduct After Stay in Disciplinary Segregation

	Violent Misconduct	Nonviolent Misconduct	Drug Misconduct
	Exp(B)	Exp(B)	Exp(B)
Gang affiliation	1.58***	1.28***	1.37***
Days spent in SC	1.00	.98	1.00
Age at intake	.95***	.97***	.96***
Black	1.50***	1.05	.66***
Mental health diagnosis	1.76***	1.76***	1.46***
Most serious offense type			
Nonviolent offense	.93	1.12*	1.12
Drug offense	.51***	.63***	.85
(Violent offense)			
Prior incarceration	.97	1.04	1.28**
Sentence length (log)	.89***	.84***	1.04
Custody supervision level	1.08	1.13***	1.05

Conditional Effects of the Logistical Regression Analysis for Predictors of Post-Solitary Confinement Violent Misconduct

	Gang Affiliated Inmates	Non-Gang Affiliated Inmates	Equality of Coefficients
	Exp(B)	Exp(B)	z
Days spent in SC	1.00	1.00	
Age at intake	.94***	.96***	-2.01*
Black	1.26**	1.67***	-2.57*
Mental health diagnosis	1.76***	1.77***	
Most serious offense type			
Nonviolent offense	1.08	.83*	2.11*
Drug offense (Violent offense)	.58**	.47***	
Prior incarceration	.95	1.00	
Sentence length (log)	.90	.88**	
Custody supervision level	.99	1.16*	

Conditional Effects of the Logistical Regression Analysis for Predictors of Post-Solitary Confinement Nonviolent Misconduct

	Gang Affiliated Inmates	Non-Gang Affiliated Inmates	Equality of Coefficients
	Exp(B)	Exp(B)	z
Days spent in SC	.99*	1.00	
Age at intake	.96***	.97***	
Black	.88	1.11*	-2.70**
Mental health diagnosis	1.73***	1.77***	
Most serious offense type			
Nonviolent offense	.95	1.21***	-2.39*
Drug offense	.67**	.63***	
(Violent offense)			
Prior incarceration	.95	1.10	
Sentence length (log)	.87**	.82***	
Custody supervision level	.99	1.23***	-2.70**

Table 6. Conditional Effects of the Logistical Regression Analysis for Predictors of Post-Solitary Confinement Drug Misconduct

	Gang Affiliated Inmates	Non-Gang Affiliated Inmates	Equality of Coefficients
	Exp(B)	Exp(B)	z
Days spent in SC	1.00	1.01	
Age at intake	.99	.95***	2.83**
Black	.67***	.67***	
Mental health diagnosis	1.55***	1.39***	
Most serious offense type			
Nonviolent offense	1.22	1.05	
Drug offense	.82	.83	
(Violent offense)			
Prior incarceration	1.07	1.35**	
Sentence length (log)	.99	1.09	
Custody supervision level	1.06	1.02	

Summary of Main Findings

- Gang affiliated inmates are more likely to engage in all types of misconduct within six months of being released from SC
- Additional risk factors have a greater influence on non-gang affiliated inmates than gang affiliated inmates
 - Suggests that gang affiliation may be the major risk factor for driving gang affiliated inmates' post-SC misconduct
- Length of time exposed to SC conditions appears to have no effect on subsequent misconduct for all groups examined

Limitations

- Findings may not be generalizable to all prisons, solitary confinement settings, or inmates
- Study relied on the use of official data that were limited to the quality and type of information collected and made available by ODRC
 - Gang information is only what it is known to ODRC

Conclusions

- One of the first studies to examine the unique effect of gang affiliation on post-SC misconduct
- Evidence suggests gang affiliated inmates represent a unique subpopulation who have a difficult time adjusting back to the general population after SC exposure
- SC appears to have neither a specific deterrent effect on inmates nor does it increase problematic behavior
 - Calls into question the goal of SC and potentially suggests the need for prison administrators to adjust these goals and the overall purpose of SC
- More research is needed in this area—on gangs and other special inmate populations

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