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UNDERSTANDING RACIAL DISPARATE TREATMENT OF JUVENILE
INTERPERSONAL VIOLENT OFFENDERS IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE
SYSTEM USING FOCAL CONCERNS THEORY

By

Suzanne M. Overstreet
B.A., University of Findlay, 2012
M.S., University of Cincinnati, 2013

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
In Criminal Justice

Department of Criminal Justice
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

December 2022

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A Dissertation Approved on
October 4th, 2022

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my loving and supportive parents, Suzanne and Roger Overstreet. You were both always there when I needed you. Thank you for the unconditional love and support you provided me throughout my life. Thanks for talking me through my day, always picking up the phone no matter the hour, spending quality time, sending money when I needed it, and allowing me to grow as an individual. I literally would not have gotten this far had it not been for the two of you. While my mother is not here physically, I know she is watching over me and in my heart. You are both my heroes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Throughout my academic career, I am blessed to have had the privilege to work with and get to know so many amazing people. Thus, I would first like to thank the chairs of my dissertation, Dr. George Higgins and Dr. Gennaro Vito. Thank you so much for all your hard work and dedication. I would also like to thank the other members of my committee, Dr. Cherie Dawson-Edwards and Dr. Cathy Marcum. Thank you all for hanging in there and never giving up on me. Second, I would like to acknowledge the professors at the University of Louisville whom I had class with and/or offered me opportunities to work on projects with them, Dr. Viviana Andreescu, Dr. Kristin Swartz, and Dr. Ben Fisher. In addition, I would like to acknowledge the staff at the University of Louisville, Ginger Brown, Kim Hendricks, Kamla Gant, Sandy Wade, Karen Thompson, and James Jenkins. Thank you for all that you do, you've all been so kind and helpful over the years. Next, I would like to acknowledge my former professors who guided me throughout my academic career. Thank you to Dr. Francis Cullen from the University of Cincinnati and Dr. Paul Chwialkowski from the University of Findlay. Thank you for taking the time to call and offer guidance when I needed it, and always checking in on me to make sure I was doing well. Thank you to Dr. Jeffery Walker and Dr. Stacy Moak from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and Dr. Susan McNeeley from the Minnesota Department of Corrections for providing much support and guidance over the years. Further, I would like to acknowledge my colleague for his support and scholarly insights, Dr. Rick Dierenfeldt from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Additionally,

would like to acknowledge my wonderful friends whom I've met over the course of my life for being there for me in various capacities. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my all-star family who contributed in different ways to help me get to this point and for believing in me. Thank you to my superhero parents, Suzanne and Roger Overstreet. Thank you to my siblings, Angela and Jason Schriver, Britteny Schroyer, Liz and Kris Overstreet, Jamie and Roger Jr. Overstreet, Trennt Overstreet, and Branden Overstreet. Thank you to my sweet and loving nieces and nephews who bring much happiness into my life. And a special thanks to my husband and partner in crime, Peter Juenke, who moved from Germany to the U.S. to support me during trying times. Thank you for always standing by my side through the good and the bad.

From Emily Dickinson:

"And, if I go while you're still here...

Know that I live on,

Vibrating to a different measure

Behind a thin veil you cannot see through.

You will not see me,

So you must have faith.

I wait for the time when we can soar together again,

Both aware of each other.

Until then, live your life to the fullest

And when you need me,

Just whisper my name in your heart,

...I will be there."

ABSTRACT

UNDERSTANDING RACIAL DISPARATE TREATMENT OF JUVENILE INTERPERSONAL VIOLENT OFFENDERS IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM USING FOCAL CONCERNS THEORY

Suzanne M. Overstreet

10.04.2022

Disproportionate minority contact (DMC) is a salient issue that has been found at every stage of the decision-making process in the juvenile justice system (Hawkins & Kempf-Leonard, 2005; Kempf-Leonard, 2007; Bishop, 2005; Leiber, Bishop, & Chamlin, 2010; Leiber & Stairs, 1999). Existing research indicates that DMC influences adjudication for drug, property, and personal crimes (Fergusson, Horwood, & Swain-Campbell, 2003; Frazier, Bishop, & Henretta, 1992; Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Leiber & Mack, 2003; Hawkins & Kempf-Leonard, 2005; Leiber, 2015). Because intimate partner violence (IPV) is a major public health problem and global concern (Djamba & Kimuna, 2008; Goo & Harlow, 2012; Laisser, Nyström, Lugina, & Emmelin, 2011; Simister, 2010; WHO, 2013), the current study examines DMC at adjudication among youth charged for crimes of interpersonal violence. This research uses administrative, Court Designated Worker (CDW) data collected from 2014 to 2016 ($n = 699$). The results are contextualized using Steffensmeier's version of focal concerns theory of judicial decision-making (Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998). This study assesses race and two seriousness of offense measures to establish whether a link exists between race and

adjudication. The results of this study coincide with previous research. These results are discussed in terms of policy implications, limitations, and future research.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present study is to examine the context where potential racial disparities are present at adjudication of the juvenile justice system concerning intimate partner violence (IPV) cases. For many decades, research has heavily focused on IPV among adult victims and offenders with research indicating that IPV occurs at high rates (Love & Richards, 2013). IPV refers to physical, sexual, verbal, and psychological harm by a former or current partner or spouse (National Institute of Justice, 2016). Recent studies show that over 43 million women and 38 million men experience psychological or physical aggression by an intimate partner during their lifetime (CDC, 2018). In 2017, 666,301 were victims of IPV (Morgan & Truman, 2020). In 2015, an estimated 363,500 women were victims of the following: sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking related (Morgan & Truman, 2020; Petrosky, Blair, Betz, Fowler, Jack, & Lyons, 2017; Smith et al., 2018) suggesting IPV is an issue.

While the majority of IPV research has primarily examined women as victims and men as perpetrators, existing research indicates that IPV victimization and perpetration rates are similar among juveniles (i.e., boys and girls) (Edwards, Mattingly, Dixon, & Banyard, 2014). Further, rates of IPV among adolescents and young adults are especially high (Love & Richards, 2013; Close, 2005; Holt & Espelage, 2005). Sometimes referred to as dating violence, IPV among adolescents includes threatened or actual physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, or emotional abuse directed toward a current or former

partner (Saltzman, Fanslow, McMahon, & Shelley, 1999; Wolfe, Scott, Wekerle, & Pittman, 2001). A significant percentage of victim's experience IPV prior to age 18 (CDC, 2018). More recently, researchers have begun to shift their focus on the growing concern of adolescent IPV (Love & Richards, 2013; Banyard & Cross, 2008; Catalano, 2007; Teten, Ball, Valle, Noonan, & Rosenbluth, 2009; Wolfe, Wekerle, Scott, Straatman, & Grasley, 2004; Yan, Howard, Beck, Shattuck, & Hallmark-Kerr, 2010). By doing so, this research aims to understand who is most at risk for IPV, what percent of teenage relationships are abusive, what types of mental health issues do teens suffer from as a result of their abuse, and what is the main cause of abuse. Different methods are available to help gather this information, but the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for instance, uses a risk behavior survey. Given the high rates of IPV among both adults and adolescents, and the detrimental consequences it has on the victims, it is crucial to further examine this issue in order to inform prevention and intervention efforts.

Rates of IPV are high among all adolescents. However, Black youth are more likely to be victims and perpetrators of violence with research indicating that among Black youth, 14.3% are perpetrators of physical IPV compared to Hispanics at 11.5% and 8.0% for that of White youth (Breiding, Chen, & Black, 2014). Consequently, IPV as a victim and perpetrator has a racial component, possibly resulting from disproportionate minority contact among youth (Hawkins & Kempf-Leonard, 2005; Kempf-Leonard, 2007; Bishop, 2005). Prior research has found that race impacts many decisions throughout the juvenile justice process including whether to make an arrest and the final outcome of a given case (Kurtz, Linnemann, & Spohn, 2008; Moak, Thomas, Walker, & Gann, 2012; Leiber, 2015; Fix, Cyperski, Burkhart, 2015; Barton, 1976; Bishop &

Leiber, 2011; Davis & Sorensen, 2013). Thus, race could be playing a critical role in cases regarding IPV, which might be why researchers are finding that IPV is most prevalent among Black adolescents compared to that of Whites. Previous research demonstrates that Black individuals are disproportionately more likely to be arrested for crimes of interpersonal violence (Sealock & Simpson, 1998; Kochel, Wilson, Mastrofski, 2011; Rosenfeld, Rojek, & Decker, 2012; Tapia, 2011). To further matters, mandatory arrest policies have contributed to an increase in arrests among Black individuals particularly for crimes of IPV. Research indicates that these policies primarily target minorities with Black individuals more likely to be arrested than Whites for IPV calls for service (Schlesinger, 2007; Chesney-Lind, 2002; Ruttenger, 1994; Miller, 1989; Fedders, 1997; Coker, 2004; McCormack & Hirschel, 2018).

While arrest is an important part of the juvenile justice system, it is equally important to understand the potential racial disparities in the adjudication process of the juvenile justice system. Previous research indicates that disproportionate minority contact (DMC) persists at the adjudication stage of the process as well (Fergusson, Horwood, & Swain-Campbell, 2003; Frazier, Bishop, & Henretta, 1992; Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Leiber & Mack, 2003; Hawkins & Kempf-Leonard, 2005; Leiber, 2015; Fix, Cyperski, Burkhart, 2015). Research examining property, personal, and drug crimes have found that Black youth are more likely to be adjudicated delinquent the same crime compared to White youth (Freiburger & Burke, 2010; Leiber, 2015; Morrow, Dario, & Rodriguez, 2015). Prior research suggests this is an ongoing issue that requires attention. No study has examined youth charged with crimes of IPV at the adjudication process. The present study will examine this directly while filling a gap in our knowledge and contributing to

the large body of literature on this topic. Further, the results of the study suggest policy implications.

To understand the potential disparities, the results are contextualized using Steffensmeier's version of focal concerns theory of judicial decision-making (Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998). This theoretical perspective has been used to explain why judges sentence some individuals more harshly or leniently than others. Three focal concerns are used to explain sentencing disparities which include the blameworthiness of the individual, practical constraints and consequences of the sentence, and the need to protect the community from the individual (Steffensmeier, 1980; Steffensmeier, Kramer, & Streifel, 1993; Steffensmeier, Kramer, & Ulmer, 1995).

This study attempts to fill a gap by addressing the following question---- are Black youth found delinquent more than White youth at the adjudication process for IPV charges? To address this question, this research examines DMC in the state of Kentucky among youth charged with crimes of IPV. A sample of 699 youth charged with crimes of IPV, referred to 99 juvenile courts in the state of Kentucky, is used to assess the relationship between race and adjudication. Further, focal concerns theory is the theoretical framework used to help understand the disparities in the juvenile justice system.

Chapter Two of this study discusses prior literature that contextualizes the current study. Specifically, the literature review discusses disproportionate minority contact (DMC) among juvenile IPV offenders at the adjudication stage and is contextualized by the theoretical framework of focal concerns theory (FCT). The first section of Chapter Two discusses the perceptions in IPV juvenile offenders. This section begins by

operationalizing the term IPV in accordance with this study. The section then describes the negative impact IPV has on society followed by characteristics of the IPV juvenile offender.

The second section of this chapter presents the empirical examinations of IPV that have been conducted among the juvenile population. A number of studies examining various factors associated with IPV are identified including age, race, and gender. Additionally, types of IPV and the long-term effects are discussed in further detail. The third section of Chapter Two discusses DMC as it relates to Black youth, in particular. This section provides a definition of DMC followed by the historical context of this term. The remainder of this section describes the studies that have been produced examining DMC at the different stages of the juvenile justice process, showing that while research has examined DMC in the context of IPV at the arrest stage, little research has examined DMC for IPV at the adjudication stage leaving a gap in the literature.

The theoretical framework---FCT---is used to contextualize DMC among IPV offenders at the adjudication stage of the juvenile justice process. This section defines FCT and describes the various components of this theory in detail. The fifth section of this chapter discusses the literature applying the focal concerns perspective to examine the unequal treatment of another based on characteristics such as race, particularly with regards to adult sentencing. The sixth section provides a discussion of prior literature assessing adjudication among juveniles using FCT. This section highlights that although previous research has examined the adjudication stage of the juvenile court process relying on FCT to help understand racial differences among youth charged with drug, person, and property crimes, no prior study has examined adjudication among youth

charged specifically with crimes of IPV using this theory. The final section of Chapter Two addresses the present study, which examines the adjudication stage of DMC among juveniles charged with acts of interpersonal violence, using the theoretical framework of Steffensmeier's version of focal concerns perspective.

Chapter Three provides the methods used for this dissertation. The first section of this chapter describes the data source, which draws on data from a larger quantitative study on DMC in Kentucky. The section concludes with a description of how the original data were collected and the importance of specific variables used in prior studies. The second section of Chapter Three describes the measures used in this analysis, which includes the dependent, independent, and control variables. First, the dependent and independent measures are described. Second, the control measures are identified (gender, age, and whether the defendant was charged in a rural or urban area) along with a description of how these variables were coded. The final section of Chapter Three discusses the data analysis plan. The analytic plan details the three types of analysis used in this study, and they include: descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate statistics.

The Fourth Chapter presents the potential results. The purpose of this analysis is to examine whether there is a link between race and adjudication disposition while holding the control measures constant. First, a description of the variables is provided under the descriptive statistics section. Second, a description of the potential bivariate results come. Third, the potential results of the binary logistic regression model are presented.

Chapter Five is the discussion. The first section of this chapter readdresses the purpose of the study. The second section reiterates the findings as it relates to prior

research. The third section discusses policy implications to consider that address the results of the study. The fourth section presents the limitations of the current study. This section includes several limitations particularly in regard to FCT and its lack of direct testing in criminological literature. The fifth section of Chapter Five provides several recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter II begins by detailing the perceptions of the IPV juvenile offender. The next section will discuss the empirical examinations conducted thus far on racial and ethnic disparities in IPV and juvenile justice system contact. The following section will examine DMC and its relation to IPV. Next, this chapter will describe Steffensmeier's version of focal concerns theory, which is the theory used for this dissertation. Then, chapter II will discuss the existing research that applies Steffensmeier's version of focal concerns theory to various areas. Finally, the chapter provides evidence FCT has been used to contextualize the juvenile adjudication process, but it leaves of IPV offenses.

Perceptions in IPV Juvenile Offender

Multiple definitions of interpersonal violence are present in the literature. One view is IPV refers to acts of physical assault on a partner in a dating, cohabiting, or marital relationship (Johnson, 1995; Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). IPV refers to any behavior that demeans or controls the partner including sexual coercion and psychological attacks (Smithey & Straus, 2002; Straus, 1990; Breiding & Armour 2015) (e.g., physical, sexual, verbal, and psychological harm by a former or current partner or spouse). According to Alpert, Sege, and Bradshaw (1997), IPV is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors that may include inflicted physical injury, psychological abuse, sexual assault, progressive isolation, stalking, deprivation, intimidation, and threats. They further explain these behaviors are perpetrated by someone who is, was, or wishes to be

involved in an intimate or dating relationship with an adult or adolescent and are aimed at establishing control by one partner over the other. For the purpose of this study which focuses specifically on juveniles, IPV refers to psychological, physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual violence that occurs between current or former dating, and cohabitating partners (Alpert, Sege, & Bradshaw, 1997; Breiding & Armour, 2015).

Violence in an intimate partner relationship is associated with dominance over one partner, which could be either the male or female partner in the relationship, and it is correlated with attitudes accepting violence as a means of correcting behavior that the violent partner deems as unacceptable (Smithey & Straus, 2002). IPV can be a single act or a pattern of behavior in relationships (Jewkes, 2002). The correlates of IPV have been linked to race, gender, age, and urbanicity. More specifically, prior research has found that poverty is significantly correlated with partner violence (DeKeseredy, Alvi, Schwartz, & Perry, 1999; Browne & Bassuk, 1997; Goodman, 1991; Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer, 2000; Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002; Vest, Catlin, Chen, & Brownson, 2002; Gillum, 2019). The lower the income, the more likely there will be violence (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995; Greenfeld et al., 1998; Vest, Catlin, Chen, & Brownson, 2002). Furthermore, violence is frequently used as a tactic in relationship conflict (Jewkes, 2002; Ackerman, 2018; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980).

IPV is costly to society for services such as the expenses associated with medical and mental health care services, filing a restraining order, and counseling services for victims. In Kentucky, an individual seeking a civil protection order from an intimate partner violence incident in the year prior to seeking the order was approximately \$35,000 (Logan, Walker, & Hoyt, 2012). In the United States, the direct cost of medical

and mental health care services associated with IPV was estimated at nearly 4 billion dollars (Duvvury, Nguyen, & Carney 2012). Max, Rice, Finkelstein, Bardwell, and Leadbetter (2004) found that the economic estimated cost of IPV against females in the US is approximately 5.8 billion dollars including 320 million for rapes, 4.2 billion for physical assault, and 342 million for stalking. For victims of IPV, these problems are severe. IPV can lead to physical harm including bruises and broken bones, and psychological harm such as depression and anxiety. Psychological, emotional, and sexual abuse could result in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression for the victim in this situation, which may lead to suicide and drug/alcohol abuse. Unfortunately, only 34% of victims receive medical attention as a result of the violence (DeJong, Pizarro, McGarrell, 2011; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009).

While some scholars argue that the most common age group for most victims and offenders of intimate partner violence is age 25-30 (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanaugh, & Medina-Ariza, 2007), other studies have found that females aged 15-24 experience the highest rates of IPV making IPV among adolescents a major social concern (Briedling et al., 2014; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007; Catalano, 2015). According to the Centers for Disease Control (2018), most victims are exposed to IPV prior to age 18. IPV among youth---commonly referred to as teen dating violence---comprises many forms of violence including physical, sexual, psychological, and stalking behaviors (CDC, 2018). Additionally, teen dating violence includes threatened or actual physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, and/or emotional abuse directed toward a current or former partner (Saltzman, Fanslow, McMahon, & Shelley, 1999; Wolfe et al., 2001). However, researchers, rarely, refer to all these categories of violence when conducting research.

Roughly 10% to 25% of youth are victims of physical teen dating violence (Eaton et al., 2008; Silverman, Raj, Mucci, & Hathaway, 2001). National estimates of teen dating violence reveal high rates of victimization among high school populations (Vagi, O'Malley Olsen, Basile, & Vivolo-Kantor, 2015; Eaton et al., 2012; Hamby & Turner, 2013).

Existing research on adolescent IPV has found that it occurs among youth (Archer, 2000; Holt & Espelage, 2005) and even higher among Black youth (Breiding, Chen, & Black, 2014; Raiford, DiClemente, & Wingood 2009; Rennison & Welchans, 2000; Straus & Gelles, 1986). According to the Centers for Disease Control (2010), the prevalence of physical IPV is highest for Black adolescents (14.3%) compared to Hispanic (11.5%) and White youth (8.0%), particularly female Black youth (14.8%). Prior research on adolescent IPV has found that roughly 62% to 76 % of adolescents report experiencing psychological/emotional IPV (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; Sears & Byers, 2010), 6% to 46% of adolescents experience physical IPV (Ackard, Meunark-Sztainer, & Hannan, 2003; Breiding, Chen, & Black, 2014; Coker, Smith, Bethea, King, & McKeown, 2000; Glass et al., 2003; Sears & Byers, 2010; Spencer & Bryant, 2000; Watson, Cascardi, Avery-Leaf, & O'Leary, 2001), and approximately 4.5% to 7% experience sexual IPV (Sears & Byers, 2010). Reports also indicate that 23% of females and 21% of males in the sample experienced all three types of violence (Sears & Byers, 2010).

Further, research shows that Black female youth are twice as likely to experience physical IPV compared to that of White female youth. For instance, a longitudinal study by Raiford, DiClemente, & Wingood (2009) found that one in four Black female youth

reported physical or verbal IPV during their lifetime, and 12% experienced physical or verbal IPV over the one-year follow-up period. While studies examining IPV by gender show that adolescent males and females experience similar rates of violence (Foshee, 1996; Halpern, Oslak, Young, Martin, & Kupper, 2001), females are more likely than males to experience severe IPV and certain types of IPV such as sexual violence (Jackson, Cram, & Seymour, 2000; O’Keefe, 2005). In addition, females are more likely than males to fear for their safety, sustain severe injuries (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), and sustain injuries requiring medical treatment (Straus, 2004). Therefore, research has attempted to specify the gender dynamics of IPV.

According to prior research, perceptions concerning juvenile IPV offenders suggests that Black youth are often the perpetrators (and Black youth are also often the victims of adolescent IPV) of IPV for adolescent populations (Eaton et al., 2008; Foshee et al., 2008; Temple & Freeman, 2011; Walton et al., 2010; Breiding, Chen, & Black, 2014; Raiford, DiClemente, & Wingood 2009; Rennison & Welchans, 2000; Straus & Gelles, 1986; DiClemente, McCree, Harrington, & Davies, 2001). Other studies have found that youths’ social environment could also impact adolescent IPV, specifically status--obtained through stereotypical gender roles---and communication. Further, parental behavior may be critical in setting standards for adolescents (Kinsfogel & Grych, 2004). This includes selecting the right partner, norms for relationship behaviors, and dating values (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; Miller, Gorman-Smith, Sullivan, Orpinas, & Simon, 2009; Pflieger & Vazsonyi, 2006; Teitelman, Ratcliffe, & Cederbaum, 2008). However, such parental styles and behavior may vary across race and ethnicity. While parents of differing racial and ethnic groups may vary in their approach to parenting and

the concerns they have for their children, one study found that Black and White parents were more similar than different with regard to attitudes, involvement, and discipline style (Magnus, Cowen, Wyman, Fagen, & Work, 1999). Several other studies indicate that compared to White parents, Black parents exhibited authoritarian parenting that was less rejecting and associated with communication and warmth (Baumrind, 1972; Murry, Brody, & Simons, 2008; Reitman, Rhode, Hupp, & Altobello, 2002). On the contrary, a recent study by Silveira, Shafer, Dufur, and Roberson (2020) found that Black parents tend to use more physical parental practices compared to White parents in order to socialize their children into conforming to social norms that may protect them from negative repercussions in society. Overall, social status among peers often becomes much more important than parents and family during the adolescent stage (Krosnick & Judd, 1982). Specifically, Black youth establishing status among male delinquents' entails exerting gender specific expectation roles--males and females have different behavioral expectations (West & Fenstermaker, 1995; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Further, sex and sexual behavior become part of a youths' perceived status from their peers and themselves. Males are expected to establish relationships that exert power and dominance (Eaton & Rose, 2011; Miller & White, 2003) while females on the other hand, are expected to attract male attention (Eyre, Auerswald, Hoffman, & Millstein, 1998; Miller, 2001).

In addition to social environment, youths rely on technology for communication, which has facilitated relationship abuse. Technology has allowed perpetrators to assert more constant control over their partner by monitoring their cell phone, texts, or instant messages (Picard, 2007; Lenhart, Madden, McGill, & Smith, 2007). A study on cyber

dating violence among teens found that slightly over 25% of youth in a current or recent relationship reported experiencing some form of cyber dating abuse victimization with females at higher risk for this type of abuse than males, particularly sexual cyber dating abuse (Zweig, Dank, Yahner, Lachman, 2013).

Technology has also allowed perpetrators to use their social net-working sites to follow or harass a current or former intimate (Picard, 2007). Thus, electronic social environments allow more opportunities for youth to abuse a victim emotionally or verbally.

Empirical Examinations of IPV Among Juveniles

Abuse that takes place in a relationship has been an ongoing issue for many decades. Several studies suggest that IPV is not restricted by age, race, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status (Callahan, Tolman, & Saunders, 2003; Coker, Smith, Bethea, King, & McKeown, 2000). Although the majority of research on this topic focuses on adult victims and offenders---specifically, college students---given that adolescent populations are commonly more difficult to access, research examining IPV among youth is still widely expansive. However, research focusing specifically on IPV among Black youth is limited (Callahan, Tolman, & Saunders, 2003; Coker, Smith, Bethea, King, & McKeown, 2000; Swahn, 2010; Swahn, Simon, Arias, & Bossarte, 2008; Swahn et al., 2008). While awareness of IPV among youth is growing, it has still not received sufficient attention.

Due to its high prevalence and severe consequences, teen dating violence (TDV)-- a sub-form of IPV --- is considered a major public health concern in the United States (Parker, Johnson, Debnam, Milam, & Bradshaw, 2017). Approximately 10% of teens are

physically abused every year by a dating partner (Rothman & Xuan, 2014; CDC, 2014), resulting in injury, depression (Choi, Weston, & Temple, 2017; Foshee, Chang, McNaughton Reyes, Chen, & Ennett, 2015; McCloskey & Lichter, 2003), suicidal thoughts and actions (Banyard & Cross, 2008; Brooks, Foshee, & Ennett, 2013), internalizing behaviors, eating disorders, and risky sexual behaviors (Hebert, Moreau, Blais, Lavoie, & Guerrier, 2017). According to Foshee and Reyes (2009), physical TDV peaks around age 16 to 17 years old.

Prior research has found that TDV has long term effects because individuals entering adulthood with a history of TDV report negative behaviors---such as those listed above----and future intimate partner violence victimization. Prevalence estimates of physical TDV from the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey has remained at approximately 9% with relatively similar rates of victimization among both female and male students (Vagi et al., 2015). Examining IPV among youth is important given that during this time, youth are entering relationships with limited knowledge on what a healthy relationship entails (Jackson, Cram, & Seymour, 2000). According to Prothrow-Stith (1991), youth may have unrealistic views on gender-specific roles---such that males are inherently controlling, and females are expected to be submissive---and unrealistic views about romance, making them particularly vulnerable to IPV.

Existing research on TDV indicates that most adolescents begin dating by age 16 and that many experience an act of dating violence by age 15. According to Wingood, DiClemente, McCree, Harrington, and Davies (2001), the prevalence of dating violence among youth ranges from 9% to 39% with estimates even higher among Black female adolescents compared to female adolescents of other ethnic

groups. Further, a study by Spencer and Bryant (2000) examining rural, suburban, and urban differences in teen dating violence found that youth in rural school districts were more likely to be victims of dating violence compared to the suburban and urban districts. Interestingly, male teens reported being slapped, hit, or kicked more often than female teens (Spencer & Bryant, 2000).

With regards to gender, some studies suggest that among heterosexual relationships, male-to-female violence is more severe than female-to-male violence (Foshee et al., 2011). However, there is evidence to suggest that girls perpetrate dating violence at a rate similar to or more than boys (Rothman, Johnson, Azreal, Hall, & Weinberg, 2010; Swahn, Simon, Arias, & Bossarte, 2008), but the severity of injury varies substantially (Jackson, Cram, & Seymour, 2000; O’Keefe, 2005). Further, a study conducted by Vagi, O’Malley Olsen, Basile, & Vivolo-Kantor (2015) found that in 2013, among a sample of students who dated, roughly 20% of female students and slightly over 10% of male students experienced some form of TDV. More specifically, female students had a higher prevalence rate compared to male students for both physical and sexual TDV. Health risk behaviors were most prevalent among students who experienced both forms of these types of violence (Vagi et al., 2015). It is important to note however, research examining LGBTQ found that youth were significantly more likely (i.e., 35% vs. 8%) than their heterosexual counterparts to experience TDV (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2006). Further, another study found that 25% of adolescents in same-sex dating relationships reported some form of relationship abuse (Halpern, Young, Waller, Martin, & Kupper, 2004). Similarly, Dank, Lachman, Zweig, and Yahner (2014) found that transgender youth reported higher rates of TDV victimization when compared

to non-transgender youth. A recent study found among LGBTQ boys and girls, boys were significantly more likely to experience physical and sexual DV victimization than several other LGBTQ sub-groups (Edwards, 2015). There is evidence to suggest that the prevalence of victimization among LGBTQ youth have concerning consequences.

Prior research has found a host of other factors associated with TDV. First, anxious and insecure attachment styles have been linked to youth dating violence (Bonache, Gonzalez-Mendez, & Krahe, 2017). Second, marital conflict was indirectly associated with TDV through child externalizing behavior (Livingston, Eiden, Lessard, Casey, Henrie, & Leonard, 2018). Third, a study by Choi, Weston, and Temple (2017) found that females, Blacks, and youth who had higher acceptance of couple violence and whose parents had less education were more likely to be victims of TDV. Fourth, studies have found that schools perceived as safe by students, have lower levels of TDV (Debnam, Johnson, & Bradshaw, 2014; Parker, et al., 2017). Fifth, a study examining TDV and its association with violent pornography exposure found that boys exposed to violent pornography were 2 to 3 times more likely to report sexual TDV perpetration and victimization, as well as physical TDV victimization (Rostad, Gittins-Stone, Huntington, Rizzo, Pearlman, & Orchowski, 2019). Sixth, childhood sexual abuse has been linked to all forms of TDV among both boys and girls (Hebert, Moreau, Blais, Lavoie, & Guerrier, 2017). Seventh, having peers in violent relationships increases the perpetration of dating violence particularly among non-Whites (Foshee, Linder, MacDougall, & Bangdiwala, 2001). An eighth factor includes risk measures that vary by race and ethnicity (Foshee, Ennett, Bauman, Benefield, & Suchindran, 2005; Foshee, Reyes, & Ennett, 2010). Finally, Debnam, Waasdorp, and Bradshaw (2016) conducted a study on TDV and

bullying and found that adolescents who experienced bullying were more likely to have also experienced emotional and physical dating violence.

Literature further establishes significant links between race and TDV. Research on race and TDV shows that Black teens have higher rates of dating violence compared to Whites (Eaton et al., 2008; Foshee et al., 2008; Temple & Freeman, 2011; Walton et al., 2010; Ahonen & Loeber, 2016; Foshee, Reyes, & Ennett, 2010; McCloskey & Lichter, 2003). Black adolescents, specifically those from economically disadvantaged neighborhoods are at heightened risk for experiencing and perpetrating dating violence compared to youth from other racial and ethnic groups (Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer, 2000; Wilson, Samuelson, Zenteno, & Sorsoli 2012). Prior research found that Black adult couples residing in economically disadvantaged communities were 3.7 times more likely than White adult couples to report IPV in their dating relationships (Caetano, Field, Ramisetty-Mikler, & McGrath, 2005; Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer 2000). While this does not pertain to Black youth couples, it does provide a sociological rationale for future exploration. According to researchers, given that economically disadvantaged neighborhoods have the highest rates of violence, and that poverty negatively impacts intimate relationships by creating stress, challenges in the relationship among these individuals increase when coping with economic disadvantage (Beyer, Wallis, & Hamberger, 2015; Foster, Brooks-Gunn, & Martin, 2007).

Variables Related to Race and the Juvenile Justice System

Prior research indicates that the seriousness of the offense and prior record are the two most important factors judges consider during the juvenile sentencing process (Farrington, Loeber, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 2003; Feld, 1995; Fergusson,

Horwood, & Swain-Campbell, 2003). Further, some scholars argue that disproportionate minority contact results from offense seriousness and prior record (Kempf-Leonard, 2007; Leiber, Bishop, & Chamlin, 2010; Guevara, Herz, & Spohn, 2006; Kurtz, Linnemann, & Spohn, 2008; Moak, Thomas, Walker, & Gann, 2012; Leiber, 2015; Fix, Cyperski, Burkhart, 2015; OJJDP, 2009). Thus, these variables are important measures to include when assessing the relationship between race and the various stages of the juvenile justice process. Specifically, the seriousness of offense has been identified by academics as an important measure to include when examining DMC (DeJong & Jackson, 1998; Farrington, Loeber, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 2003; Feld, 1995; Fergusson, Horwood, & Swain-Campbell, 2003; Frazier, Bishop, & Henretta, 1992). This measure is considered important because some scholars argue that judges consider the seriousness of the offense to be the most important factor in sentencing rather than the defendant's race (Albonetti, 1997; Doerner & Demuth, 2014; Spohn, 2008; Ulmer, 1997). However, research has found that even after controlling for the seriousness of offense, race continues to be one of the most prevalent factors in the sentencing process of the juvenile justice system (Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Leiber & Mack, 2003; Thornberry, 1979; Wordes & Bynum, 1995; Sealock & Simpson, 1998).

Disproportionate Minority Contact

Existing research on juvenile justice and delinquency shows that race influences every stage of the decision-making process in the juvenile justice system including the adjudication stage (Hawkins & Kempf-Leonard, 2005; Kempf-Leonard, 2007; Bishop, 2005; Leiber, Bishop, & Chamlin, 2010; Leiber & Stairs, 1999; Thomas & Sieverdes, 1975; Guevara, Herz, & Spohn, 2006; Kurtz, Linnemann, & Spohn, 2008; Moak,

Thomas, Walker, & Gann, 2012; Leiber, 2015; Fix, Cyperski, Burkhart, 2015; Barton, 1976; Bishop & Leiber, 2011; Davis & Sorensen, 2013; Snyder, Sickmund, & Poe-Yamagata, 1996; Males & Macallair, 2000). Because of this ongoing issue, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) refers to the phenomenon as disproportionate minority contact (DMC). The definition disproportionate minority contact (DMC) varies, but it is commonly defined as the disproportionate number of minority youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system relative to their representation in the general population (Hanes, 2012; Slowikowski, 2009; OJJDP, 2009). DMC increases from earlier to later stages of processing (OJJDP, 1999).

In 1992, amendments were made to the Juvenile Justice Delinquency & Prevention Act (JJDP), increasing efforts to address DMC to a core requirement. In 2002, Congress expanded the DMC core requirement from confinement to contact. This change required states participating in the Formula Grants program to address juvenile delinquency prevention efforts as well as efforts used to improve the system established to reduce, without requiring standards or quotas, the disproportionate number of juveniles of the minority groups who come in contact with the juvenile justice system (Department of Justice, 2019). The primary purpose of the core requirement was to ensure equal and fair treatment for every youth in the juvenile justice system, regardless of race and ethnicity (Hanes, 2012).

Further, to remain in compliance with the JJDP Act, states are required to provide a detailed model consisting of multiple steps. In the first phase, referred to as identification, states are expected to calculate disproportionality at various contact points in the juvenile justice system. These include arrest, referral to court, diversion, case

petitioned, secure detention, delinquency finding, probation, confinement in a correctional facility, and case transferred, certified, and waived to adult criminal court using the relative rate index. The relative rate index provides information on the rate of activity involving minority youth and how it differs by the rate of activity involving majority youth. Other than at the diversion and probation contact points, numbers greater than 1 indicates disproportionality (Hanes, 2012; Slowikowski, 2009). The next phase of the model is referred to as assessment/diagnosis. During this phase, states evaluate the causal mechanisms that contribute to DMC, and includes a discussion on each probable explanation, asking questions about the data and information collected, and consulting other data sources to verify the explanation. The final step in the model is considered the intervention phase, which involves the implementation of an appropriate delinquency prevention strategy as well as systems improvement activities (Hanes, 2012; Slowikowski, 2009).

Hamparian and Leiber (1997) found evidence of DMC in 31 of the 36 states that they studied. Researchers recognize that DMC exists, they do not all agree as to why this is a reoccurring problem. Some argue that DMC results from discriminatory decisions made by those within the justice system, while others argue this results from legally relevant factors such as variation in offense seriousness and prior record (Kempf-Leonard, 2007; Leiber, Bishop, & Chamlin, 2010; Guevara, Herz, & Spohn, 2006; Kurtz, Linnemann, & Spohn, 2008; Moak, Thomas, Walker, & Gann, 2012; Leiber, 2015; Fix, Cyperski, Burkhart, 2015; OJJDP, 2009). Over the last 25 years, research examining DMC in the juvenile justice system has increased (Kempf-Leonard, 2007; Leiber, Bishop, & Chamlin, 2010; Guevara, Herz, & Spohn, 2006; Kurtz, Linnemann, & Spohn, 2008;

Moak, Thomas, Walker, & Gann, 2012; Leiber, 2015; Fix, Cyperski, Burkhart, 2015; Bishop & Leiber, 2011; Davis & Sorensen, 2013; OJJDP, 2009; Males & Macallair, 2000; McCoy, Walker, & Rodney, 2012; Piquero, 2008) with some studies indicating mixed findings (Engen, Steen, & Bridges, 2002; McCoy, Walker, & Rodney, 2012). The disproportionate representation of Blacks, Latinos, Native Indians, Southeast Asian as well as other disadvantage minority youth under state supervision is documented and considered the most controversial feature of the juvenile justice system with research consistently demonstrating that minority youth, particularly Black and Hispanic youth, are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system at every stage including the adjudication process (Hawkins & Kempf-Leonard, 2005; Kempf-Leonard, 2007; Bishop, 2005). Minority youth are disproportionately petitioned to court (Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Leiber & Mack, 2003; Frazier, Bishop, & Henretta, 1992; Leiber, Bishop, & Chamlin, 2010; Leiber & Stairs, 1999; Thomas & Sieverdes, 1975; DeJong & Jackson, 1998), held in pre-adjudication detention (Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Leiber & Mack, 2003; DeJong & Jackson, 1998; Guevara, Herz, & Spohn, 2006; Kurtz, Linnemann, & Spohn, 2008; Moak, Thomas, Walker, & Gann, 2012), adjudicated or determined delinquent (Fergusson, Horwood, & Swain-Campbell, 2003; Frazier, Bishop, & Henretta, 1992; Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Leiber & Mack, 2003; Hawkins & Kempf-Leonard, 2005; Leiber, 2015; Fix, Cyperski, Burkhart, 2015), confined to detention or correctional facilities following adjudication (Barton, 1976; Bishop, 2005; Bishop & Leiber, 2011; Davis & Sorensen, 2013), and transferred to criminal court (Snyder, Sickmund, & Poe-Yamagata, 1996; Bishop, 2005; Brown & Sorensen, 2013; Males & Macallair, 2000).

A number of studies have examined disproportionate minority contact (DMC) concerning juveniles with evidence consistently demonstrating that members of racial and ethnic minority groups are vastly over-represented at numerous stages in the juvenile justice system (Claus, Vidal, Harmon, 2017; Cruchfield, Fernandes, & Martinez, 2010; Engen, Steen, & Bridges, 2002; Leiber, 2002; Pope, Lovell, & Hsia, 2002; Sampson & Lauritsen, 1997). More specifically, Hispanic/Latino youth are placed in residential facilities at a rate that is 1.3 times greater than their representation in society while Black youth are approximately three times that of their representation in the population (Puzzachera, Sladky, & Kang, 2015; Sickmund, Sladky, Kang, & Puzzachera, 2013). Additionally, findings show that disparities exist in earlier stages of the justice system. Evidence indicates that Black and Hispanic/Latino adolescents are more likely than Whites to have had previous contact with the police and be arrested (Cruchfield, Skinner, Haggarty, McGlynn, & Catalano, 2009). While OJJDP youth arrest data continues to show racial disparities, studies show that Black youth have a higher probability of arrest, and even when controlling for delinquent behavior, Black youth were more likely to be arrested compared to White youth (Sealock & Simpson, 1998; Kochel, Wilson, Mastrofski, 2011; Rosenfeld, Rojek, & Decker, 2012; Tapia, 2011).

Contributing to this issue, mandatory arrest policies were implemented with the notion that by increasing the certainty and severity of punishment, potential offenders will be deterred from committing acts of abuse, thereby reducing the prevalence of domestic violence (Mignon & Holmes, 1995; Eitle, 2005; White, Goldkamp, & Campbell, 2005; Dugan, 2003). This is relevant for acts of IPV. Research indicates that

these policies primarily target minorities with Black individuals more likely to be arrested than Whites for IPV calls for service (Schlesinger, 2007; Chesney-Lind, 2002; Ruttenberg, 1994; Miller, 1989; Fedders, 1997; Coker, 2004; McCormack & Hirschel, 2018). Additionally, women of color are also more likely to be arrested themselves for IPV under mandatory arrest laws as they may be seen as more physically aggressive than White women, and therefore their defensive violent behavior might be viewed as IPV perpetration (Hamberger & Potente, 1994; Chesney-Lind, 2002; Ruttenberg, 1994; Hovmand, Ford, Flom, & Kyriakakis, 2009). Thus, a number of scholars argue that mandatory arrest laws will ultimately result in increased prosecution and oppression among all Black individuals in both the juvenile justice system and the criminal justice system (Maguigan, 2003; Richie, 2000; Schlesinger, 2007; Chesney-Lind, 2002; McCormack & Hirschel, 2018; Coker, 2004; Coker, 2000).

While research shows that teen dating violence is highest among non-White youth, it is possible these estimates are affected by mandatory arrest policies. Concerns regarding IPV and race suggest that mandatory arrest policies negatively impact both adolescent and adult minorities involved in an IPV incident (Chesney-Lind, 2002; Eitle, 2005; Ruttenberg, 1994; Chesney-Lind, 2006). Mandatory arrest policies were established in the late 1970s as an effort to help reduce IPV (Hendricks, 1992; Buel, 1988; Mills, 1998; Kane, 1999; Reuland, Morabito, Preston, & Cheney, 2006). Many jurisdictions in the United States have implemented these policies for cases of IPV reported to law enforcement; however, the extent to which these policies are enforced vary by states across the U.S. for calls related to domestic violence among intimate partners (Buel, 1988; Ruttenberg, 1994; Sherman, 1992; Stark & Flitcraft, 1996).

While research has examined DMC in the context of IPV at the arrest stage, little research has examined DMC for IPV at the adjudication stage. This is an additional decision point in the juvenile justice process where researchers have found DMC. For instance, researchers have shown DMC does exist at this stage for the following behaviors - property, drug, and violent offenses (Fergusson, Horwood, & Swain-Campbell, 2003; Frazier, Bishop, & Henretta, 1992; Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Leiber & Mack, 2003; Hawkins & Kempf-Leonard, 2005; Leiber, 2015; Fix, Cyperski, Burkhart, 2015). This research suggests this is a valuable area for understanding DMC. At the present time, a gap in the literature exists with the lack of IPV research at this stage.

One way to provide a deeper understanding is to use a theoretical premise to contextualize the results of the study. Theories are useful because they provide the following: a means of organizing data, variables along with conceptual definitions of the variables, and context of the variables. In addition, theories provide a general basis for research questions guiding a research inquiry (Higgins & Marcum, 2016). Finally, theories provide information for policy and programming development. Focal concerns theory may provide context for DMC at the adjudication stage of the juvenile justice process concerning IPV.

Focal Concerns Theory

Steffensmeier, Ulmer, and Kramer (1998) developed a version of Focal Concerns Theory (FCT) to explain gender and racial differences in judicial decision-making. This perspective is an adopted theoretical framework applied to help explain the unequal treatment in adult-sentencing based on an individuals' race, age, and gender (Steffensmeier, 1980; Spohn & Holleran, 2000; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2000;

Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998; Ulmer, 1997). This theory has been applied to various stages of decision-making throughout the criminal justice system. In this study, focal concerns theory will instead be used to contextualize juvenile adjudication based on race among interpersonal violent offenders.

A number of theoretical perspectives have been applied to help explain judicial decision-making, and how it relates to case processing. Focal concerns theory is a recent theoretical perspective, and it quickly has dominated the sentencing literature in recent years (Lynch, 2019; Durante, 2021; Cochran, Lynch, Toman, & Shields, 2018; Arazan, Bales, & Blomberg, 2019; Hartley, 2014; Franklin & Henry, 2020; Clair & Winter, 2016; Spohn, White, & Tellis, 2014). Steffensmeier et al. (1998) argued judges' sentencing decisions are heavily influenced by three focal concerns, which include a desire to impose what is deemed as just or an appropriate sentence consistent with the defendant's blameworthiness, a desire to protect the community from what they perceive as dangerous offenders, and a desirability to avoid negative social consequences.

The first focal concern blameworthiness requires information on the seriousness of the offense, the defendant's role in the crime, as well as the defendant's maturity, sophistication, and other levels of culpability (Hartley, 2014). The second focal concern--a desire to protect the community from dangerous offenders, requires an accurate prediction of the offender's risk of re-offending (Bradley & Dollar, 2013). The last focal concern---a desire to avoid negative social consequences, requires an assessment of negative consequences that coincides with sentencing alternatives (Albonetti 1991). This includes consequences for the justice system (detention overcrowding), the offender (family disruption), and the court (negative public reaction) (Steffensmeier, 1980;

Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2000; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2001; Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998). Given that judges oftentimes have insufficient time or information to accumulate accurate assessments, they instead rely on legal factors such as offense and prior record, to decide on how to punish a juvenile or adult. In addition, judges also rely on stereotypes and attributes of the offender (i.e., extralegal factors) including race (Steffensmeier, Kramer, & Streifel 1993; Spohn & Holleran 2001; Ulmer & Johnson 2004). Researchers have examined the theory empirically in a number of areas.

Focal Concerns Theory Literature

Focal concerns perspective is used as a theoretical framework to provide context around the unequal treatment of another based on race, age, and gender---particularly with regards to adult sentencing (Steffensmeier, 1980; Spohn & Holleran, 2000; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2001; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2000; Demuth, 2003; Ulmer & Bradley, 2006; Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998; Ulmer, 1997; Nagel & Geraci, 1983).

Decisions made by judges are often based on the belief of the likelihood that an offender will recidivate (Albonetti, 1991). When making this decision, the judge will rely on the information available to them. Unfortunately, due to time restraints and insufficient information, some judges also base their sentencing decisions on certain attributes such as race, gender, and age (Simon, 1997). Existing research on focal concerns perspective has found general support for the theory overall (Higgins, Vito, & Grossi, 2012; Lu, 2018; Ray & Dollar, 2013; Campbell & Fehler-Cabral, 2018; Berryessa, 2018; Ulmer, Kurlychek, & Kramer, 2007; Bishop, Leiber, & Johnson, 2010).

Focal concerns has been applied to various research areas including sentencing

for environmental crimes (Cochran et al., 2018), probation officer recommendations for sentencing (Leiber, Reitzel, & Mack, 2011), court decisions such as sentencing (Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2001; Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998; Beckett & Sasson, 2000; Chiricos, Welch, & Gertz, 2004), and decisions in corrections such as parole (Huebner & Bynum, 2008; Lin, Grattet, & Petersilia, 2012; Huebner & Bynum, 2006; Logan et al., 2017). Additionally, previous research has used the focal concerns theory to understand racial disparities in police decisions such as searches and use of force (Crow & Adrion, 2011; Higgins, Jennings, Jordan, & Gabbidon, 2011; Morgan, Logan, & Olma, 2020).

Studies have applied the focal concerns theory to police officers' decision-making during a traffic stop (Silberman, 1978; Skolnick, 1966). Given the minimal amount of time and limited information concerning the character of an individual stopped, an officer may rely on the person's race, gender, or age when making a decision during a traffic encounter. For instance, a study found that police officers create profiles of citizens based on the person's race, while also influenced by their gender and age (Smith & Alpert, 2007). Another study found that police officers were more suspicious of male drivers, as well as Black and Hispanic drivers during a traffic stop (Smith, Makarios, & Alpert 2006). In addition, focal concerns theory has been applied to help explain racial profiling as it relates to police officer decision-making during traffic stops. Higgins, Vito, and Grossi (2012) examined traffic stops made by the Louisville, Kentucky Police Department. They found that Black drivers were more likely to give consent for a search compared to White drivers, and police officers were more likely to search drivers when contraband was in plain view, providing evidence for one aspect of focal concerns theory:

blameworthiness (Higgins et al., 2012).

Focal Concerns Theory and Juvenile Adjudication Literature

Much of the prior research examining adjudication among juveniles has been guided by focal concerns theory (Freiburger & Burke, 2010; Bishop, Leiber, & Johnson, 2010; Leiber, 2015; Leiber & Peck, 2015; Morrow, Dario, & Rodriguez, 2015).

Specifically, Freiburger and Burke (2010) examined the likelihood of adjudication among White, Black, Hispanic, and Native American juveniles charged with property, personal, drug, public order, and public safety offenses, in a single county located in Arizona, using focal concerns as the theoretical framework to help explain racial and ethnic differences. Findings suggest that Hispanic and Native American youths had a greater likelihood of adjudication than White youths. Additionally, results indicate that White female youth were found to be the least likely of all groups to be adjudicated.

Further, Bishop, Leiber, and Johnson (2010) examined youth charged with property, person, and drug crimes using the theoretical framework of FCT, and found that only legal variables, such as the severity of the offense, influence adjudicatory decisions. In addition, Leiber (2015) used FCT to examine the roles that race and prior offending had on multiple decision points including adjudication, for youth charged with property, person, and drug crimes. Results suggest that while prior offending may not be racialized, race alone results in unfair treatment. On the contrary, another study by Leiber and Peck (2015) used FCT to examine the effects of race, gender, and crime severity on decision making at intake, adjudication, and judicial disposition for drug, person, and property offenses. The results indicate that race and gender do not have an effect on adjudication. Finally, Morrow, Dario, and Rodriguez (2015) examined the decision by the juvenile

judge to adjudicate or not for property, drugs, obstruction, person, and public disorder crimes using a focal concerns framework. Findings indicate race, age, and gender influenced the likelihood of adjudication. Previous research examining the adjudication stage of the juvenile court process have primarily relied on the theoretical concept of FCT to help understand racial differences among youth charged with drug, person, and property crimes, however no prior study has examined adjudication among youth charged specifically with crimes of IPV using this theory. Thus, the results of the current study, which focuses on decision making at adjudication among a sample of juveniles charged with crimes of IPV, will be contextualized using FCT.

The Present Study

The current study examines the adjudication stage of DMC among youth who allegedly performed acts of IPV. Applying FCT to examine this topic area will help us better dissect why Black youth are disproportionately found delinquent of similar crimes---interpersonal violence----compared to White youth. FCT provides a theoretical lens that will help contextualize the correlates of DMC and adjudication. For this dissertation, FCT will establish the context for understanding DMC in the adjudication process. Further, given the robustness of FCT and applicability to a number of research areas including adjudication (Cochran et al., 2018; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2001; Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998; Beckett & Sasson, 2000; Chiricos, Welch, & Gertz, 2004), this perspective can provide clarity by helping explain judicial decision-making as it relates to adjudication outcomes among juveniles in the context of IPV.

This study includes the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a link between race and adjudication disposition.

H2: There is a link between race and adjudication disposition while holding the control measures constant. Specifically, Black youth are found guilty more than white youth at the adjudication process for IPV charges while holding all other measures constant.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

Chapter III focuses on the methodology to this study. The methodology includes: a description of the data, measures used in the analysis, and the analytic plan selected for the current study. The goal of the current study is to examine the DMC in the adjudication stage among youth who allegedly perpetrated IPV, with results contextualized using FCT. Specifically, applying FCT to this topic area will provide context to understand why Black youth are disproportionately found delinquent of similar crimes----interpersonal violence----compared to White youth. This chapter will begin by discussing how the data were collected (i.e., the data source). The chapter will then present the measures used in the analysis by describing the dependent, independent, and control variables. The last section of chapter III will discuss the analytic techniques that will be used to address the main issue of the study.

Data source

In Kentucky, researchers have found evidence that DMC is a prevalent issue among youth for various types of offenses (Dawson-Edwards, Higgins, & Overstreet, 2019; Dawson-Edwards, Tewksbury, Higgins, & Rausch, 2014). This study uses focal concerns theory to contextualize DMC among youth for crimes of IPV in 99 counties across the state of Kentucky. Guided by focal concerns theory, this study suggests that decisions made by judges are driven by the race of the defendant rather than on other factors due to stereotypes that racial or ethnic minorities are more blameworthy.

Scholars from the University of Louisville have conducted research in this area (Dawson-Edwards, Higgins, & Overstreet, 2019; Dawson-Edwards, Tewksbury, Higgins, & Rausch, 2014). A 2019 report by Dawson-Edwards and colleagues (2019) assessed DMC in Jefferson County, Kentucky to better understand why DMC persists. Findings revealed that in Jefferson County, DMC is concentrated at several stages that include referral, law enforcement referral, school related referral, and cases detained. Further, this study found evidence of race effects at certain decision points, but not others.

This study draws on data from a larger quantitative study on DMC in Kentucky (Dawson-Edwards, Higgins, & Overstreet, 2019; Dawson-Edwards, Tewksbury, Higgins, & Rausch, 2014). These data were collected between 2014 and 2016. The purpose of collecting the data was to perform a DMC assessment stage to assist with determining what factors contribute most to Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) in select communities in Kentucky. The data for this study are administrative data. Court Designated Worker (CDW) data collected during the course of their work from 2014 to 2016. Since 1986, the Kentucky Court Designated Worker Program (CDW) has operated under the Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The CDWs are responsible for processing complaints against individuals under the age of 18. Complaints are categorized as either public offenses or status offenses. Public offenses are behaviors consistent with adult crimes while status offenses are behaviors that are noncriminal but classified as offenses because the individual is underage. The CDW process is guided by uniform criteria that distinguishes which juvenile complaints are formally or informally processed in juvenile court.

Examining DMC and IPV among youth is an understudied and salient issue, therefore this study aims to shed light on this matter. A number of key variables have been identified by academics as variables that would be helpful to include in the model when examining DMC such as the seriousness of the offense and age (DeJong & Jackson, 1998; Farrington, Loeber, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 2003; Feld, 1995; Fergusson, Horwood, & Swain-Campbell, 2003; Frazier, Bishop, & Henretta, 1992; Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Leiber & Mack, 2003; Thornberry, 1979; Wordes & Bynum, 1995; Sealock & Simpson, 1998). While many important variables are present in these data that will allow for an assessment of the relationship between race and whether the defendant was found delinquent, the data does not include other critical variables such as prior record. After the seriousness of the offense, the next most important factor in sentencing is the defendant's prior record (Albonetti, 1997; Doerner & Demuth, 2014; Spohn, 2008; Ulmer, 1997). However, because these data include all youth charged between 2014 and 2016, they represent the adjudication outcomes among youth in the state of Kentucky for crimes of IPV. The total sample size was 699.

Measures

Dependent Measure

The dependent variable identifies whether the defendant was found delinquent of IPV. This was done by examining the charge disposition type. A delinquent variable was created using the sentencing outcomes identified in the data. This includes commitment of juvenile to CHR, commitment of juvenile to DJJ, and adjudicated delinquent (coded as 1). The non-delinquent category includes those found not delinquent, amended, amended down, deferred prosecution, dismissal by motion of prosecutor, dismissed, dismissed-

diverted, diversion, informal judgement-juvenile only, merged, remanded, and transfer (coded as 0). Because affirmed represents a small percentage of the sample, this category was removed from the data. In addition, fugitive, other, pending, defendant was found neither delinquent nor not delinquent under these categories, and withdrawn were removed from the data as well.

Independent Measures

Within Focal Concerns Theory, blameworthy individuals are more likely to be found guilty. In the adjudication process, researchers have shown judges and other court workers use perceptual short-hand in making guilty or not guilty decisions. The perceptual short-hand is based on stereotypes. Steffensmeier, Ulmer, and Kramer (1998) proffered racial stereotypes are often used in making judicial decisions. Prior research examining DMC has included variables such as the seriousness of the offense, to establish whether the size of the race effect on juvenile justice system processing remains the same or is reduced in the presence of this variable (Fergusson, Horwood, & Swain-Campbell, 2003; Frazier, Bishop, & Henretta, 1992; Leiber & Mack; 2003; Sealock & Simpson, 1998; Thornberry, 1979). Thus, this study includes two seriousness of offense measures. The first measure is a binary variable coded 1 for less severe offenses and 0 for more severe offenses. The second measure is charge level, which is an ordinal variable ranging from class rank A offenses to class rank D offenses with A being the most severe and D being least severe. Finally, to increase our understanding of DMC, this study examines whether the race of the defendant is linked to being found delinquent or non-delinquent. Race is coded as a binary variable indicating whether the defendant is Black

(coded as 1) or White (coded as 0).¹

Control Measures

The following variables were used as control variables in the analysis: the defendant's gender, age, and whether the defendant was charged in a rural or urban area. When examining DMC and studies of Focal Concerns Theory, prior research has looked at whether race effects remain significant when controlling for demographics, gender, and age (Bridges & Steen, 1998; DeJong & Jackson, 1998; Farrington, Loeber, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 2003; Feld, 1995; Fergusson, Horwood, & Swain-Campbell, 2003; Frazier, Bishop, & Henretta, 1992; Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Leiber & Mack, 2003; Wordes & Bynum, 1995; Sealock & Simpson, 1998). These variables were selected to determine whether the size of the race effect on sentencing outcomes remains the same or is reduced in the presence of these three variables. First, the defendant's gender is a binary variable with males coded as 1 and females coded as 0. Second, the defendant's age is a continuous variable representing the age in years at the time of the incident. The age category ranges from 10 to 18 years old. Those under the age of 10 were removed from the data as they represent a small percentage of the sample. Finally, a binary variable was created for rural and urban areas. Counties were classified as either rural (coded as 1) or urban (coded as 0) according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020).

¹Preliminary analysis indicated using Hispanic or other racial categories would not be fruitful given their small sample sizes in the data. This is consistent with Dawson-Edwards and Higgins's examination using these data. Therefore, this study will only examine whether a racial difference exists between White and Black youth in this context.

Data Analysis Plan

The central premise of this study is to examine whether FCT can contextualize racial differences in adjudication dispositions for IPV alleged of juveniles. Specifically, this study is designed to determine if Black youth are found delinquent of interpersonal violence offenses more than White youth. To address this issue, the data analysis for this study proceeds in a series of steps: 1) descriptive statistics, 2) bivariate statistics, and 3) multivariate statistics. Descriptive statistics are a first step in this analysis. This study will use the mean, standard deviation—where the variables are continuous, minimum and maximum. The results from these statistics provide some indication of the distribution of the data.

The second step of the analysis is bivariate statistics. In this study, two forms of analyses will be used to produce the bivariate statistics. First, cross-tab analysis will be performed to determine if an association exists between race (i.e., White versus Black) and being found delinquent or not delinquent. Within the cross-tab analysis, the chi-square statistic will be examined for statistical significance among these groups.

The second bivariate statistic is a bivariate logistic regression analysis. Logistic regression is important because the dependent measure of the study is binary (0=not delinquent and 1=delinquent). Researchers argue this is the proper analysis when the dependent measure is capture in this way (Menard, 2002; Pampel, 2000). This is the proper analysis because the distribution of the dependent measure violates the assumption of linearity making OLS inappropriate. Bivariate binary logistic regression has the benefit of providing an odds ratio. The odds ratio is an effect size indicating how large or small the effect is likely (Cohen, 1988). With the information from the cross-tab analysis

and the bivariate binary logistic regression the bivariate link between race and adjudication disposition, in these data, will be shown.

The third step of the analysis is multivariate statistics. Similar to the bivariate analysis, the multivariate statistic for this study is binary logistic regression. This type of analysis technique was selected as the analytical technique because the dependent variable is categorical and dichotomous. Consequently, applying linear regression would lead to inefficient or biased results (Menard, 2002; Pampel, 2000). This strategy will help assess the relationship between race and those found delinquent of crimes of IPV. Similar to the bivariate binary logistic regression analysis, logistic regression provides information about the link between the race and adjudication disposition while holding the control measures constant. Because of the nature of this analysis plan, some may consider the results from the multivariate analysis as a form mediation modeling. This is not the intent of this analysis. Rather, the intent is to examine the robustness of the link between race and the adjudication disposition. In other words, if the link between race and adjudication disposition vanished when introducing the control measures, one could say the original link, potentially, found in the bivariate analysis would be weak or spurious.

Important to the multivariate analysis, is the introduction of control measures. This means the control measures add complexity to the analysis. It is possible the measures for this study are substantively and highly correlated with one another. This is known as multicollinearity. Multicollinearity is important because it is a condition indicating the measures are not independent and are capturing similar conceptual or theoretical contents of domain. To examine whether this is occurring in the data,

following the recommendations from Menard (2002), an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) analysis will be performed of the final model. In making his suggestion, Menard (2002) recognizes the actual coefficients are biased due to the binary nature of the data, but he goes on to show and argue the measures that indicate multicollinearity—especially, tolerance—remain robust and can be used in analyses. Menard (2002), then, argues tolerance coefficients below 0.20 indicate multicollinearity is present among the data. For an overall view of the entire data analysis plan along with the specific questions each technique addresses, see Table 1.

Table 1. Data Analysis Plan.

Step	Data Analysis Type	Question/Hypotheses addressed	Statistic
1	Descriptive Statistics	The distribution of the data is non-normal	Mean
2	Bivariate Statistics	There is a link between race and adjudication disposition	Cross-tabs Chi-Square Binary bivariate Logistic regression
3	Multivariate Statistics	There is a link between race and adjudication disposition while holding the control measures constant	Multivariate logistic regression
		Multicollinearity is not an issue in these data	Ordinary Least Squares

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Step One Results: Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for this study provides some indication of the distribution of each of the measures in this study (i.e., the distribution of the data) (see Table 2). The measures, including the dependent measure, in this study are captured using binary coding (i.e., 0 and 1). This means the data for this study are non-normal, with the exception of age and charge level. The non-normality of these measures is satisfactory for inferential statistics not requiring a correction. To ease in the consumption of the measures, their distribution is presented and discussed as percentages of each measure. Table 2 presents the results of the descriptive statistics for all variables used in the study. Approximately 44% of youth in the sample were found guilty of IPV ($n = 793$). The majority of youth were White (69.2%). Roughly 66% of youth in the sample were male. Approximately 14% of youth were charged with IPV in rural areas. The average age of youth charged with IPV was 15 years old. Roughly 39% of IPV incidents were considered less severe. The entire sample of youth were class A offenses². Overall, these results are consistent with previous research (Kempf-Leonard, 2007; Leiber, Bishop, & Chamlin, 2010; Guevara, Herz, & Spohn, 2006; Kurtz, Linnemann, & Spohn, 2008; Moak, Thomas, Walker, & Gann, 2012; Leiber, 2015; Fix, Cyperski, Burkhart, 2015).

²Because there is no variation in charge level, the decision was made to remove it from the analysis.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics.

	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Min-Max
N			
Dependent variable			
Adjudicated guilty for IPV	44%	49,686	0-1
793			
Race			
Black youth	30%	46,197	0-1
750			
Seriousness of offense			
Less severe	39%	48,872	0-1
832			
Charge class A	100%	0	1-4
846			
Location			
Rural	14%	35,151	0-1
846			
Youth Characteristics			
Male	66%	47,299	0-1
810			
Age (in years)	15.15	1.549	10-18
846			

Step Two Results: Bivariate Statistics

The second step in this study addresses the proposed link between race and adjudication outcome. Specifically, this step addresses hypothesis 1 (i.e., there is a link between race and adjudication disposition). The cross-tabs and corresponding chi-square analysis provides information about the association between race and adjudication (see Table 3). The cross-tab analysis provides percentages about White youth and their adjudication outcomes (i.e., not guilty or guilty), and percentages about Black youth and their adjudication outcomes (i.e., not guilty and guilty). In line with prior research, this dissertation also finds that there is a statistically significant difference ($X^2=8.893, p < .01$)

between the percentage of race and those found guilty (Guevara, Herz, & Spohn, 2006; Kurtz, Linnemann, & Spohn, 2008; Moak, Thomas, Walker, & Gann, 2012) supporting hypothesis 1.

Table 3. Cross-tabs and Chi-square.

	White youth	Black youth	Total
Not Guilty	289 (58.86%)	102 (46.79%)	391 (55.1%)
Guilty	202 (41.14%)	116 (53.21%)	318 (44.9%)
Total	491 (100.0%)	218 (100.0%)	709 (100.0%)
Chi-square	8.893**		

Note. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

The bivariate binary logistic regression analysis provides information about the association between race and adjudication. Like the cross-tab and chi-square analysis this analysis addresses hypothesis 1, but this analysis provides effect size information in the form of an odds ratio (see Table 4). Similar to previous literature, the findings of this dissertation suggest there is a link between race and adjudication disposition (Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Leiber & Mack, 2003; DeJong & Jackson, 1998; Guevara, Herz, & Spohn, 2006; Kurtz, Linnemann, & Spohn, 2008; Moak, Thomas, Walker, & Gann, 2012). The odds ratio ($OR=1.627$, $b=.48$, $p<.01$) indicates that Black youth are more likely to receive a guilty verdict than White youth. Overall, the combination of these

results indicates race has a connection with adjudication outcome supporting hypothesis 1.

Table 4. Bivariate Binary Logistic Regression.

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>OR</i>
Race			
Black youth	0.48**	0.16	1.62
Constant	-0.35***	0.092	0.69
Model X ²	8.867**		
Nagelkerke R ²	0.017		
<i>N</i>	709		

Note. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

Step Three Results: Multivariate Statistics

The multivariate statistical analysis examines whether there is a link between race and adjudication disposition while holding the control measures constant. This step addresses hypothesis 2 (i.e., there is a link between race and adjudication disposition while holding the control measures constant). Specifically, Black youth are found guilty more than white youth at the adjudication process for IPV charges while holding all other measures constant. Table 5 presents the results of the binary logistic regression model predicting youth adjudicated guilty for IPV charges. Using multivariate binary logistic regression analysis, the results for this analysis show that race continues to matter while holding all of the control measures constant, which is similar to previous research (Hawkins & Kempf-Leonard, 2005; Kempf-Leonard, 2007; Bishop, 2005; Leiber, Bishop, & Chamlin, 2010; Leiber & Stairs, 1999; Thomas & Sieverdes, 1975; Guevara, Herz, & Spohn, 2006). More specifically, Black youth were 52% more likely to be

adjudicated guilty for crimes of IPV than White youth ($b=.42, p<.01, OR = 1.52$). This result supports hypothesis 2. In addition, age was significantly associated with the likelihood that youth would be adjudicated guilty for IPV ($b=.11, p<.05, OR=1.12$); the likelihood of being adjudicated guilty increased by approximately 12% each year a youth ages.

Table 5. Multivariate Binary Logistic Regression Model.

<i>VIF</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>Tol</i>
Race				
Black youth	0.42**	0.17	1.52	0.95
1.05				
Seriousness of offense				
Less severe	-0.17	0.15	0.83	0.99
1.00				
Location				
Rural	0.11	0.22	1.11	0.96
1.04				
Youth Characteristics				
Male	-0.048	0.16	0.95	0.99
1.00				
Age	0.11*	0.052	1.12	0.99
1.00				
Constant	-2.048**	0.79	0.12	
Model X ²	13.249*			
Nagelkerke R ²	0.025			
<i>N</i>	793			

Note. *** $p<.001$. ** $p<.01$. * $p<.05$.; Tol = Tolerance

Further, the measures have undergone multicollinearity analysis. This addresses the hypothesis no multicollinearity is present in the data. Specifically, the tolerance values are within the acceptable limits of 0.4 and 2.5 for VIF (Allison, 1999). This indicates the measures in the study are not overly correlated, and the finding of the

connection between race and adjudication disposition is robust when considering other plausible control measures. This is consistent with the hypothesis no multicollinearity is present in the data. Further, this is in line with previous research (i.e., multicollinearity in these data) (see Table 5, Kurtz, Linnemann, & Spohn, 2008; Moak, Thomas, Walker, & Gann, 2012; Leiber, 2015; Fix, Cyperski, Burkhart, 2015; Barton, 1976; Bishop & Leiber, 2011; Davis & Sorensen, 2013; Snyder, Sickmund, & Poe-Yamagata, 1996; Males & Macallair, 2000).

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to determine if Black youth are disproportionately found delinquent of interpersonal violence offenses than White youth. Further, this study uses Steffensmeier et al.'s (1998) focal concerns theory as context for this analysis.

Specifically, this study seeks to place the potential disproportionate nature of Black youth being found delinquent of IPV than White youth in the context of being more blameworthy. The results of this study found that Black youth are more likely to receive a guilty verdict than White youth. This is consistent with previous research that found Black youth were more blameworthy and disproportionately found delinquent of other offenses than White youth (Freiburger & Burke, 2010; Leiber, 2015; Morrow, Dario, & Rodriguez, 2015). In addition, similar to previous research (Bridges & Steen, 1998; DeJong & Jackson, 1998; Farrington, Loeber, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 2003; Feld, 1995; Fergusson, Horwood, & Swain-Campbell, 2003; Frazier, Bishop, & Henretta, 1992; Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Leiber & Mack, 2003; Wordes & Bynum, 1995; Sealock & Simpson, 1998), the results for this study show that race continues to matter while holding all of the control measures constant.

These findings are important because they provide more evidence issues are abound in the juvenile justice system. Like other offenses (Hawkins & Kempf-Leonard, 2005; Kempf-Leonard, 2007; Bishop, 2005; Leiber, Bishop, & Chamlin, 2010; Leiber &

Stairs, 1999; Thomas & Sieverdes, 1975; Guevara, Herz, & Spohn, 2006; Kurtz, Linnemann, & Spohn, 2008; Moak, Thomas, Walker, & Gann, 2012; Leiber, 2015; Fix, Cyperski, Burkhart, 2015; Barton, 1976; Bishop & Leiber, 2011; Davis & Sorensen, 2013; Snyder, Sickmund, & Poe-Yamagata, 1996; Males & Macallair, 2000), these results confirm a disproportionate handling of Black youth within the juvenile justice system when compared to White youth. Another way of thinking of this issue is interpersonal violence cases contribute to the disproportionate minority contact at the adjudication phase. The results suggest policy and programming are needed for judges.

Policy Implications

The results of this dissertation, which examined adjudication outcome among youth charged with crimes of IPV, presents important policy implications. More specifically, the results have shown that Black youth charged with crimes of IPV are more likely to be found delinquent at the adjudication stage of the juvenile justice process despite the fact that White youth represent the majority of the sample for those charged with such crimes. Steffensmeier's version of focal concerns theory is used to help understand the results of this dissertation. Focal concerns theory suggests that judges' sentencing decisions are heavily influenced by three objectives or focal concerns, which include a desire to impose what is deemed as just or an appropriate sentence consistent with the defendant's blameworthiness, a desire to protect the community from what they perceive as dangerous offenders, and a desirability to avoid negative social consequences (Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998). This study is not a direct test of FCT, rather the theory is used to contextualize the results found in this study by making assumptions through FCT that racial differences are due to stereotypes stemming from attitudes and/or

a belief that Black youth are more blameworthy. For the purpose of this study as it examines the adjudicate stage, stereotypes on the part of the judge are the primary focus. These stereotypes may be intentional or subconscious, often referred to as implicit bias.

Research on implicit bias purports that individuals may act on the attitudes and stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions without intending to do so (Staats, Capatosto, Wright, & Jackson, 2016). Further, when thoughts and feelings are implicit, we are unaware of them thus relying on cognitive shortcuts to filter information and categorize individuals according to certain stereotypes (Henning, 2017). Prior research has examined implicit biases directed at members of socially stigmatized groups, such as Black individuals (Goff, Jackson, DiLeone, Culotta, & DiTomasso, 2014; Henning, 2013; Epstein, Blake, & Gonzalez, 2017). For example, research has found that Whites have a white preference in that they associate white faces more quickly with positive words and black faces with negative words.

Negative stereotypes regarding youth of color in America has led many to intentionally or unintentionally associate Black youth as dangerous. Specifically, among juvenile justice system stakeholders, research has found support of bias in perceptions of culpability, risk of reoffending, and deserved punishment for youth when the decision maker explicitly knew the race of the offender (Henning, 2013). More specific to this study, an examination of 133 judges from three jurisdictions across the country, found that implicit racial biases were common among judges and that these biases can influence their judgement (Rachlinski, Johnson, Wistrich, & Guthrie, 2009).

Although such stereotypes as discussed above will never fully dissipate, there are policy implications that could be implemented to help reduce DMC at the adjudication

stage, such as implicit bias training. Implicit bias training helps individuals recognize and acknowledge their own and other's biases' to help reduce those biases' harmful impact on behavior (Bennett, 2010; Kang et al., 2012). Implicit bias specifically refers to unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that can negatively influence individual's actions and decisions toward others (Staats, Capatosto, Wright, & Jackson, 2016). Training judges to learn to recognize biases as they appear, is an important step to help reduce DMC within the juvenile justice system (Lustbader, 2015).

A tool to assist during implicit bias training is the Implicit Association Test (IAT), which measures attitudes and beliefs that individuals may be unwilling or otherwise unable to report (Loyola Marymount University, 2022). The IAT is particularly interested in whether an individual has an implicit attitude that they were unaware of. The IAT measures the strength of associations between concepts (e.g., Black youth) and stereotypes (e.g., blameworthy). The primary premise rests on that making a response is easier when closely related items share the same response key. For instance, during an IAT, an individual is asked to quickly sort words into categories that are on the left- and right-hand side of the computer screen. The IAT has five main functions, and relies on how long it takes a person, on average, to sort the words in the third part of the IAT compared with the fifth part of the IAT (Loyola Marymount University, 2022). For example, the IAT could indicate that an individual has an implicit bias towards Blacks relative to Whites if they are faster when categorizing words when Black youth and blameworthy share a response key, relative to the reverse.

Implicit bias training has been implemented across various professions including criminal justice personnel, health care employees, and medical education programs

(Hunsinger, Christopher, & Schmidt, 2019; Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004; Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001; Dasgupta & Rivera, 2006; Moskowitz, Gollwitzer, Wasel, & Schaal, 1999; Stone & Moskowitz, 2011; Ansell & McDonald, 2015; Byrne & Tanesini, 2015; Burgess, van Ryn, Dovidio, & Saha, 2007; Hannah & Carpenter-Song, 2013; Hernandez, Haidet, Gill, & Teal, 2013; Teal, Gill, Green, & Crandall, 2012; Boscardin, 2015). A recent program evaluation of an implicit bias training program examined the effects of profession and racial identity on outcomes among justice professionals and non-justice professionals. More specifically, the training described how implicit biases are formed, how they impact children in the school-to-prison pipeline and adults in society, the consequences of those biases both short-and long-term, and strategies for responding to one's own implicit biases. Results suggest that several strengths and assets of the program were identified and how receptive participants were to the training, but this varied by race, gender, and profession (Fix, 2020). Findings indicate that non-justice professionals and women benefited slightly more from trainings than their counterparts (Fix, 2020). Additionally, adult participants identifying their gender as female and race as Black felt more positively about the training overall, regardless of their profession (Fix, 2020). This study supports the need for continued implicit bias trainings with more in-depth and longitudinal studies of them to provide a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses.

Support for implicit bias training has been found to reduce implicit bias towards Black individuals and minority groups (Hunsinger, Christopher, & Schmidt, 2019; Stell & Farsides, 2015; Pinkston, 2015; Mann & Ferguson, 2015; Lueke & Gibson, 2015; Kang, Gray, & Dovidio, 2014). In particular, a study by Lueke and Gibson (2015)

incorporated training on mindfulness meditation to examine age and racial biases, followed by an age or race IAT. Results indicated that participants applying mindfulness meditation exhibited a decrease in implicit biases for both age and race. While some scholars have questioned the extent to which implicit bias training is effective (Joy-Gaba & Nosek, 2010; Schmidt & Nosek, 2010), there appears to be overall support for such training among researchers (Critcher & Risen, 2014; Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004; Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001; Lai et al., 2014).

It is also important to identify policy implications related to helping prevent or reduce IPV among youth. Policy implications specific to reducing IPV among both adults and adolescents include court intervention programs in certain states (Buel, 2002; Grottpeter, Menard, & Gianola, 2008). Juvenile court intervention programs have shown to be effective, but require further improvement (Buel, 2002; Pensak, 2015). These programs should be established in every state. An additional implication includes moving away from mandatory arrest policies. Initially focused on IPV among adults, these statutes have been further extended to juvenile dating relationships (Durfee, 2016), despite evidence to suggest that a positive impact of arrest is small and in some cases escalates violence (Maxwell, Garner, & Fagan 2001; Sherman & Smith, 1992; Garner, Fagan, & Maxwell, 1995; Garner & Maxwell, 2000). Rather, the goal of the juvenile justice system should be to restore order with minimal arrests made. Further, legislative efforts need to clearly introduce teen-specific language into statutes. In addition, national education systems need to implement lesson plans that educate middle and high school students (and their teachers and parents) about what IPV looks like, and the steps they should take if they notice these acts of abuse. Finally, the juvenile justice system should implement a

multidisciplinary approach to teen abusers that includes intensive rehabilitation and appropriate detention sentences throughout school districts (Pensak, 2015). These implications should be considered by policymakers and stakeholders to help reduce the likelihood of IPV and future acts of violence.

Stakeholders and policymakers need to be educated on the effects of implicit racial biases in the juvenile justice system. Implementing policy implications such as required implicit bias training for judges in every state, is an important component that can be used to help reduce negative stereotypes that might cause a judge to believe, either consciously or subconsciously, that Black youth are more blameworthy. Furthermore, every state should consider implementing a DMC model ---similar to the model used in Kentucky --- to address the presence of racial and ethnic disparities within their court system. The Kentucky Court of Justice developed a 4-step model to help reduce the disparities within the court system. More specifically, this model explains how to identify disparities, construct strategies to address them, institutionalize effective changes, and reevaluate progress for continuous quality improvement via annual performance measures to provide data outcomes by race (Palmer, 2022).

An additional policy implication involves racial trauma training. Racial trauma or Race-Based Traumatic Stress (RBTS) can be defined as the mental and emotional injury caused by encounters with racial bias and ethnic discrimination, racism, and hate crime (Mental Health America, 2022). Any individual that has experienced an emotionally painful, sudden, or uncontrollable racist encounter is at risk of suffering from a race-based traumatic stress injury (Mental Health America, 2022; Carter et al., 2013; Helms, Nicolas, & Green, 2010). A recent study examined whether experiences of racist

discrimination and heterosexist microaggressions were associated with IPV among female youth of color (Swann et al., 2022). Results indicate that both forms of enacted stigma was associated with perpetration and victimization across all four types of IPV which included psychological, physical, sexual, and sexual minority-specific. Notably, racial discrimination was specifically associated with physical perpetration and psychological victimization. Overall, the findings from this study suggest that enacted stigma based on minority identity intertwine to increase the likelihood of IPV among female minority youth of color (Swann et al., 2022; Reuter, Newcomb, Whitton, & Mustanski, 2017; Whitton, Dyar, Mustanski, & Newcomb, 2019). Further, theories of IPV that examine how violence between partners mimics the cultural violence toward certain groups indicate that societal heterosexism and racism contribute to IPV among certain gender groups and racial minorities by adding additional stress on their relationships that can foster dysfunctional relationship dynamics (LeBlanc, Frost, & Wight, 2015; Almeida, Woods, Messineo, Font, & Heer, 1994; Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Neff & Karney, 2004; Neff & Karney, 2009).

The juvenile justice system should incorporate racial trauma training to create awareness among personnel, and to increase their understanding and sensitivity of racial trauma when dealing with youth, particularly youth charged with IPV crimes. The training should discuss the three main types of racial trauma stressors --- direct, vicarious, and transmitted --- and teach juvenile justice actors such as judges, to consider racial trauma when interacting with youth of color (Mental Health America, 2022). Recent research has acknowledged that racial trauma may go unrecognized and therefore underreported (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Comas-Díaz, 2016; Williams, Metzger,

Leins, & DeLapp, 2018), thus juvenile justice actors should be aware of this. Further, policy implications should consider having mental health professionals examine youth charged with IPV prior to the adjudication and sentencing stage of the process using the Race-Based Traumatic Stress Symptom Scale (RBTSSS). This is a measure developed to assess the psychological and emotional stress reactions to racism and racial discrimination. Judges should take the results into consideration when sentencing Black youth charged with crimes of IPV (Carter et al., 2013).

In addition, as echoed by Lustbader (2015), effectively listening to and learning from stories about racial injustice, judges could validate the experiences of communities of color. In sum, reductions in implicit bias among judges and DMC in the juvenile justice system can be accomplished through continued trainings --- which may incorporate education about diverse groups and racial trauma training including the use of the RBTSSS, coupled with more in-depth and longitudinal studies of such trainings --- followed by future program evaluations, development of a DMC model within each court system, being critical about one's objectivity, awareness of implicit bias via the IAT, and reflecting on the decision-making process.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study is that the data are not intended to be a test of the focal concerns framework, thus the selected measures may not be the best measures of each theoretical construct. More specifically, the data do not include potential measures that might be more direct measures of blameworthiness, such as judicial stereotypes, so while the data are rich, there is no information in the data specifically on judges' stereotypes. Rather, the purpose of this study is to examine racial differences in

adjudication among youth charged with crimes of IPV and the results are used to contextualize focal concerns theory. The results for this analysis show that race continues to matter while holding all of the control measures constant. Additionally, it is difficult to define concepts such as severity and blameworthiness in terms of the harm caused by judges. A recent article by Lynch (2019), is used to further examine this limitation.

Lynch (2019) discusses how FCT has been inadequately tested in criminological literature. More specifically, Lynch (2019) suggests that in much of the sentencing research, focal concerns has become nothing more than an individual-level and common-sense psychological theory of judging. Lynch further explains that such work commonly reproduces quantitative findings of different demographic disparities in sentence outcomes without testing the theory itself. The major concerns Lynch discusses regarding the dominant approach used to examine FCT include framing, theorizing, and operationalization. Lynch (2019) and Ulmer (2012, 2019) call on researchers to improve how scholars assess focal concerns framework by drawing from new approaches and to bridge theoretical differences.

One approach to help improve how researchers evaluate FCT suggests that scholars fully immerse themselves in the extensive social psychological literature from which a given part of the theory draws, to enhance the theoretical conceptualization and improve operationalization in developing direct measures to test for their influence (Lynch, 2019). Another suggestion is the use of methodological diversity to strengthen theoretical and empirical assertions. More specifically, scholars are encouraged to use direct theory testing to examine the strength and validity of the theory's postulations, then refine as needed to enhance its usefulness and applicability (Lynch, 2019; Ulmer, 2012;

Ulmer, 2019). In sum, the current study is a pre-study at best given that this is not a direct test of FCT.

Relatedly, an additional limitation of this study is that the research examines only one decision point (adjudication) in the juvenile justice process. Other stages of the process include arrest, intake, disposition, and transfer to adult court. Multiple decision points are helpful to examine in order to better understand the extent of DMC (Lynch, 2019). Another limitation of this study is that the data were collected only in the state of Kentucky, thus the results may not be generalizable to the larger population. Other limitations are that the data does not include a measure of prior record, which is an important variable to control for when examining DMC (Peck & Jennings, 2016; DeJong & Jackson, 1998; Leiber & Mack, 2003; Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Bridges & Steen, 1998). As research indicates, after the seriousness of the offense, the next most important factor in sentencing is the defendant's prior record (Albonetti, 1997; Doerner & Demuth, 2014; Spohn, 2008; Ulmer, 1997).

The current studies primary focus is to examine DMC by assessing racial differences among youth adjudicated delinquent specifically for crimes of IPV. While examining youth charged with crimes of IPV is one aspect that makes the current study unique as it addresses gaps in the literature and adds to the larger body of research on DMC, could also be considered a limitation of the research. Examining various crimes in a single study might add more clarity to our understanding of this problem (Peck & Jennings, 2016; DeJong & Jackson, 1998; Leiber & Mack, 2003; Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Fergusson, Horwood, & Campbell, 2003; Bridges & Steen, 1998). An additional limitation relates to the number of females in the sample charged with IPV.

Approximately 34% of youth in the sample were female. Although females are more likely to be victims of IPV rather than perpetrators, examining adjudication outcomes by comparing both gender groups would add to our understanding of this topic. Other limitations directly relate to the data. The data were limited to only White and Black youth, and not other ethnicities. The study was also limited by only having two charges as a measure of interpersonal violence. Further, the data did not allow for different income levels to be examined. A final limitation of this study relates to issues regarding the use of secondary data. As with all analyses using secondary data, any errors committed during the original data collection process would be passed on to this research. Data that were incorrectly coded or misidentified would be incorrect or missing in this data set.

Future Research

The initial contributions of this study could be expanded with additional research. First, as previously discussed, Lynch (2019) provides a proposed method to collect and analyze data. Future research should incorporate Lynch's recommendation in order to capture multiple decision points and to improve the framing, theorizing, and operationalization when assessing the focal concerns framework. Furthermore, future research should examine multiple decisions points throughout the juvenile justice process. For instance, studies should assess racial differences at the arrest, adjudication, and disposition stage of the process. Second, future research should directly test FCT while examining all propositions of the theory. Third, research should use data collected across multiple states to increase generalizability. Fourth, future studies should compare adjudication outcomes for both gender groups. A fifth recommendation relates to

sentence length. As with adjudication, the length of sentence is an important judicial outcome to examine when assessing DMC. Thus, scholars should consider sentence length as a viable area for research on this topic. Additional research should take into account other ethnicities, a broader range of interpersonal violence charges, and different income levels. Finally, future qualitative research could be conducted with judges concerning their opinions on the blameworthiness of youth to help establish whether judicial stereotypes are present. Qualitative research could also examine how judges make decisions specifically regarding adjudication, which could be used to make comparisons with that of quantitative results.

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- Wordes, M., & Bynum, T. S. (1995). *Reflections on race effects in juvenile justice* (Ed.). Minorities in Juvenile Justice. Sage.
- World Health Organization. (2013). Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-

partner sexual violence. *WHO*, Geneva.

Yan, F. A., Howard, D. E., Beck, K. H., Shattuck, T., & Hallmark-Kerr, M. (2010).

Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 25(5), 808-831.

Zweig, J. M., Dank, M., Yahner, J., & Lachman, P. (2013). The rate of cyber dating

abuse among teens and how it relates to other forms of teen dating

violence. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 42, 1063–1077.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Suzanne M. Overstreet

Education

Ph.D. University of Louisville 2022
Criminal Justice

Chairs: Dr. Gennaro F. Vito and Dr. George E. Higgins

Dissertation: *Understanding Racial and Ethnic Disparate Treatment of Juvenile Interpersonal Violent Offenders in the Juvenile Justice System using Focal Concerns Theory*

M.S. University of Cincinnati 2013
Criminal Justice

B.A. University of Findlay 2012
Criminal Justice and Sociology
Cum Laude

Study Abroad (2011) The Washington Center, London, England. Learning Through Internships, The History of London

Areas of Research Interest

Race and Crime, Victimology, Policing

Publications

Overstreet, S., Sriken, J., McNeeley, S., and Lapsey, D. (2022) School Fairness and Repeated Bullying Victimization Among High School Students. *Crime & Delinquency*

Overstreet, S., McNeeley, S., and Lapsey, D. (2020). Can Victim, Offender, and Situational Characteristics Differentiate Between Lethal and Non-Lethal Intimate Partner Violence? *Homicide Studies*.

Andreescu, V., and Overstreet, S. (2020). Violent Victimization and Violence Perpetration among American Indian Female Adolescents. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*.

Fisher, B., Higgins, E., Kupchik, A., Viano, S., Curran, C., Overstreet, S., Plumlee, B., and Coffey, B. (2020). Protecting the Flock or Policing the Sheep? Differences in School Resource Officers' Perceptions of Threats by School Racial Composition. *Social Problems*.

Higgins, E., Overstreet, S., Fisher, B., and Coffey, B. (2019). Bridging the Gap: School Resource Officers as Bridge Builders in the Community Policing Era. *Journal of Crime and Justice*.

McNeeley, S., and Overstreet, S. (2018). Lifestyle-Routine Activities, Neighborhood Context, and Ethnic Hate Crime Victimization. *Violence and Victims*.

Overstreet, S., McNeeley, S., Elvey, K., and Gass, W. (2017). Helping victims of sexual assault. In Cliff Roberson (Ed.), *Handbook of Victims' Issues in Criminal Justice* (pp.1-89). New York, NY: Routledge.

Manuscripts Under Review

Higgins, E., Fisher, B., Overstreet, S., and Dawson-Edwards., C. SROs and the Discursive Definition of Law Enforcement: Examining the Safety Doctrine Logic in the School Context. *Law & Society Review: R&R*.

Higgins, E., Fisher, B., Swartz, K., and Overstreet, S. Saving Snitching: How School Resource Officers Break Codes of Silence in Schools. *Police Quarterly*.

Active Research Projects

Close to Completion:

Overstreet, S. *A Comparative Analysis of Juvenile Justice Professionals' Views on Whether Restorative Justice Promotes Fairness and Efficiency*.

Swartz, K., Overstreet, S., and McNeeley, S. *Which CO Should We Attack?: Applying Target Congruence to Correctional Staff Assault*.

McNeeley, S., and Overstreet, S. *Situational Factors that Contribute to Police Related Deaths.*

In Progress:

Overstreet, S., Sriken, J., and McNeeley, S. *Sexual Assaults Resulting in Injury: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Methods Used in Prior Studies.*

Overstreet, S., McNeeley, S., and Sriken, J. *Understanding Rape Resulting in Homicide: A Situational Approach with NIBRS Data.*

Technical Reports

Dawson-Edwards, C., Webb, D., and Overstreet, S. (2021). *A Case Study on Identifying, Addressing and Reducing Racial & Ethnic Disparities, Kentucky Court of Justice Administrative Office of the Courts - Family & Youth Services Division.*

Fisher, B., Dawson-Edwards, C., Swartz, K., Higgins, E., Coffey, S., and Overstreet, S. (2019). *School Climate, Student Discipline, and the Implementation of School Resource Officers.*

Dawson-Edwards, C., Higgins, G., and Overstreet, S. (2019). *Assessing Disproportionate Minority Contact: Jefferson County, Kentucky.*

Grant Activity

2022 Multi-Section Course Enhancement Grant
Indiana University Southeast

2021-2022 Strategic Excellence Grant for Teaching Excellence
Indiana University Southeast

2018-2019 Graduate Researcher on a Disproportionate Minority Contact
Grant directed by Dr. Cherie Dawson-Edwards
University of Louisville

2017-2019 Collaboration with a number of faculty on a School Resource
Office Grant directed by Dr. Ben Fisher
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Academic Positions

Fall 2022 Visiting Assistant Professor
Indiana University Southeast
Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology

Drugs, Society, and Justice, Research Methods (2 sections), Introduction to Criminal Justice (online)

- Summer 2022 Visiting Assistant Professor
Indiana University Southeast
Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology
Introduction to Criminal Justice (online), Victimology (online); Summer Internship
- Spring 2022 Visiting Assistant Professor
Indiana University Southeast
Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology
Theories of Crime and Deviance, Introduction to Criminal Justice, Research Methods, Victimology
- Fall 2021 Visiting Assistant Professor
Indiana University Southeast
Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology
Master's Program: Victimology;
Undergraduate: Race, Gender, and Inequality in the Criminal System, Research Methods, Courts and Criminal Justice
- Summer 2021 Visiting Assistant Professor
Indiana University Southeast
Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology
Introduction to Criminal Justice (online), Victimology (online)
- Spring 2021 Visiting Assistant Professor
Indiana University Southeast
Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology
Topics in Criminal Justice: Human Trafficking, Drugs, Society, and Justice, Research Methods (2 sections) (all classes converted to online instruction)
- Fall 2020 Visiting Assistant Professor
Indiana University Southeast
Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology
Research Methods, Introduction to Criminal Justice, Courts and Criminal Justice, Theories of Crime and Deviance (all classes converted to online instruction)

Summer 2019	Instructor University of Louisville Department of Criminal Justice <i>Crime and Justice in the U.S. (online)</i>
Spring 2019	Instructor University of Louisville Department of Criminal Justice <i>Crime and Justice in the U.S. (online)</i>
Fall 2017-2018	Teaching Assistant University of Louisville Department of Criminal Justice <i>Seminar in Justice Administration</i>
Spring 2017	Instructor Cleveland State University Department of Criminology/Anthropology/Sociology <i>Sociology of Mental Illness</i>
Spring 2017	Instructor Lorain County Community College Math and Science Department <i>Statistics (3 sections)</i>
Fall 2016	Instructor Lorain County Community College Math and Science Department <i>Statistics (2 sections), Quantitative Reasoning (2 sections)</i>
Summer 2016	Tutor Lorain County Community College <i>Statistics, Research Methods, Writing and Research, Legal Aspects, Policing</i>

Field Experience

2014	Osceola County Clerk of the Circuit Court Kissimmee, FL. Injunction Unit Personnel
2012	Open Arms Rape and Domestic Violence Center Findlay, OH. Worked with victims of rape and domestic violence
2011	Hibiscus Female Prisoners Welfare Project

London, England. Hibiscus Project Worker

Media Interviews

Spring 2019 Invitation to speak on ESPN radio regarding my publication on Lifestyle-Routine Activities, Neighborhood Context, and Ethnic Hate Crime Victimization.
University of Louisville

Conference Presentations

2022 *Understanding the Role of Age in Decisions to Report Crimes: An Experiment.*
American Society of Criminology: Atlanta, GA.

2019 *Are School Resource Officers Associated with an Increase in Suspension Rates Among the Student Body?*
American Society of Criminology: San Francisco, CA.

School Resource Officers and School Climate: A Difference-in-Differences Approach.
American Society of Criminology: San Francisco, CA.

2018 *Can Victim, Offender, and Situational Characteristics Differentiate Between Lethal and Non-Lethal Intimate Partner Violence?*
American Society of Criminology: Atlanta, GA.

Which CO Should We Attack?: Applying Target Congruence to Correctional Staff Assault.
American Society of Criminology: Atlanta, GA.

Changes in School Climate Associated with Implementing School Resource Officers.
American Society of Criminology: Atlanta, GA.

School Resource Officers and Student Suspension.
American Society of Criminology: Atlanta, GA.

2018 *Violent Victimization and Violence Perpetration among American Indian Female Adolescents.*
Unscheduled Chair for Paper Session “Violent Crime: Victims, Offenders, and Intervention.”
Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences: New Orleans, LA.

Correlates to Contact: Examining City Police Complaints on Juvenile Offenders.

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences: New Orleans, LA.

2012 *Forensic Mitochondrial DNA Analysis on Carrion Flies to Determine Species Identification.*
Independent Research Project for Symposium: Findlay, OH.

Service

To the University:

Summer 2016 Tutor Undergraduate Students in Various Criminal Justice Courses
Lorain County Community College

To the Community:

2017-Current Volunteer at the Human Trafficking Shelter

2015-2016 Volunteer at the Rape Crisis Center
Center for Healing Hearts and Spirits

Journal Reviewer

2022 Peer reviewer for *Crime & Delinquency*

2021 Peer reviewer for the *Journal of Family Violence*

2017-2018 Peer reviewer for the *Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice & Criminology*

Peer Reviewer

Fall 2022 Peer Teaching Reviewer for Faculty in Different Departments
Indiana University Southeast

Program Evaluations

Spring 2018 Participation in a Program Evaluation of the Living Room Project:
An Intake Shelter, Alternative to Prison.
University of Louisville

Professional Memberships

American Society of Criminology
Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences

Honors and Awards

Fall 2020 Online Teaching Cohort Award: Indiana University Southeast
University Graduate Scholarship: University of Louisville
University Graduate Scholarship Award: University of Cincinnati
Trustees' Academic Scholarship: University of Findlay