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TRANSFERRED JUVENILES: THE EFFECTS OF RACE AND GENDER
ON SENTENCING OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

This thesis utilizes the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing Data in an effort to explore how race and gender affects the sentencing outcomes of transferred juveniles. Focal concerns theory serves as a theoretical framework for a more comprehensive understanding of how the intersectionality of race and gender impact sentencing outcomes. Using multinomial logistic regression to analyze the data, findings suggest that both Hispanic and Male juveniles are at the highest risk of receiving the harshest sentences. Implications of these findings and recommendations on how to improve this study for further research is detailed below, in the conclusion.

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Chapter 1

Importance

During the 19th century, the United States adopted a new system of justice exclusively for juveniles that was separate from criminal court as a way to protect adolescents from experiencing destructive sanctions. This system was created based upon the premise that children are biologically different than their adult counterparts; and thus, deserve a unique form of treatment. These two systems differ in many ways, but one of the major distinctions is the difference in objective. Instead, of placing the focus on punishment for the crime, the emphasis is geared towards rehabilitation of the individual. Contrary to their adult counterparts, juveniles are meant to be treated as troubled beings in need of serious structural and institutional guidance, but who are fully capable of reform (National Resource Council and Institute of Medicine 2006).

However, since the 1980s, a surge in youth crime generated a great deal of public hysteria which has, in turn, contributed to legal reforms that stress retribution, accountability, and a need for public safety in favor of a get-tough approach on juvenile crime and punishment (Front Matter 2001). The revision of transfer laws has served as a significant measure to crack down on youthful offenders by easing the process in which juveniles can be tried as adults. These revisions include lowering the minimum age at which a juvenile may be waived, altering waiver criteria to increase the number of transfer-eligible offenses, expanding the list of offenses that would warrant a juvenile transfer, and reducing judicial discretion in the transfer decision-making (Redding 2010; Kolivoski and Shook 2016). The idea was that the implementation of more punitive, adult sanctions would serve as an effective deterrent for youthful offenders.

However, evidence shows that not only does this penal response fail to dissuade juveniles from reoffending; in fact, “six large-scale studies have found higher recidivism rates among juveniles convicted for violent offenses in criminal court when compared with similar offenders tried in juvenile court (Redding 2010), it also disproportionately targets individuals of color (Kolivoski 2016). This present study will address how the criminal justice system might prioritize social biases over social justice by raising several inquiries regarding how the effects of race and gender might influence sentencing outcomes.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Race Effects

Before analyzing how race may have a direct influence on sentencing outcomes it is integral to first examine the preceding stages leading up to the date of sentencing in order to examine how race may have played a role throughout various decision points, starting from the initial arrest. The accumulation of racial disparities, as a juvenile proceeds through the justice system, is another component to be wary of that can oftentimes go unnoticed when the focus is limited only to the final verdict (Pope and Feyerherm 1995). Statistically speaking, African Americans account for the vast majority of arrested youths, but does that mean that African Americans are inherently more delinquent? Studies would suggest otherwise; “the OJJDP reports that among nationally representative sample of youth who completed a self-survey on delinquency, African American youth reported no substantial difference in the amount of delinquent behavior in comparison to their White peers... [and yet] the self-survey also indicated that a disproportionate number of the African American participants had been arrested” (Drakeford and Staples 2006). Thus, it is appropriate to infer that racial discrimination occurs prior to the date of sentencing and that “minority youth may be arrested in numbers that are disproportionate to the number of delinquent acts they commit.” (Drakeford and Staples 2006). In addition to the greater frequency of arrest rates, once in the system, minorities are proven to be further exploited for their race. MacCalliar and Males (2004) examined the adult transfer records in Los Angeles to find that violent minority juvenile offenders were transferred

at a rate more than twice that of violent White juvenile offenders. Moreover, according to Drakeford and Staples' (2006) findings, controlling for arrest rate, not only are minority youth in Los Angeles overrepresented in the adult courts, they are more likely to be convicted, and more likely receive harsher sentences than White youth. Prior research indicates the need and urgency to consider how selection may be contributing to the trying and convicting of minorities. My objective is to assess, within the Pennsylvania data, how having a minority status affects the sentencing outcome of minority juveniles when compared to Whites.

Gender Effects

There is a great deal of supporting research that suggests female defendants receive more lenient treatment during sentencing than male defendants (Rodriguez, Curry, and Lee 2006). However, the majority of research available for juveniles exists within the juvenile justice system; therefore, when analyzing the effects of gender on sentencing, it is necessary to consider how gender influences both juvenile adjudications as well as adult sanctions in order to form a calculated hypothesis on how gender affects how transferred juvenile offenders are sentenced in criminal court. According to Steffensmeier, Ulmer, and Kramer (1998) the greatest disparity of treatment among adult male and female defendants is evident during sentencing and imprisonment decisions. "The odds of incarceration for male defendants are about 71% higher than the odds of incarceration for female defendants" (Steffensmeier and Demuth 2006) and for the small percentage of females who do receive a sentence of incarceration, Holland (2010) found that the length of their sentence was significantly shorter than that of males.

With that said, there are a handful of studies that reject the argument that females receive lighter sentences than males; however, the majority of these studies, claiming that females

actually receive harsher sentences than males, are typically found within the juvenile justice system and for much more minor offenses (Rodriguez, Curry, and Lee 2006). Tracy, Kempf-Leonard, and Abramoske (2009) found that in the juvenile system: (1) females were handled more punitively than males and substantially more likely to be detained for status offenses and (2) females were more likely than males to receive the harshest sanction available in juvenile court (for status offenses and technical violations of probation). And so, while the trend implies that on average, in both the juvenile system and the adult system, females receive more penal rulings for minor offenses in, the evidence remains that for serious felonies tried in criminal court, adult female offenders tend to receive shorter sentences (Steffensmeier, Kramer, and Streifel 1993). Thus, for the purposes of my study, because my subject pool consists of juveniles who have committed crimes serious enough to have been waived into the adult system, I presume that my study will support the assumption that females are granted more lenient sentences than males.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

Focal Concerns Theory

For the purpose of my study I will be primarily utilizing the focal concerns theory to help guide my hypotheses. This particular theory combines elements from theories on both general judicial decision-making and gender disparity”(Richardson 2015). Focal concerns theory argues that sentencing decisions reflect judges’ beliefs about three primary considerations which include “the offender’s blameworthiness and the degree of harm caused to the victim, protection of the community, and practical implications of sentencing decisions” (Steffensmeier, Ulmer, and Kramer 1998). This provides a useful framework for understanding how the intersectionality of gender, race, and other extralegal factors impact the sentencing process. Blameworthiness takes into account the offender’s level of culpability as well as the severity of the offense. This focal concern embraces the concepts of retribution and punishment; generally, the more culpable a person is or the more harm he or she inflicted will result in a harsher sentence (and vice versa). When a judge examines blameworthiness he or she will also consider the offender’s prior record, prior victimization, and their role in the offense in an effort to propose a fair and reasonable sentence (Jordan 2013). Blameworthiness is the focal concern most predominantly based on justice, such that the punishment ought to be proportionate to the crime (Richardson 2015).

The second focal concern is protection of the community. This concern focuses on how dangerous the offender is to society and his or her likelihood of reoffending. This concern embodies a principle of deterrence aimed at thwarting the perpetrator as well as other potential offenders from engaging in further criminal behavior (Jordan 2013) based on how punitive the punishment/sentence is which may affect how a judge will proceed. This concern forces judges

to prioritize the characteristics of the offender, rather than the characteristics of the case in order to predict the likelihood that the defendant will recidivate and/or cause further harm to society, as a whole (Richardson 2015). Research indicates that transferred youth are more likely to recidivate more often and more quickly than youth in the juvenile system (Bishop et al. 1996).

The final concern regards the practical constraints and consequences for sentencing decisions at both the organizational and individual level. At the organization level, judges must take into consideration limited correctional resources, institutional overcrowding and extraordinary expenses made by the criminal justice system. (Jordan 2013; Richardson 2015). And at the individual level, judges have to examine and, essentially, predict how the offender will fare with the punishment he or she receives and how it will affect his or her social ties, mental health, physical health and how he or she, as a judge, will be perceived by the public eye after imposing a final verdict (Hartley, Maddan, Spohn 2007).

Race

During sentencing, minorities are often doubly jeopardized for their race due to widespread societal prejudices that influence judges' and juries' decision-making. Steffensmeier and Demuth (2006) found that court officials (and society at large) often view Black and Hispanic offenders as "violent-prone, threatening, disrespectful of authority...more criminal in their lifestyles... more likely to recidivate and less likely to be deterred." A recent study examining 233 probation officer reports, to determine the differences in officers' perceptions of attribution by race, found that "officials consistently attributed the crimes of African American juvenile offenders to negative internal attributes, whereas the crimes of White youth were... attributed to negative external attributes... [and] that African American youth are more frequently seen as responsible for their crimes, more likely to become repeat offenders, and more

deserving of retribution [while], white youth were more frequently viewed as victims of environmental factors, less likely to become repeat offenders, and more deserving of some degree of leniency in punishments imposed” (Drakeford and Staples 2006). In terms of focal concerns theory, minorities are considered to be more blameworthy and a greater risk to the community than whites. Therefore, for this study, I hypothesize that minority juvenile offenders (i.e. Black and Hispanic defendants) will receive harsher sentencing outcomes in criminal court than White juvenile offenders.

Gender

Due to the scarcity of research on juveniles and even greater scarcity of research on female juveniles, it’s necessary to consider how females are viewed in both the adult and juvenile systems in order to predict how gender might affect the sentencing outcomes of transferred youths. The majority of prior research regarding adult offenders states that “in terms of gender, women are thought to be less dangerous, less blameworthy, less likely to recidivate, and more likely to be deterred than men” (Doerner and Demuth 2012). Thus, come sentencing, it is likely that a judge will grant females more lenient sentences, compared to men, based solely on their perceptions and biases. With that said, statistically speaking, women (of all ages) are responsible for far less crime and have significantly less serious criminal records than men (Richardson 2015) which supports the perception that females are less of a safety risk than males. “However, net of case severity, charge severity, type of offense, prior record, and other defendant characteristics, male and female defendants [are] still treated differently on the basis of their ties and responsibilities for others” (Doerner and Demuth 2012). Studies show that women are perceived to maintain community ties, more so than men, with children, parents, friends, etc. and are more closely bonded to conventional institutions that are likely to reduce future criminal

behavior (Steffensmeier and Demuth 2006). Furthermore, because judges and other court actors “tend to see women’s crimes as an outgrowth of their own victimization (e.g., by coercive men or drugs), and because of judges’ beliefs that the social costs of detaining women are higher since they are more likely than males to have child care responsibilities and mental or health problems that could not be treated in a jail setting (Steffensmeier et al. 1993),” judges are more inclined to reduce their sentencing. Because, consistent with focal concerns perspective women are less blameworthy, less dangerous, and less suitable for incarceration.

Despite previous evidence that suggests females are, occasionally, treated more punitively than males within the juvenile justice system, the argument applies exclusively to females who have committed minor offenses, in which case the juvenile justice systems tends to impose harsh disciplinary measures in an effort to protect them (Guevara, Herz, and Spohn 2006). However, since the female population that I will be utilizing for my study has committed crimes egregious enough to warrant them an adult trial, the argument becomes irrelevant. In fact, research suggests that for serious felonies, there is nearly no difference in perception of adult female offenders and juvenile female offenders and akin to adult female offenders, “female youth are [also] viewed as less dangerous, less threatening, and less likely to recidivate than male youth” (Guevara, Herz, and Spohn 2006). Ergo, I hypothesize that female juvenile offenders will receive more lenient sentencing outcomes in criminal court than male juvenile offenders.

Hypotheses

1. Minority juvenile offenders (i.e. Black and Hispanic defendants) will receive harsher sentencing outcomes in criminal court than White juvenile offenders
2. Female juvenile offenders will receive more lenient sentencing outcomes in criminal court than male juvenile offenders

Chapter 4

Data and Methods

Current Study

The goal for my current study is to build off existing research by analyzing the relationship between race and gender of transferred juvenile offenders to examine how these factors affect the sentencing process. I will assess and analyze which population of juveniles, comparatively, receive the most punitive sanctions while accounting for various control variables.

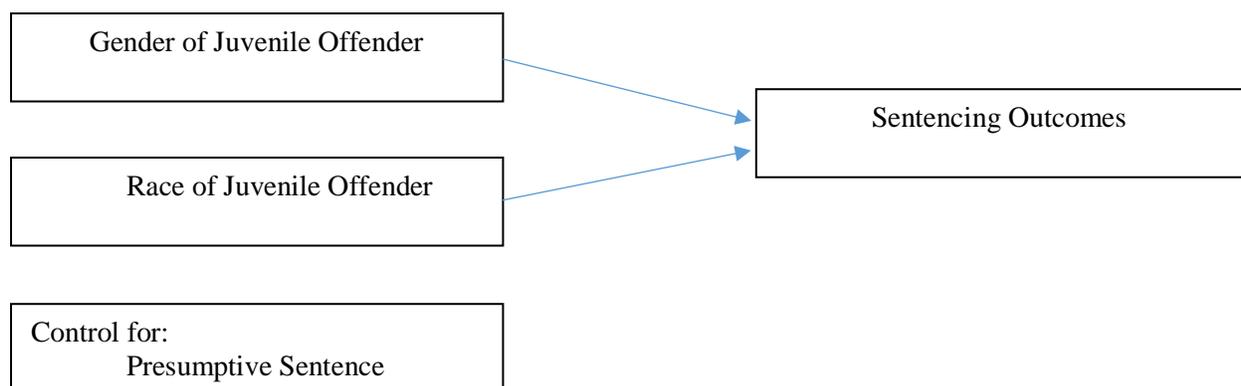
Dataset

This research was conducted using the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing Data. It is a legislative agency of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania established to address problems of unwarranted disparity and undue leniency in judicial sentencing. The sentencing data reflects all felony and misdemeanor offenses that were sentenced in common pleas courts in a given year. The data includes both adults, individuals 18 and older and juveniles, younger than 18, who have been transferred into criminal court. The information available contains extensive details: on offender demographics; case identification; offense of conviction; record of previous convictions; sentence recommendations, including applicable sentencing enhancements and/or mandatory provisions; type of disposition; and the sentence imposed (Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing 2011).

It is important to note that, for the purposes of my research, the data I used focuses exclusively on juveniles and is limited to 754 cases of juveniles ranging from 11 to 17 years of age.

Dependent and Independent Variables

Conceptual Model:



The dependent variable employed in this study was severity of sentencing outcomes. I intended to measure the sentence severity by separating the sentencing outcomes into three categories including (1) whether or not the juvenile offender received a *probation sentence* (2) whether or not the juvenile offender received a *jail sentence* or (3) whether or not the juvenile offender received a *prison sentence*. Those who received a prison sentence, would have received the “most serious” penalty, while those who receive a probation sentence, would have received the “most lenient” penalty.

Two of the independent variables: *gender of the juvenile offender* and *race of the juvenile offender* represent extralegal factors that could potentially influence how the juvenile offender is sentenced. Gender was measured using a simple dummy variable where male was coded as 1 and female was coded as 0. The second variable, race of the juvenile offender, was also measured by a dummy variable in three separate instances for three separate racial groups: *Black*, *White*, and

Hispanic. For my first regression, *Black* was coded as 1 while *White* and *Hispanic* were both coded as 0. I ran the same regression two more times for both *White* and *Hispanic* where *White* was coded as 1 and *Black* and *Hispanic* were coded as 0, and then once more where *Hispanic* was coded as 1, and *Black* and *White* were coded as 0.

Control Variable

Control variables are especially necessary when running an analysis in order to yield accurate, representative results. The single control variable that I implemented for this study was *Presumptive Sentence* (PS). This variable is a rather comprehensive one, not only does it provide the recommended sentence for each juvenile offender, but it also takes into account the influence of both the defendants' prior record and offender gravity score (OGS), which is assigned to every criminal offense and provides the presiding judge with a numerical standard to evaluate the seriousness of the crime for which the defendant has been convicted. The more serious the offense committed, the higher the number; the scores range from 1 (being the lowest) to 14 (being the highest).

Methods of Analysis

In order to analyze the predictor variables effect on the target variable, descriptive statistics, cross tabulations, and multiple linear regressions will be employed. First I ran descriptive statistics on each and every variable. For the nominal variables like: *Race*, *Gender*, and Sentence Outcomes: *Probation*, *County Jail*, *State Prison* I found out the percentage of cases and for the continuous variables like: *Age* and *Presumptive Sentence*, I used frequencies to find out the mean and standard deviation of each.

Since my dependent variable consisted of three different circumstances I had to recode them quantitatively so that a *Probation Sentence* was equal to 1, a sentence to *County Jail* was equal to 2 and a sentence to *State Prison* was equal to 3. This allowed me to run a multiple nominal linear regression model to test for the individual effects of *Race* and *Gender* while controlling for *Presumptive Sentence*.

Next, I used cross tabulations to test for the combined effects of *Race* on sentencing outcomes while still controlling for *Presumptive Sentence*. Unfortunately, the number of cases available in the dataset for female juveniles was simply too small to be able to test for the combined effects of *Gender*.

Chapter 5

Findings

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics, Dependent Variables

Sentencing Outcomes	Frequency	Percentage
Probation	146	19.4%
County Jail	213	28.2%
State Prison	395	52.4%
Total:	754	100%

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics, Independent Variables

Independent Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender:		
Female	46	6.1%
Male	708	93.9%
Race:		
White	184	24.4%
Black	433	57.4%
Hispanic	68	9.0%
Total:	754	100%

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics, Control Variables

Control Variable	Frequency	Mean	S.D
Presumptive Sentence	754	17.87	20.068
Age	754	16.61	0.741

Cross Tabulations:

In order to examine the relationship between different variables and determine the statistical significance of my categorical data, without yet applying the control variable, I conducted cross on all my independent and dependent variables. Using crosstabs yields a frequency distribution table that allows me to see the proportion of my cases.

Table 4 Cross Tabulations, Defendant's Race and Sentence Outcome

	Probation	County Jail	State Prison	Total
Race:				
White	54	63	67	184
Black	71	109	253	433
Hispanic	7	23	38	68

Total:	685
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Table 4 represents the relationship between Race and sentencing, without yet accounting for my control variable. It illustrates the distribution of sentencing outcomes among *Whites*, *Blacks*, and *Hispanics*. To best understand and interpret this data, I focused on one race at a time, and took the number of juveniles who received *probation* and divided it over the total amount of convicted juveniles who identified as said race; and I repeated these steps for *Jail* and *Prison* as well. Below, reads a list of the generated percentages that correspond with Table 4.

- 29.3% of all White juveniles are sentenced to Probation
- 43.3% of all White juveniles are sentenced to County Jail
- 36.4% of all White juveniles are sentenced to **State Prison**
- 16.4% of all Black juveniles are sentenced to Probation
- 25.2% of all Black juveniles are sentenced to County Jail
- 58.4% of all Black juveniles are sentenced to **State Prison**
- 10.3% of all Hispanic juveniles are sentenced to Probation
- 33.8% of all Hispanic juveniles are sentenced to County Jail
- 56% of all Hispanic juveniles are sentenced to **State Prison**

Based on these statistics, without controlling for *Presumptive Sentence*, it's safe to say that both Black and Hispanic juveniles are at the highest risk for receiving the harshest sentencing outcome of *State Prison*. Compared to White defendants, both Black and Hispanic juveniles are nearly twice as likely to be sentenced to Prison. Not only, are White juveniles the

least likely to receive a prison sentence, but they are also the most likely to receive a probation sentence which, in this study, is considered to be the most lenient possible sentence. However, interestingly enough, it appears that White juveniles are most likely to receive a jail sentence, which is still more lenient than prison, but certainly harsher than probation. It is also important to note the raw number of juveniles within each race that were involved in the sentencing process because, the vast majority of the juveniles who have been introduced into criminal court are Black defendants, while Hispanics make up a very small overall percentage of convicted juveniles.

Table 5 Cross Tabulations, Defendant's Gender and Sentence Outcome

	Probation	County Jail	State Prison	Total
Gender:				
Female	18	15	13	46
Male	128	198	382	708
Total:	754			

Table 5 delineates the relationship between gender and sentencing, without accounting for the control variable; just as I did for Table 4, I chose to look at what percentage of each gender received *probation*, *Jail*, or *Prison* and then compared that with the rest of said gender. Below, are a list of the generated percentages that correspond with Table 5.

- 39.1% of all female juveniles are sentenced to Probation
- 32.6% of all female juveniles are sentenced to County Jail

- 28.2% of all female juveniles are sentenced to **State Prison**
- 18.1% of all male juveniles are sentenced to Probation
- 28% of all male juveniles are sentenced to County Jail
- 54% of all male juveniles are sentenced to **State Prison**

As presumed, male juveniles make up the vast majority of all juveniles who have been sentenced in adult court and are nearly twice as likely to receive the harshest sentence of State Prison. For females, the trend seems to be that the harsher the sentence, the smaller the percentage of those (females) who receive them. For instance, the majority of female juveniles received probation, less received a jail sentence, and even less received a prison sentence.

Logistic Regressions

To further examine my research question, I conducted a multinomial logistic regression to investigate whether any of my chosen independent variables could predict my dependent variable, which includes more than two categorical levels. For this research question, the independent variables were *race* and *gender*, while the dependent variables included *Probation*, *County Jail*, and *State Prison*.

Table 6 Multinomial Logistic Regression without Controls

Type of Incarceration	B	Std. Error	Sig.	Exp(B)
County Jail				
Male Juveniles	.684	.374	.067	1.981
Black Juveniles	.233	.225	.301	1.263
Hispanic Juveniles	1.079	.466	.021	2.940
State Prison				
Male Juveniles	1.424	.388	.000	4.153
Black Juveniles	.843	.209	.000	2.322
Hispanic Juveniles	1.400	.448	.002	4.055

a. The reference category is: Probation

Above, Table 6 offers a premature look at how sentencing is distributed among juveniles of various demographics, without controlling for anything. These numbers are bound to change once certain extraneous influences have been accounted for.

Table 7 Multinomial Logistic Regression with Controls

Type of Incarceration	B	Std. Error	Sig.	Exp(B)
County Jail				
Male Juveniles	.627	.372	.092	1.872
Black Juveniles	.247	.231	.284	1.281
Hispanic Juveniles	1.042	.465	.025	2.834
Control				
Presumptive Sentence	-.003	.012	.775	.997
State Prison				
Male Juveniles	2.020	.488	.000	7.541
Black Juveniles	.228	.240	.341	1.256
Hispanic Juveniles	1.273	.474	.007	3.573
Control				
Presumptive Sentence	.100	.011	.000	1.106

a. The reference category is: Probation

After accounting for my control variable, Table 7 uses a multinomial logistic regression to offer a more complete representation of the implications that these demographics such as *gender* and *race* have on sentencing severity. Using probation and White juveniles as reference categories, Table 7 illustrates what the consequences are of being male, Hispanic, or Black in the context of sentencing. Focusing on those who are sentenced to *County Jail*, only Hispanic juveniles appeared to yield significance. Table 7 suggests that the odds of a Hispanic juvenile receiving *County Jail* time are 2.834 times greater than a White juvenile; and that being male or Black has not been shown to increase one's chances of going to *County Jail*. However, looking at those who receive a *State Jail* sentence, 3 of my predicting variables evince to be significant. According to Table 7, the odds of a male juvenile being sentenced to *State Prison* are 7.541 times greater than for a female juvenile and the odds of a Hispanic juvenile being sentenced to *State Prison* are 3.573 times greater than for a White juvenile. *Presumptive sentence* was also found to be significant, in that for each one month increase in *presumptive sentence* the odds of receiving a jail sentence decreases by .03 but the odds of receiving a prison sentence increases by about .11, making this a cumulative finding.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Review of Hypotheses

The findings of my data analysis detailed above were administered in order to explore the potential relationship between various demographics of juveniles with the severity of their subsequent sentences, while accounting for certain variables that might have interfered with identifying the significance of my results. Running multinomial logistic regressions, granted/permitted exploratory conclusions to be made regarding the level of support or, rather, lack thereof for my hypotheses. Below, I will reiterate what both my hypotheses were and review, in greater detail, how they were or were not supported and elaborate on why that may be.

Hypothesis 1:

Minority juvenile offenders (i.e. Black and Hispanic defendants) will receive harsher sentencing outcomes in criminal court than White juvenile offenders →

Partially Supported

I consider this hypothesis partially supported because, while my regression model delineated that Hispanic juveniles are, indeed, at a greater risk for receiving harsher sentences

than Whites juveniles in criminal court, my regression model reported a lack of statistical significance regarding Black offenders. However, even though no significance was found for Black offenders, I think it's integral to note that the vast majority of transferred juveniles (433 out of 754) were Black, which seems to be a relevant/meaningful finding in it of itself. Alluding back to Drakeford and Staples (2006) research, that reported there to be no substantial difference in the amount of delinquency among Blacks and Whites youths, and yet a disproportionate number of those who had been arrested were Black, leads me to believe that while racial discrimination may not have manifested itself during the sentencing process, it certainly played a role in the preliminary stages.

Nevertheless, the findings regarding Hispanic juveniles, remain supported by my hypothesis. And based on focal concerns theory, I can speculate that the reason for this finding stems from a systemic prejudice that depicts Hispanics as a more violent, threatening, and disrespectful population that is, presumably, more likely to recidivate and less likely to be deterred, than White offenders (Drakeford and Staples 2006). However, despite the lack of evidence that would suggest Hispanics are, somehow, inherently more dangerous than Whites, this groundless bias that has been adopted by so many court officials is bound to have profound effects on how they approach these cases with Hispanic defendants. Referring back to Table 4, Hispanic juveniles comprise of the least amount of cases from my data set, and yet, not only are Hispanics disproportionately more likely to be incarcerated, than any other race, but they are significantly more likely to receive the harshest sentence of *State Jail*. In the context of focal concerns theory, this could suggest that judges along with other criminal justice actors are relying on hostile prejudices to influence how they perceive Hispanic offenders. This finding

further supports an unsubstantiated notion that Hispanics are a more threatening population who require severe sanctions.

Hypothesis 2:

Female juvenile offenders will receive more lenient sentencing outcomes in criminal court than male juvenile offenders → **Supported**

The results of my regression model supported my hypothesis that females are treated more leniently than males during sentencing. Due to the minimal research available regarding transferred female juveniles, I had to base my conjecture on how female youths were sentenced within the juvenile sentence and how adult females were treated in criminal court. Embracing the perspective of focal concerns theory, and keeping in mind the fact that women are responsible for far less crime than men, it's valid to surmise that females are, overall, a less dangerous and threatening population than men. Plus, the majority of crimes that are committed by women, evince to be less serious, violent, and profitable (Becker and McCorkel 2011) which makes sense then as to why there were so few female cases within my data set. Women have also been portrayed as less blameworthy and more susceptible to being coerced into delinquency (Steffensmeier et al. 1993). This vulnerability to be persuaded is surely intensified for those with undeveloped minds. I would expect that court official are aware of this and thus adjust their sentencing, accordingly.

Dataset Limitations & Further Research

Within every study that is conducted, there is bound to be subsequent limitations that have to be addressed before continuing and administering further research. Naturally, my first caveat which surely had rippling effects was the size of my sample/population. Based on my interest in transferred juveniles and the data that was readily available to me, I only had 754 cases. Now, 754 cases might be sufficient for certain studies, but for the purposes of my research and wanting to look at variations within the population as well as taking it a step further to explore the combined effects of various factors, 754 cases was rather limiting. Because, as I began to categorize these cases into *race* and *gender*, to see how particular demographics would affect sentencing, I realized the sample size was growing smaller and smaller until there was little room for anything else. Originally, my intention for this study was to include a third predicting variable which would have considered juveniles' prior record to examine how past convictions might have contributed to their sentencings. However, there was simply not enough cases for it to yield any significance and so I decided, instead, to incorporate it into my control variable.

Another limitation that stemmed from my small sample size was the number of control variables; fortunately, the variable I did choose was a rather comprehensive one that incorporated

several components such as the influence of *offender gravity score* and *prior record*. But, if this study were to be revised and refashioned, I would definitely advise the inclusion of additional controls such as: type of crime, whether or not it was a trial or a plea bargain, attorney type, age at crime vs. age at sentencing, number of charges the defendant was convicted of, etc. The more controls, the greater potential a study has to render more significant results, because there are fewer variables that would suggest a finding was due to chance.

For further research, I would suggest to extend the study to other states across the Country. As a result of the data that was accessible to me, I focused exclusively on Pennsylvania, but it would be awfully interesting to observe how different states, with different political, legal, and social standings/context, would compare in how they sentenced their transferred juveniles. Furthermore, I think comparing how transferred juveniles are sentenced with how young adults, who are just over 18 years, are sentenced would be a fascinating component to delve into to probe how different states and different courts, recognize age and how much weight they delegate to being a “minor” versus being an “adult” even though there is little variance in age, and probably maturity, between both populations.

Furthermore, to try and make this a more comprehensive study, I would advise to implement an additional piece to this study that would look thoroughly into how judges reach a decision; and this could be conducted through several methods, but ideally an interview that would allow them to elaborate on their reasoning and reveal any latent biases that they might be harboring (that would be rather difficult to detect from a survey).

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ACADEMIC VITA

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OBJECTIVE:

To attend graduate school and become a full time mental health counselor

EDUCATION:

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Bachelor of Arts: Sociology and Criminology

Schreyer Honors College

HONORS:

- Penn State Schreyer Honor Scholar Fall 2017-Present
- Penn State Dean's List Spring 2016-Present

LEADERSHIP:

Vice President of Boxing Team: Penn State Boxing Team 2018-2019

- Lead all club related activities, event planning and practice requests
- Assist President and Treasurer with all organizational, financial, and logistical needs

Co-Thon Chair: Penn State Boxing Team 2017-2018

- Collaborated with team members two times per month to brainstorm fundraising ideas and elaborate on how to organize for THON weekend, a charitable fundraiser for pediatric cancer
- Orchestrated an interactive event for THON Explorer's Program
- Arranged and coordinated "Canning Trips" for donations to THON's mission

ACTIVITIES:

Penn State Club Boxing Team 2017-Present

- Trained vigorously 5 days per week in preparation for competition against collegiate level boxing teams
- Second place at Eastern Regionals Competition, 112 pound weight class
- Trained for and competed in the National Collegiate Boxing Association (NCBA)

- Received “Breakout Boxer” Award from coaches and team members

Thon-Interest Organization Futures Member

2015-2016

- Attended weekly meetings to explore fundraising activities and logistical issues for THON weekend
- Collected donations through “Canning drive,” and bake sales contributing to THON’s collection of nearly \$10 million

INTERNSHIPS:

Intern- *Hope Works, Domestic Violence Center (Howard County, MD)* 2014-201

- Designed and administered an experiential activity for implementation in middle school curricula
- Wrote and published an expressive poem in Hope Work’s *Dragon Fly Magazine*
- Attended conferences on domestic and intimate partner violence
- Participated in domestic violence trainings and workshops with men and women of all ages

HONORS, AWARDS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Bunton-Waller Merit Award Recipient - 4 years
- Penn State Provost’s Award Recipient - 4 years
- Member of The National Society of Leadership and Success, *Sigma Alpha Phi*
- Superior Academic Achievement Award from the College of Liberal Arts
- Dean’s List for past seven semesters

PROJECT:

Honor’s Thesis

- Writing an honor’s thesis on the effects of race, gender, and prior record on the sentencing of juvenile offenders tried in criminal court

