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# **Investigating some Correlates of Hegemonic Masculinity and Criminal Motives among Residents in Juvenile Correctional Facilities.**

By Caitlin D. Jones  
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## **Abstract**

The primary goal of juvenile corrections is behavior reform through various therapeutic programs; yet, juvenile reoffending persists as a costly and serious social problem. Few studies have examined how the quasi-military approach of juvenile corrections may conflict with its therapeutic goals. A comprehensive literature review revealed several disturbing findings concerning youth residing in juvenile facilities, such as one study that reported a paradox between therapeutic programs and a correctional punitive culture. Moreover, these studies suggest that the prisonized nature of corrections can reinforce hegemonic masculinity in residents, increase moral disengagement, bullying, lying, and criminal behaviors is problematic. Accordingly, the current study explores the issue of rehabilitation in such environments by assessing the relationships between residents in juvenile corrections, hegemonic masculinity, and criminality. The findings of the current study and literature review suggest the need to reevaluate juvenile corrections as an institution of rehabilitation.

*Keywords:* juvenile corrections, hegemonic masculinity, masculinities, identity

## **Introduction**

Some scholars argue that the United States juvenile correctional system presents some of the most socially controversial and financially expensive issues challenging our society today (Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2001; Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010). An estimated \$40 billion dollars is spent on juvenile corrections (U.S. Department of Justice, 2010). This huge expense forces several states to actually spend more money on corrections than education. With so many lives at stake and so much money being spent, policy makers and citizens have a responsibility as a society to change broken policies and utilize evidence based practices to implement the most effective rehabilitative programs for these juveniles.

Over the past few decades, juvenile justice systems in the United States have maintained a trend that has discouraged placement of juvenile offenders in non-secure, community-based programs and has increasingly utilized a more punitive than rehabilitation oriented response to the social problems of juvenile crime and delinquency. The beginnings of this punitive trend can be seen in the 1980s, during the crack epidemic and resulting crime wave. However, criminologists assert that the "get tough" on crime policies have had several negative impacts such as: the unprecedented growth in correctional populations, massive correctional overcrowding, reduction of early release, stricter sanctions, lengthier sentences, incapacitation of nonviolent offenders, and certifying youths as adults (Hagan, 2009; Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010; Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2001). Criminologists also assert that the United States correctional system is in crisis as a result of "get tough" policies despite all-time lows in crime rates across the United States (Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010). Moreover, the maintaining of these "get tough" on crime policies may contribute to the current conditions in which criminologists predict that 1 in every 6 boys and 1 in every 12 girls in the United States will be referred to a juvenile court before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (Pearson Criminal

Justice, 2010). In 2006, approximately 1.3 million arrests were made of youth under the age of 18. By the end of 2006, an estimated 102,400 juveniles were in correctional institutions and other residential programs, a 20% increase from 1999, despite nearly a 19% decline in crimes committed by juveniles during that same time period (Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010).

As a result of these “get tough” penal policy shifts, the United States’ juvenile correctional approach has largely become based upon a quasi-military model of discipline, rules, and ceremony that mirrors the adult penal system (Mackenzie, 1997; Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010; Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2001). These programs rely on harsh penalties in attempting to correct and modify behaviors and attitudes (Abrams et al., 2005; Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010). Yet, in its ideal conception the juvenile justice system is not merely interested in using punishment; the other underlying mission of juvenile corrections is changing the behaviors and attitudes of juvenile offenders by trying to create awareness in youth of the root causes of their criminality, through various forms of therapeutic programs.

Despite public investment in these “get tough” on crime juvenile correctional programs, empirical research suggests that these punitive oriented interventions are not as effective as desired in preventing recidivism. A review of meta-analyses examining correctional interventions of differing lengths reported recidivism rates averaging between 45% and 75% were reported (Lipsey, 1992). The high percentages suggest that for many youth sent to juvenile justice facilities, a significant shift in criminal behaviors and attitudes does not occur. Lapse (1992) reviewed all of the literature on recidivism within juvenile correctional facilities and compiled a meta-analysis which reported that reasons such as inadequate funding, co-occurring issues such as mental health, substance abuse histories, inadequate length of program treatment, and the overwhelming social forces of criminal environments explain the high recidivism rates. In addition, criminologists concur that many of the therapeutic programs offered to juvenile offenders such as Boot Camps, Scared Strait, and Intensive Supervision, have been shown through rigorous evaluations to increase recidivism (Mackenzie, 1997; Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010).

Yet, surprisingly given the disproportionate number of boys in the judicial system, very few studies have looked at how the quasi-military approach of juvenile corrections affects the development of boys’ masculinities and how such prisonized environments may affect program outcomes. Too few studies explore how the quasi-military model of discipline utilized in corrections may conflict with the rehabilitative goals of juvenile facilities and may ultimately hinder treatment outcomes as a result. Also too few studies have examined the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and criminality within juvenile facilities. Specifically, hegemonic masculinity is a way of behaving or acting out the male sex role and is characterized by traits such as anti-femininity, restricted emotions, except anger, and a focus on success, power, achievement, toughness, and aggression (Brannon, 1976; O’Neil et al., 1986; O’Neil, 2008).

The current study aims to fill these gaps by exploring the relationship between juvenile corrections, hegemonic masculinity, criminality, and by examining literature on how institutionalization may mediate the relationship. This study attempts to answer two research questions. The first research question asks if juvenile offenders of power and dominance crimes have a higher endorsement of hegemonic masculinity than juvenile offenders of non-power and dominance crimes. Given previous research that has found both positive and negative relationships between power and dominance crimes and masculinity ideology, I did not make a directional hypothesis. Rather, I hypothesized that there would be a difference between the groups. The second research question asks whether there is a relationship between a youth’s total length of stay in a juvenile correctional facility and their criminal decision making. The current study hypothesizes that youth who have been a resident of a juvenile correctional facility longer will have more negative changes in their decisional balance in regards to criminal thinking, than youth who have resided in a correctional facility fewer days.

Part of exploring hegemonic masculinity, criminality, and the effects of correctional institutionalization on rehabilitation within male juveniles requires an examination of male youth as gendered beings. Implicit in this examination is exploring how masculinity shapes male behavior and experience. Accordingly, the current study is framed through three main theoretical lenses: theory of differential association, social learning theory, and gender role conflict theory. Using these theories as a lens to frame these issues allows for the current study to better explore juvenile males in correctional environments, criminality, and the risks of hegemonic masculinity.

### **Male Youth in Corrections as Gendered Beings**

Sutherland's theory of differential association asserts that individuals become predisposed toward criminality because of an excess of peers that advocate criminal behavior or anti-social thinking. Due to these contacts, a person will tend to learn and accept values and attitudes that look more favorably on criminality (Hagan, 2009). For example, criminologists note that placing high risk youth with low risk youth can negatively impact the low risk youth by virtue of being socialized among more severe anti-social thinking peer groups; thus, often moving those youth into a higher risk category (Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010). While many juvenile corrections attempt to separate youth by risk category, there is often no official policy which insures this. As a result, many nonviolent offenders are pooled with violent offenders, causing higher recidivism rates among the nonviolent offenders. (Hagan, 2009; Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010). This theory adds to the understanding of how longer residency in a juvenile correctional facility may negatively affect youth by virtue of being pooled with a multitude of anti-social peers. Thus, length of stay becomes a hindrance to cognitive changes necessary in criminal thinking to achieve rehabilitation.

Complimentary to the theory of differential association, social learning theory asserts that people are active learners, engaging with and learning from their environments in dynamic ways. Socialization occurs through various agents such as exposure to media, peer groups, parents, differential treatment based on gender, and early influences such as gendered children's books (Bandura, 1969; Kilmartin, 2010). The strength of socialization is dependent upon the amount of exposure to such models, the degree a person identifies with the model, referring to the process in which a person patterns their thoughts, feelings, or actions after another person who serves as a model, and the degree to which a person perceives rewards and punishments and internalizes them positively or negatively (Bandura, 1969; Kilmartin, 2010). Viewed through this theoretical lens, gender roles are the result of gender typing; thus, being socialized to normative male or female behaviors within an individual's larger historical context (Brannon, 1976; Kilmartin, 2010). Social learning theory allows for a better understanding of how hegemonic masculinity can be internalized through socializing agents and how juveniles' identity formation may be negatively influenced by virtue of a punitive correctional environment and residents who endorse hegemonic masculinity. The next step then in understanding how hegemonic masculinity and institutionalized prisonization may negatively influence identity formation in juvenile youth residing in a correctional facility is to understand gender role conflict and hierarchical power structures.

Gender role conflict is a psychological state in which socialized gender roles have negative consequences on the person or others (O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986; O'Neil, 2008). How gender roles are learned, internalized, and experienced, from early childhood to late adulthood, is very complex and idiosyncratic; therefore, gender role conflict is quite individualized (O'Neil et al., 1986; O'Neil, 2008). Gender role conflict occurs when rigid, sexist, or restrictive gender roles result in personal restriction, devaluation, or violation of others or self (O'Neil et al., 1986; O'Neil, 2008). The ultimate outcome of this kind of conflict is restriction of the human potential of the person experiencing the conflict or a restriction of another's potential. Overall, gender role conflict implies cognitive, emotional, unconscious, or behavioral problems caused by the socialized gender roles learned in sexist and patriarchal societies (Brannon, 1976; Kilmartin,

2010; Mankowski & Maton, 2010; O'Neil, et al., 1986; O'Neil, 2008). The current study is interested in the male experience of gender role conflict and how that may contribute to criminality.

Researchers have noted that males experience gender role conflict directly or indirectly in six contexts: when they deviate from or violate gender role norms, try to meet or fail to meet gender role norms of masculinity, experience discrepancies between their real self-concept and their ideal self-concept, based on gender role stereotypes, personally devalue, restrict, or violate themselves, or experience this from others, or violate others because of gender role stereotypes. (Brannon, 1976; Kilmartin, 2010; O'Neil et al., 1986; O'Neil, 2008). When individuals are personally devalued, restricted, or violated because of sexism and gender role conflict, psychological and physical health may be at risk (Brannon, 1976; Kilmartin, 2010; Mankowski & Maton, 2010; O'Neil et al., 1986; O'Neil, 2008). Several studies have asserted that males who more strongly endorse or who are more conflicted over these masculine expectation experience decreased wellbeing and experience increased problem behaviors such as abusing alcohol and other substances, experiencing anxiety and depression, perpetrating violence, using controlling behaviors with partners, using aggression, committing crimes, and not seeking physical and mental healthcare (Brannon, 1976; Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Courtenay, 2000a; Courtenay, 2000b; Kilmartin, 2010; Kimmel & Messner, 2010; Mankowski & Maton, 2010; Messerschmidt, 1999; Messerschmidt, 2000; O'Neil et al., 1986; O'Neil, 2008). Furthermore, a sizable body of theory and research accumulated on the male gender role demonstrates that males have poorer attainment of quality of life than women, in physical and mental health, in safety, and in education (Burke et al., 2010; Center of Disease Control and Prevention, 2010; Courtenay, 2000a; Kilmartin, 2010; Kimmel & Messner, 2010; Mankowski & Maton, 2010; National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). While these outcomes have not been linked to biologic gender, these outcomes have been linked to the extent to which individual males endorse beliefs and behaviors that define hegemonic masculinity (Courtenay, 2000a; Courtenay, 2000b; Kilmartin, 2010; Mankowski & Maton, 2010). Specifically, research in this area has examined differences among males in hegemonic masculinity, which again is characterized by anti-femininity, restricted emotions, except anger, and a focus on success, power, achievement, toughness, and aggression (Brannon, 1976; O'Neil et al., 1986; O'Neil, 2008). Moreover, gender role conflict is a multidimensional and complex process; thus, resolving gender role conflict is an ongoing process of conscious-raising over the life span (Burke et al., 2010; Mankowski & Maton, 2010; O'Neil, 2008).

The risk factors resulting from gender role conflict is cause for serious concern, in part because hegemonic masculinity is also defined as the idealized form of masculinity at a given place and time, so the pressure to conform to hegemonic masculine normative behaviors within patriarchal societies is high (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Moreover, the concept of hegemonic masculinity presumes the subordination of non-hegemonic masculinities. As such, hegemonic masculinity is a type of hierarchy; in essence it is a social power structure (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hagan, 2009; Messerschmidt, 1993; Messerschmidt, 1999; Messerschmidt, 2000).

The hierarchical nature of hegemonic masculinity is an important concept when considering correctional institutions, which are also hierarchical, social power structures, utilizing control over residents through punitive punishment (Pearson, 2010; Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2001). This suggests that the commonalities between institutionalized settings and hegemonic masculinity are complimentary systems, implying a reciprocal reinforcement. Furthermore, when combining a punitive and a rehabilitative program for juveniles, the reciprocal reinforcement of these frames may condition youth in organizing themselves along these hierarchical lines. This reciprocity highlights the potential negative impacts of correctional institutionalization on identity formation, criminal thinking, and rehabilitation. In addition, several studies have linked particular patterns of aggression and violence with hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt,

2005; Messerschmidt, 1993; Messerschmidt, 1999; Messerschmidt, 2000; Hagan, 2009; Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010). Moreover, some studies have indicated that marginalized males experiencing gender role conflict may attempt to compensate for their subordinated status by constructing alternative forms of masculinity, or by attempting to compensate by exemplifying overblown hegemonic masculine traits in the hopes of achieving higher status within peer social hierarchies (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 1993; Messerschmidt, 1999; Messerschmidt, 2000). Following is a literature review concerning hegemonic masculinity and crime and the effects of prisonized institutionalization on identity formation and criminality.

In a study utilizing the-life-history method in interviews with adolescent boys in juvenile facilities with offenses for assaultive violence, sexual assault, and gang involvement, Messerschmidt (1999) found a direct link between school dynamics/social hierarchies and the internalized identities of the boys involving the body and its relation to masculine construction, which were found to be the underlying motivations for their criminal behaviors. Important to note is that adolescence is also a time when bodies are increasingly subject to peer inspection, and physically small and less muscular boys are often labeled "sissies" and "fags" (Messerschmidt, 1999). Messerschmidt (1999) found that the boys who did not fit into or embody hegemonic masculinity often compensated in dysfunctional and destructive ways, such as expressing dominance through violent sexuality. Moreover, at risk boys who did physically embody hegemonic masculinity, such as being tall, muscular, or athletic often overemphasize their masculinity in destructive ways, such as fighting, risk taking, and displaying criminal behaviors in an attempt to maintain their status or get respect from their peer groups (Messerschmidt, 1999). Messerschmidt (1999) noted that a male adolescent sex offender confessed that the motivation behind the molestation of his cousin was to feel strong, competent, powerful, and to be sexually active, which were all important to be accepted as a "cool" guy at his school. Messerschmidt (1999) discusses how the adolescent boy did not meet the hegemonic standard of masculinity in school, was terrible at sports, and overweight. The adolescent boy felt that being sexually active was a way that he could make up for his deficiencies in masculinity and attain greater acceptance within his peer groups.

Messerschmidt's (1999) study illustrates ways in which marginalized individuals act out in criminal ways to reassert their status, highlighting how the expectation to be "tough," "sexually active," and "aggressive" as a male can become ways in which marginalized individuals use those very traits against others to reaffirm their masculine identity.

The connection between crime and hegemonic masculinity is further made in another study by Messerschmidt (2000) in another article utilizing the-life-history method in interviews with adolescent boys in juvenile facilities. In particular, Hagan (2009) and Messerschmidt (2000) note that gang activity is explicitly masculine in that it emphasizes daring, active mastery, achievement, exploit, aggressiveness, and pursuit. In this, the delinquent gang acts in ways that reflect these aspects of the male sex role. Connell and Messerschmidt (1995) assert then, that arguably the delinquent subculture is an excellent solution for problems concerning the male sex role.

Interestingly though, in a study conducted by Daleiden, Kaufman, Hilliker, & O'Neil, (1998) examining adolescent sex offenders' fantasies through interviews, researchers found that contrary to clinical lore, criminal activity may be associated with suppressed levels of non-deviant fantasy rather than elevated levels of deviant fantasy. This may indicate that while sex offenders may engage in a type of power and dominance crime, it may not be connected to internalized hegemonic masculine beliefs. Rather, it may be connected to the degree of suppression and marginalizing experienced by the offender. Moreover, it illustrates the complexity in understanding youths' motives for committing sex crimes.

South and Wood (2006) also had compelling findings from prisonized males in a study looking at power structures, utilizing a randomized sampling method. Specifically, the study aimed to see if

perceived importance of social status in prison motivates bullying, and whether moral disengagement and prisonization influences the relationship. Based upon participants social status within their correctional environment they were labeled either as a bully, a victim, or a bully/ victim (South & Wood, 2006). The results showed that overall the presence of bullying is high in prisonized residents. Moreover, the results indicated that prisonized attitudes may instill values such as social status into prisoners, and may result in cognitive distortions such as moral disengagement and bullying. This reinforces the earlier point that the hierarchical nature of prisonized environments and hegemonic masculinity may reinforce the other. Moreover, moral disengagement mediated the relationship between social status and bullying, which is in alignment with what Messerschmidt (1999; 2000) found. The study reported that participants labeled as a bully were found to be more prisonized than those labeled as a victim, suggesting that length of residency in prisonized institutions contributes to increased behaviors overtime linked to bullying: such as certain aspects of hegemonic masculinity, importance of social status, and moral disengagement (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Messerschmidt, 1993; Messerschmidt, 1999; Messerschmidt, 2000; Pearson, 2010; South & Wood, 2006). Furthermore, South and Wood (2006) found that prisonization also revealed a positive relationship with moral disengagement, suggesting that length of residency predicts increased moral disengagement. The complex feedback loops of prisonization, length of residency, moral disengagement, social status, and bullying, all indicate a reciprocal relationship which enhances the other, suggesting that correctional hierarchies and hegemonic masculinities may contribute to criminality and not rehabilitation.

Along the lines of Messerschmidt (1999, 2000) and South and Wood (2006), Abrams, Anderson-Nathe, and Aguilar (2008) conducted a study examining how young men's gender identities are constructed in the context of juvenile justice system. Researchers found a disturbing reinforcement of an overarching hegemonic masculine milieu within the correctional facility. The researchers also consistently observed explicit validation of dominant and competitive masculine ideals and behaviors by staff in enforcing a hierarchy of hegemonic masculinity. Researchers also observed how the institutionalized setting and staff played a crucial role in suppressing resident's individuality and expressions of their own masculinities (Abrams et al., 2008). These themes occurred in subtle and not so subtle institutional mechanisms, such as ways the staff interacted with residents, or instances of staff not intervening in residence's interactions with each other. Unfortunately these findings are not outliers.

In another study conducted by Abrams and Hyun (2009) examining identity construction in three juvenile facilities through interviews and observations, the juvenile justice correctional institutions were presented as covertly and overtly imposing an underlying set of expectations reinforced through implicit values and norms of the American dream discourse, which attempts to enforce a middle class, law abiding citizenship and identity among incarcerated young males in these three facilities. In addition, Abrams, Kim, and Anderson-Nathe (2005) conducted another study in a county juvenile correctional facility and found paradoxes of treatment that became apparent through interviews and observations of juveniles. The researchers noted that on an ongoing basis, when staff were operating in the treatment frame, program staff encouraged residents to express their anger as a tool for personal growth and healing. However, researchers also found that the rigid program structure required that staff simultaneously exert a high degree of control over these emotional expressions. Moreover, the study found that the quasi-military correctional nature of the facility mandated that staff respond to some extreme emotional displays punitively or dismissively (Abrams et al., 2005). The researchers also found that residents as a result of these conflicting messages, became caught in a tangle of expectations and messages concerning emotion, which resulted in confusion about when, how, and where is it appropriate to utilize their therapeutic tools (Abrams et al., 2005). Lastly, researchers found that a significant proportion of residents became acclimated to the tight system of rules and regulations and adapted themselves to the facility and structure; thus, becoming more prisonized. These residents became aware that they could expedite



their release date if they fooled the staff into believing that they were sincerely working on their therapeutic treatment goals. These conflicting expectations creates a link between personal disclosure about family issues and advancement in program levels, which was found to cause some residents to invent family issues, or to adopt a therapeutic discourse to fulfill the program requirements (Abrams et al., 2005).

## **Current Study**

In addition to the literature review, it is also important to note that the current study utilizes survey data from Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS), where a civil suit filed in 2008 led to an investigation of the Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS). This investigation found the juvenile detention facilities to be in a constitutional violation of the 8th Amendment on several counts: use of unnecessary force, use of excessive isolation and seclusion, use of excessive discipline, inadequate mental health, medical, and dental care, inadequate education services and structured programs, broadly inadequate training of staff, unsafe living conditions, and dysfunctional grievance system (Cohen, 2008). Data collection for this study occurred in 2009, after the lawsuit, but it is unknown how many juveniles from the class action lawsuit remained in Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS) at the time the surveys were administered. Although the findings of the class action lawsuit were extreme, it is important to note that some of the investigation revealed similar findings in the literature review. Specifically, the class action lawsuit found similar findings to what criminologists have asserted are the detrimental impacts of the “get tough” punishment ideology that has swept across the United States (Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010). Criminologists have asserted for some time that excessive punishment and military styles of discipline are not actually effective in reducing recidivism; rather, such tactics and policies can actually increase recidivism (Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010).

Given the disturbing literature on residency within juvenile corrections, hegemonic masculinity, and criminality, the current study examines relationships between hegemonic masculinity, crime, prisonization, and criminal thinking. In this endeavor, the current study addresses two research questions. First, is there any difference in endorsement of hegemonic masculinity between juvenile offenders of power and dominance crimes and juvenile offenders of non-power and dominance crimes? I hypothesized that there is a difference between these two groups. Second, is there a relationship between a juveniles’ length of stay within a correctional facility and change in individual decisional making in regards to criminal thinking? I hypothesized that youth who reside in a juvenile correctional facility longer will have more negative changes in their decisional making in regards to criminal thinking, than youth who have been in a correctional facility fewer days.

## **Methods**

### *Participants*

Male residents of the Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS) participated in the study. Youth from four facilities were included: Ohio River Valley Juvenile Correctional Facility (ORV), in Franklin Furnace, Ohio; Indian River Valley Juvenile Correctional Facility (IRV), in Indian River Valley, Ohio; Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility (CV), in Circleville, Ohio, and Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility (CH), in Cuyahoga Hills, Ohio.

The first research question was restricted to participants whose institutional records included a crime and to those who had taken a (“pre”) Adolescent Masculinity Ideology Relationship Scale (AMIRS) survey. The second research question was restricted to participants whose institutional records included their total length of days within ODYS and to those who had taken a (“pre”) and

("post") Decisional Balance Scale (DBS) survey. As a result of the differing inclusion criterion of each research question, the sample sizes of each question are different.

The first research question was addressed by a sample of  $n = 452$  male youth age range: 13 – 20 years,  $M$  age = 17 years. Of these 452 participants 3% identified as Latino, 4% identified as other, and 5% identified as more than one ethnicity, 6% identified as Native American, 20% identified as white, 67% identified as African American. When asked who the participant had lived with prior to being admitted to ODYS, 2% reported living in a group home, 3% reported living with a foster parent, and 4% reported more than one of the above living options, 6% reported living with other family, 8% reported living with other, 8% reported living with their father, 13% reported living with their mother and father, 55% reported living with their mother. The average length of residence in ODYS facilities was 569 days ( $SD = 401$ ).

The second research question was addressed by a sample of  $n = 343$  male youth age range: 14 – 20 years,  $M$  age = 17 years. Of these 343 participants, 5% identified as Native American, 3% identified as Latino, 5% identified as more than one ethnicity, 6% identified as other, 19% identified as white, and 69% identified as African American. When asked who the participant had lived with prior to being admitted to ODYS, 1% reported living in a group home, 4% reported living with a foster parent, 6% reported more than one of the above living options, 8% reported living with their father, 8% reported living with other family, 9% reported living with other, 13% reported living with their mother and father, and 51% reported living with their mother. The average length of residence in ODYS facilities was 630 days ( $SD = 431$ ).

### *Procedure & Materials*

Participants were administered a paper and pencil survey by ODYS staff in June, 2009 ("pre"), and again after 10 weeks between August and September, 2009 ("post").

### *Type of Crime*

To assess whether the type of crime committed by each youth that resulted in their sentence to an ODYS facility was a power and dominance crime, this study utilized institutional records that were obtained through a community partner at ODYS. Specifically, crime type was coded based on a literature review of hegemonic masculinity and crime (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hagan, 2009; Kilmartin, 2010; Messerschmidt, 1993; Messerschmidt, 1999; Messerschmidt, 2000; Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010). Participants were coded as having committed a power and dominance crime if the crime type allowed for an explicit knowing of an occurrence of direct sexual assault or direct physical assault. Thus, attempted rape, rape, gross sexual imposition, assault, felonious assault, domestic violence, premeditated murder, or murder was coded as a power and dominance crime. Each of the above coded power and dominance crime types allows for an explicit knowing of direct violence from the offender to the victim. All other crimes were coded as a non-power and dominance crime such as theft, burglary, robbery, trafficking, receiving stolen property, kidnapping, and complicity to murder, tampering with evidence, gang affiliation, drug use, and vandalism. Each of the above coded non-power and dominance crimes involves ambiguity as to whether direct sexual assault or direct physical assault occurred in cahoots with the committed crime type. For example, kidnapping and complicity to murder were not coded as a power and dominance crime, because the generic crime type of kidnapping does not allow for an explicit knowing of physical or sexual violence. A literature review revealed that convicted offenders of kidnapping offenses often involves holding a person against their will for lack of payment over a drug deal or other forms of monetary motivation, often never resulting in physical or sexual violence; thus, creating an ambiguity over an explicit knowing of direct physical or sexual assault (Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010). Similarly, complicity to murder only implies that the offender

knew of the planned crime, not that they were directly involved in the actual act of the murder itself.

### *Length of Incarceration*

Institutional records were used to obtain participants' total number of days incarcerated within any given ODYS facility.

### *Masculinity Ideology*

Because a measure of gender role conflict among adolescents was not available, youth completed a related measure -- the Adolescent Masculinity Ideology in Relationship Scale (AMIRS; Chu, Porche, & Tolman 2005) to assess their level of endorsement of hegemonic masculine normative beliefs. The AMIRS scale consists of 12 items and measures four major themes: emotional stoicism, heterosexual dominance, sexual drive and physical toughness. The AMIRS survey asks questions such as, "Guys should not let it show when their feelings are hurt" "It's embarrassing for a guy when he needs to ask for help" "A guy never needs to hit another guy to get respect" and "I think it's important for a guy to act like he is sexually active even if he is not." Responses are scored along a 4-point Likert scale with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree with higher scores indicating greater endorsement of hegemonic masculinity. Internal consistency has been established across different ages of adolescents (seventh grade: Cronbach's alpha=.70) (Chu, Porche & Tolman 2005). In the current study, Cronbach alpha  $\alpha = .75$  at ("pre") and ("post").

### *Criminal Thinking*

Youth also completed the Decisional Balance Scale- Adolescent Offenders survey (DBS-AO; Jordan, 2005). The DBS-AO survey consists of 32 items measuring three variables related to readiness to change criminal behavior: Con, Pro Self, and Pro Other. The Con Scale assesses the perceived negative consequences of ending criminal behavior. It is exemplified by losing respect from peers and family members and diminished self-image. It also includes a loss of financial opportunities and the potential for increased danger. The Con subscale survey asks questions such as "If I stop doing crime I will lose my tough image." The Pro Self Scale assesses the perceived positive internal rewards from terminating criminal activity. Rewards include positive self-image, self-respect, positive relationships with others, and increased safety. The Pro Self subscale survey asks questions such as "If I stop doing crime I will be proud of myself." The Pro-Other Scale assesses perceived benefits to others of ending criminal behavior, such as gaining close, positive relationships with others. Other feelings include the self-respect of others for prosocial behaviors. The Pro-Other Scale subscale asks questions such as "If I stop doing crime the people I care about will trust me." Responses are scored along a 4-point Likert scale with 1 = not important, 2 = of little importance, 3 = important, 4 = very important. It is expected that youth who score higher on the Pro scales than the Con scale are decreasing their criminal behaviors, thus, will be more likely to decrease their criminal behavior in the future. The DBS-AO has demonstrated excellent internal reliability in previous studies, with total summed Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .89 to .91 (Jordan, 2005). In the present sample, the total summed Cronbach  $\alpha = .82$  (pre scores) and  $\alpha = .92$  (post scores).

## **Results**

To answer the first research question, a t-test was computed to determine the baseline difference in AMIRS scores at ("pre") between offenders of power and dominance crimes and offenders of non-power and dominance crimes. Juvenile offenders of power and dominance crimes reported

lower AMIRS scores ( $M = 2.13$ ,  $SD = .48$ ) than non-power and dominance crimes ( $M = 2.31$ ,  $SD = .40$ ). This was a significant difference ( $-t = -4.07$ ,  $p = .005$ ).

To test the second research question concerning whether there is any relationship between length of stay and changes in criminal decision making, juveniles' length of incarceration in ODYS and the difference score between their ("pre") and ("post") Decisional Balance Scale Scores (DBS-AO) 2-tailed correlations were computed. Results indicated a significant correlation between length of stay and change scores on the Con subscale ( $r = .17$ ,  $p = .04$ ). However there was no significant correlation found between length of stay and the Pro-self subscale ( $r = -.09$ ,  $p = .21$ ) or the Pro-other subscale ( $r = .03$ ,  $p = .65$ ).

## Discussion

The results of the analysis of the first research question suggest that there is a significant difference in endorsement of hegemonic beliefs between juvenile offenders of power and dominance crimes and juvenile offenders of non-power and dominance crimes. This finding is somewhat in alignment with prior theory and research (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmit, 2005; Messerschmit, 1993; 1999; 2000).

Specifically, these studies collectively suggest that that adolescent boys who have attained hegemonic masculinity by virtue of being a part of a deviant peer subculture, such as membership in a gang, or participation in a drug operation, may have reduced their gender role conflict and as a result experience less cognitive dissonance between their self perceptions and others' perceptions of them. A gang member's peer group may reaffirm the non-power and dominance offender's identity as a tough, fearful individual by virtue of surrounding themselves with their fellow gang members and culture with high frequency. However, adolescent boys who may be attempting to attain hegemonic masculinity by virtue of committing a power and dominance crime such as rape, molestation, or sexual assault, may have a more problematic solution for resolving gender role conflict, due to the solitary nature of the crime, thus, creating more contradictory male sex role expections and as a result more cognitive dissonance between how the power and dominance offender perceives themselves and how others perceive them. For example, Messerschmidt (2000) found that in a case of sexual molestation taking place in the juvenile offender's home that once the adolescent sexual offender went back to school, he was outside of the carefully constructed environment in which he felt powerful and in control and once again represented a subordinate masculinity. As such, the feelings of power and control were brief between more sustained periods of isolation and marginalization; thus, causing larger incongruences between the self-concept and actual self, leading to more severe gender role conflict. The greater degree of gender role conflict may thus indicate a desire to achieve hegemonic masculinity rather than adherence to those beliefs. This in part may explain why offenders of non-power and dominance crimes have a greater adherence to hegemonic masculinity.

The results of the second research question are also significant and suggest that the change scores of juveniles who have resided longer in correctional facilities were more likely to perceive more negative consequences of stopping their criminal behavior, than juveniles who have resided fewer days in the correctional facilities. Specifically in regards to the Con scale, youth over the 10 weeks seem to become more concerned with potentially losing respect from peers and family members, including more concern over a loss of financial opportunities through criminal activities. This finding is in alignment with Sutherland's theory of differential association and social learning theory (Hagan, 2009; Kilmartin, 2010; Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010). Criminologists such as Hagan (2009) have noted the dangers of housing low risk offenders with high risk offenders due to the increase in anti-social thinking among the low risk offenders. Thus, long term residency with anti-social peers becomes a detriment to pro social thinking. However, there was no relationship

between length of incarceration and the difference score in the Pros Self subscale. There was also no relationship between length of incarceration and the difference score in the Pros-Other subscale.

The finding that length of stay is associated with less change in criminal thinking highlights the issues of combining a quasi-military punitive approach to juvenile corrections and maintaining rehabilitative treatment goals, which seemed to imply that length of residency in juvenile corrections can predict moral disengagement, greater endorsement of criminal behaviors, desire for social status, lying, and bullying. Several prior studies also suggest that many juvenile correctional facilities reinforce hegemonic masculinity and that the competing goals of correctional rules and rehabilitation hinder residents' ability for authentic growth (Abrams et al., 2005; Abrams et al., 2008; Abrams & Hyun 2009; Cohen, 2008; Pearson, 2010; South & Wood, 2006; Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2001).

If empirical research informs society that aspects of hegemonic masculinity correlates with aggression, violence, criminality, higher health risks, and lower quality of emotional life, and that prisonization can lead to bullying, lying, moral dis-engagement, and increased criminality (Messerschmidt, 1993; Messerschmidt 1999; Messerschmidt, 2005; South & Wood, 2006; Kilmartin, 2010; Pearson Criminal Justice, 2010), then policy makers need to find new ways to rehabilitate juveniles. Although, it is important to point out that not all juvenile corrections resemble the ones described in the literature review, it seems that there is enough prior research to suggest that juvenile corrections may not be fulfilling their rehabilitative goals.

I suggest that to truly grapple with the issues of juvenile crime and delinquency that are challenging our society today, the United States has to think in terms of primary prevention/public health and not just treatment. By framing the discussion within this context, the United States can better deal with the root causes of juvenile crime and delinquency and not merely their symptoms. The implications of this study are cause for concern and further research is needed to add to the insights of the current study with the goal to inform future policy. Research is needed to ascertain the validity of juvenile corrections as an institution in which rehabilitation can occur. My findings suggest that how the male sex role is experienced by males may contribute to the types of crimes they commit. Research indicates that individuals with more androgynous character traits are more psychologically healthy than those who strongly conform to stereotypical female or male gender roles. A primary prevention policy that educates children on how gender roles are flexible and constructed by society, may increase the awareness of the dangers of gender role conflict and crime.

## **Limitations and Future Research**

It is important to note that the causal relationships among the variables were not demonstrated in this study; rather, the results highlight correlations and relationships. As always there are limitations to such studies since there was no control group or random assignment. Another limitation to this study is the lack of life-histories from the juveniles who completed the surveys. Such histories provide a deeper understanding of why they committed the crimes they did and how certain offenses may be connected to hegemonic masculinity or gender role conflict. Without life histories, such connections are difficult to ascertain. Additionally, the current study cannot make any certain claims to youth outside of the Ohio Department of Youth Services; rather, the results highlight that a significant difference was found between these two groups and that the higher endorsement of hegemonic masculinity in offenders of non-power and dominance crimes may be connected to the types of crimes juveniles commit and the social nature of those crimes.

More research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between gender role conflict, adherence to hegemonic masculinity, and crime type. Specifically, future research needs

more longitudinal studies which assess change in criminality within residents of juvenile facilities. Also, future research needs to assess the effects of prisonization on hegemonic masculinity, and assess the relationship and motives between gender role conflict and committed crimes. With a deeper understanding of why juveniles commit certain types of crimes, prevention programs and social and correctional policies can be put in place to help mitigate the potential relationships between criminality and gender role conflict.

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