

Understanding Racial Disparate Treatment of Juvenile Interpersonal Violent Offenders in the Juvenile Justice System Using Focal Concerns Theory

Authors : Suzanne Overstreet-Juenke

Abstract : 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. Existing research indicates that DMC influences adjudication for drug, property, and personal crimes. Because intimate partner violence (IPV) is a major public health problem and global concern, 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. The results are contextualized using Steffensmeier's version of focal concerns theory of judicial decision-making. This study assesses race and two seriousness of offense measures to establish whether a link exists between race and adjudication. The results of the study is similar to prior research on the topic. These results are discussed in terms of policy implications, limitations, and future research.

Keywords : race, disproportionate minority contact, focal concerns theory, juvenile

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