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# Adjustment to correctional confinement: Investigating the correlates of violence and disorder in a jail environment

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ADJUSTMENT TO CORRECTIONAL CONFINEMENT:  
INVESTIGATING THE CORRELATES OF  
VIOLENCE AND DISORDER IN  
A JAIL ENVIRONMENT

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
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**THE GRADUATE COLLEGE**

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**May 2010**

## ABSTRACT

### **Adjustment to Correctional Confinement: Investigating the Correlates of Violence and Disorder in a Jail Environment**

by

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This study examines the individual- and institutional-level variables that are correlated with violence and disorder within a jail facility. Previous research indicates that deviant behavior is one of the main challenges that negatively impacts the safe and effective management of correctional facilities. While many studies have been conducted on prison populations, few studies have focused upon jail populations. Using official institutional data, this study explores the factors associated with general infractions and violent misconduct among a stratified random sample of inmates (n=447) incarcerated during a one year period in a large county jail facility. The logistic regression and conjunctive analyses revealed that several variables were significantly correlated with institutional violence and disorder. These variables had both individual and conjunctive or combined effects on the nature of institutional misconduct. The results of this study are then discussed in terms of their implications for future research and practical policy for controlling disorder within correctional institutions.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Jails throughout the United States regularly detain and manage hundreds of thousands of individuals accused or convicted of committing a crime that have been legally deprived of their freedom. According to the National Institute of Corrections (1998), jails represent the most widespread single component of the overall American criminal justice system. Whereas prisons regularly house individuals for long term periods, jail facilities incarcerate individuals that are considered pre-trial and those that have been convicted and sentenced to short terms of imprisonment, generally of one year or less.

Individuals housed in jail facilities represent a much more active and dynamic population than that found within a prison system. Prisons incarcerate people long term and are a somewhat static environment, but jails are forced to manage a population that is far more diverse, with inmates regularly being booked, processed, transported to court, transferred to other agencies, and released. A far greater number of individuals also arrive at local jails under the influence of controlled substances and they are often in medical or psychological crisis. Due to the high rate of admissions of those with special needs, jail managers face a unique challenge of processing, managing, and releasing inmates in a safe and secure manner.

As a result of these unique human and facility management concerns, the concept of objective jail classification was proposed and developed by the National Institute of Corrections (National Institute of Corrections, 1998). Classification is recognized by many correctional practitioners and academics as an important function for the proper management of any correctional facility (Fernandez & Neiman, 1998; Proctor, 1994;



Wright, 1988). According to Levinson (1982), there are four main goals of inmate classification: to assign proper security levels, assign appropriate housing, designate custody levels, and determine what inmate programs and activities are appropriate.

The goal of objective classification is to make consistent, fair, and effective decisions that promote a cost effective, safe, and secure environment for the appropriate management of jail facilities (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; National Institute of Corrections, 1998; Wright, 1998). According to Holland and Holt (1980), prediction of inmate behavior and misconduct is difficult to accurately achieve, but proper inmate housing assignment remains one of the most significant decisions that an institution can make. In addition to the difficulty associated with accurate risk prediction, the vast majority of scholarly research thus far has focused on prison environments rather than jail facilities (Kellar & Wang, 2005). It is also the case that the existing research on factors associated with inmate misconduct in prisons has often produced inconsistent or conflicting results (Alexander, 1986; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; Harland, 1996).

The current study attempts to fill a gap in the scholarly literature by investigating the variables correlated with inmate misconduct in a county jail environment. By investigating the relationship between several individual- and institutional-level variables and inmate misconduct, the results of this research may be utilized to assist practitioners in the evaluation and implementation of objective jail classification systems, as well as the overall management of jail facilities.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

A substantial portion of the population living in the United States will experience some form of contact with the criminal justice system during their lifetime. These contacts can sometimes lead to arrest, trial, and imprisonment. The United States has long been recognized as a leading nation when it comes to the rate at which it incarcerates its citizenry. According to the United States Department of Justice, approximately one in every thirty one adults living in this country is under some form of correctional supervision (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008). There are two primary types of correctional facilities in the United States: jails and prisons. For the purposes of this study, the jail environment and the people detained therein will be the focus.

There are currently approximately three quarters of one million individuals incarcerated, either awaiting trial or serving short-term sentences within jail facilities (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008). While there are some similarities between prisons and jails, their purpose and operation vary substantially. In particular, a prison population may be somewhat consistent because inmates are sentenced for one year or more, but local jails have far greater instability and turnover in detainees because the typical individual may be processed and released within twenty four hours. These differences in population dynamic require local jail officials to constantly process, assign housing, manage and release individuals at a rate far greater than that of a typical prison environment.

The differences between prison and jail environments are well known. However, the vast majority of scholarly work related to correctional institutional management has been

focused upon prisons rather than jails (Kellar & Wang, 2005). Within this context, prison-based studies often yield inconsistent results about the factors associated with institutional misconduct and management (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007). The following sections provide a review of the scholarly literature related to inmate misconduct, jail classification techniques, relevant criminological theories, and the research questions underlying the current study.

### Inmate Misconduct

Nearly any deviant act that is committed on the street can also be attempted or completed within a correctional setting. This deviant behavior within a correctional environment is referred to as “inmate misconduct”. Correctional facilities regularly have formalized rules that inmates are required to follow. These formalized rules lay out types of inmate misconduct and provide a framework for the safe and orderly operation of the facility. Although specific rule language may vary among jail facilities, it is safe to say that any violent or illegal act will be considered a violation of jail rules across all of these institutions. In combination with institutional discipline, inmates may risk criminal prosecution if the alleged offense warrants an official criminal charge.

In addition to criminal offenses, there may also be some rules that are far more restrictive than those imposed upon the general public. For example, rules that mandate adhering to instructions from staff, wearing an inmate uniform properly, and accepting an assigned cell represent a few of the rules imposed upon those housed in jail facilities that would not necessarily apply to the greater American public. Wherever rules are published and a population is expected to conform, there will be some acts that are considered deviant or unacceptable.

Researchers have engaged in a substantial amount of research related to prison-based correctional operations and inmate misconduct, with the importance of facility management practices found to be substantial (Jiang & Fisher-Giorlando, 2002; McCorkle, Miethe & Drass, 1995). The current study uses this previous research as a basis for identifying particular individual- and institutional-level variables correlated with inmate misconduct among jail inmates. The following paragraphs briefly describe the existing scholarly literature on these individual- and institutional-level risk factors.

### *Age*

Several studies have examined how the inmate's age is related to misconduct among prison inmates. The bulk of research seems to support the idea that age is negatively related to incidents of misconduct. The older an individual is, the less likely it is that they will present a behavioral management problem while incarcerated. According to Toch and Adams (1989), this independent variable is one of the strongest correlates of inmate misconduct. This variable has been empirically investigated several times since, and it regularly remains a significant predictor of inmate misconduct (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; Proctor, 1994; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2009).

### *Race*

Another demographic characteristic that has been examined as a correlate of institutional misconduct is the inmate's race. The vast majority of previous studies report a relatively weak but significant correlation between race and misconduct, but this bivariate relationship often disappears when other variables are controlled for (Alexander, 1986; Fernandez & Neiman, 1998; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2009; Tartaro & Levy, 2007). The utilization of race when evaluating inmates during objective

institutional classification is considered discriminatory and unacceptable in light of today's societal norms (National Institute of Corrections, 1998).

### *Criminal Charge*

The nature of the current criminal charge is often found to be associated with inmate misconduct. In particular, some violent charges are related to a higher incidence of misconduct, but other initial charges involving violence are associated with lower levels of deviant acts while incarcerated. For example, several studies have found that inmates charged with murder are less likely to commit violent acts while incarcerated than others with violent charges (Kane, 1986; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008). Among other types of initial charges, the existing research suggests that persons charged with less serious criminal offenses generally pose a lower risk of misconduct when compared to those with more serious or violent crimes (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008).

### *Criminal History*

The offender's criminal history is another individual-level risk factor for inmate misconduct. Inmates with more extensive arrest and conviction records, especially if violence is involved, are more prone to committing deviant acts while incarcerated. Previous research has repeatedly found a significant relationship between this variable and misconduct (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; Gendreau et al, 1997; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2009).

### *Institutional History*

Prior institutional misconduct has often been found to be associated with future deviant behavior while incarcerated. The idea that persons with prior institutional

misconduct are more prone to future inmate misconduct makes intuitive sense and is supported by most of the research literature (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; Kane, 1986; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2009). However, there is some scholarly research that has found no significant correlation between prior and future institutional misconduct (Alexander, 1986).

### *Time in Custody*

Sentence length or overall time in custody is another variable that is sometimes positively and sometimes negatively associated with the risk of institutional misconduct. On its face, one would assume that the longer an individual is in correctional confinement, the greater their opportunity and chances of committing some kind of deviant act. However, there is some research indicating that persons who have lengthy sentences are actually less likely as time goes on to commit any kind of misconduct while incarcerated (Fernandez & Neiman, 1998; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008). Given the current focus on jail inmates and the limited length of stay in these facilities, it is expected that persons with longer jail confinement will be found to have higher risks of inmate misconduct. This expectation is based on the simple operation of greater opportunities for misconduct and the “pains of imprisonment” that are linked to longer periods of jail confinement.

### *Gang Membership and Association*

Those individuals that are identified as gang members or associates have generally been found to have a higher risk of committing rule infractions and deviant acts while imprisoned. This has been a fairly new area of overall research for jails and prisons, but the existing literature appears to support a relationship between this variable and rates of

misconduct among individuals that are incarcerated (Daggett & Camp, 2009; Gaes et al, 2002).

### *Mental Illness*

Inmates that self-report a diagnosis of mental illness or have a history of treatment for mental illness are sometimes found to have a higher likelihood of misconduct while incarcerated (Adams, 1986; Lee & Edens, 2005; Magaletta et al, 2009). It is often recognized that persons with low self control exhibit difficulty in highly structured environments. Individuals suffering from mental illness may appear to fit in this category and thus be at risk for deviancy or misconduct (DeLisi et al, 2008).

### *Classification Level*

Jail facilities utilize several individual-level variables during intake to assign an initial custody level and housing assignment. If an objective classification system is working effectively, it would be expected that inmates classified to a higher custody level would be more at risk of committing rule violations than those assigned as lower security risk. According to existing research, this higher rate may be due to the individual, the institutional environment, or a combination of the two (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; Steiner, 2009).

### *Citizenship Status and Homelessness*

There is no research literature on the relationship between a person's residency status (e.g., U.S. resident versus illegal immigrant; homeless or not at time of arrest) and the risks of inmate misconduct. Some research indicates that illegal immigrants are involved in criminal activity at a level that is similar and sometimes lower than the rate among U.S. citizens (Olson et al, 2009). Other than the association between homelessness and

higher risks of arrests for minor criminal offenses (e.g., trespass, disorderly conduct), there is no scholarly research found related to homelessness and rates of jail institutional misconduct. However, both illegal immigrants and the homeless have lower attachments to conventional social institutions and therefore may be more prone to inmate misconduct because of a lack of social bonds that enhance conformity.

As a group, the existing research literature has found that many of these individual- and institutional-level factors are associated with inmate misconduct. Although this research is drawn primarily from studies of prison inmates, these correlates of inmate misconduct may provide jail managers ways to separate inmates into different sub-populations and units to control inmate behavior and minimize adjustment problems. The inclusion of these variables in risk assessment or “classification” instruments is being used in numerous jurisdictions to reduce the risk of inmate misconduct that can negatively impact staff, other inmates, and the overall operation of jail facilities.

#### Inmate Classification

One of the main goals for correctional administrators is to predict and prevent inmate misconduct to achieve and maintain safe and orderly institutions (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; Daggett & Camp, 2009; Steiner & Woodredge, 2008). According to the American Correctional Association (1975), inmate classification is an important duty of correctional personnel for proper placement of individuals within a custodial setting. In an effort to promote safe and effective management of jail facilities, administrators have implemented various offender classification systems.

Two primary classification systems have been utilized in jail facilities throughout the United States: subjective and objective systems. Historically, classification and custody



level assignments have been made by a correctional official who would use little more than their personal judgment to determine the appropriate security level. This approach is recognized as a “subjective” classification system. It is considered “subjective” because custody level, status, housing assignment, and programming were all determined at the sole discretion of an individual evaluator without necessarily consulting any empirical evidence. Subjective classification systems were the method of choice for many years.

As a result of the changes in correctional philosophy (i.e., from retribution, to the medical model, to reform and rehabilitation), a more consistent and evidence-based system of classification has become more desirable and accepted within the last three decades. In fact, recent changes in correctional practices, especially the contemporary utilization of direct inmate supervision, have caused jail managers to focus upon proactive methods and some empirical evidence to predict and prevent negative inmate behavior (Gottfredson & Moriarty, 2006; Wener, 2006). Beginning in the early to mid 1980s, a “new generation” objective classification system began to be formed and utilized (Holland & Holt, 1980; National Institute of Corrections, 1982).

Objective classification systems have been gradually implemented in the United States and have also begun to be accepted and utilized internationally (Lee & Edens, 2005). Objective classification systems rely upon objective measures to determine the appropriate custody level for an inmate. While a subjective override may still be utilized in some rare instances, the overall operation of the objective jail classification system relies upon the evaluation and combination of several independent variables in an effort to make an empirically based risk assessment (Clements, 1996; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006; Fernandez & Neiman, 1998). Often, an additive scale is used to combine

individual-level variables such as age, criminal charge, criminal history, prior institutional history, gang affiliation, and mental health status to determine the appropriate custody level. While much research has been done on prison inmates in general, jail detainees have been evaluated far less often. Unfortunately, as stated previously, those studies that have been completed often report mixed and inconsistent findings (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007).

When an evidence-based approach is utilized, the goal is to improve institutional safety and security by appropriately housing individuals according to their custodial needs. When an objective classification system operates effectively, management of an inmate population should be improved through mitigation and minimization of inmate misconduct, proper housing assignment, and access to institutional programming that is relevant and appropriate for the inmates needs.

### Criminological Theory

There are several criminological theories that will be utilized as a conceptual framework to examine the individual- and institutional-level correlates of inmate misconduct. Two of the main theories developed and evaluated as explanations of institutional violence are the theories of importation and deprivation. While most research has focused on the prison environment, many of the characteristics of jail inmates mirror those of prison inmates, thus making these two theories relevant and testable in this study.

Importation theory (Irwin & Cressey, 1962) suggests that a correctional facility is not a closed system. Instead, individuals bring certain values, attitudes, and experiences with them when they enter the institution. These characteristics cannot easily be manipulated

within a correctional setting and these particular factors have been found to be correlated with violence in many previous research studies. According to importation theory, an inmate's age, race, social class, educational attainment, employment, income, and criminal history are expected to influence the likelihood and severity of inmate misconduct because these characteristics are associated with deviant behavior outside the prison setting (Cheeseman, 2003; Lahm, 2008; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008).

Deprivation theory (Clemmer, 1940; Sykes, 1958) suggests that the "pains of imprisonment" along with a closed institutional system lead to inmate violence. From this perspective, the causes of inmate misconduct are factors associated with the prison environment itself, rather than the individual-level characteristics of the inmate. In particular, the level of inmate segregation, security level, and facility architecture are variables that have been suggested to affect inmate misconduct, irrespective of individual characteristics (Lahm, 2008; Tartaro & Levy, 2007).

The most common explanations for criminal and deviant behavior in a variety of different contexts are social bond theory (Hirschi, 1969), differential association theory (Sutherland, 1924), labeling theory (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1951), and social learning theory (Bandura, 1969). These theories have been used to explain both the likelihood of criminal behavior and its social and spatial distribution.

Social bond theory attributes anti-social behavior to the weakening of bonds (e.g., attachments, commitment, involvement, beliefs) to society. Differential association theory argues that criminal behavior is produced by cultural conflict (i.e., an excess of pro-crime relative to anti-crime values among individuals and groups) that exists in heterogeneous societies. In contrast, labeling theory suggests that individuals who

commit deviant acts are perceived by others as deviant and their subsequent criminal behavior is the result of a type of self-fulfilling prophecy. From this perspective, those labeled as “deviant” or “criminal” are more closely scrutinized by authorities, may internalize this label, and ultimately behave in ways that are consistent with that label. Social learning theory posits that human behavior can be reinforced in ways other than simply direct reward or punishment. Individuals may learn vicariously through the observation of others, combine that with their own life experience, and decide what action to take thereafter.

### Current Study

Using these theories of criminal and deviant behavior as a conceptual framework, the current study will examine the impact of various individual and institutional factors on the likelihood and seriousness of inmate misconduct within a jail setting. Based on these theories, the following research questions are to be examined in this study:

1. Do inmates who are younger (under 25 years old), minority (Black or Hispanic), homeless, and non-U.S. citizens have higher risks of inmate misconduct and are they more prone to serious misconduct than their counterparts? These expectations are based on importation, differential association, and social bond theories (e.g., younger, minority, homeless, non-residents have weaker bonds to traditional institutions, experience greater cultural conflict, and bring these deviance-producing factors into the institutional setting).
2. Do inmates who have a prior history of criminal behavior, institutional behavioral problems, mental health issues, classified as gang affiliated, and charged with more

serious offenses have higher risks of inmate misconduct and are they more prone to serious misconduct than their counterparts? These expectations are based primarily on labeling theory and its assumption that persons with a prior “deviant” status will be treated differently by formal authorities and subsequently behave in ways consistent with that label.

3. Do inmates who are assigned to higher custody levels and have spent more time in custody have higher risks of inmate misconduct and are they more prone to serious misconduct than their counterparts? These expectations are based on deprivation theory and its assumption that the institutional setting itself and the “pains of imprisonment” are deviance-producing forces.

4. What are the particular combinations of individual- and institutional-level factors that are most highly associated with the likelihood of inmate misconduct and its seriousness? Offenders that have particular combinations of characteristics should be associated with high risks of institutional misconduct (e.g., young, gang membership, previous institutional history of violations, etc.) according to the various theories of anti-social behavior such as importation, social bond, and labeling.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This study involved a secondary data analysis of information on 525 inmates that were housed within the Clark County Detention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. This jail facility is the largest of its kind in the state and serves as the main county jail institution for the greater Las Vegas valley. The particular sampling design and the measures of the major variables in this study are described below.

#### Data Collection and Sampling Design

Data for this study were derived from a disproportionate stratified random sample of 525 adult male inmates who were detained in the Clark County Detention Center (CCDC) in Las Vegas, Nevada between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009. The Clark County Detention Center is the largest jail in the State of Nevada, with an average daily population well in excess of three thousand. General case and monitoring data were retrieved electronically from this agency's "ITAG" computer program. These anonymous records were then converted into Microsoft Excel and SPSS files to conduct a secondary data analysis.

For purposes of comparing results across types of inmate misconduct, the data was separated into five distinct strata and random samples of 105 inmates were selected within each group. A total of 105 inmates per group were selected to guarantee a sufficient number of cases within each group (i.e., N's of about 100) after taking into account missing data. Each of the following strata groups were included: (1) no infractions while in custody, (2) general disorder infractions, (3) property infractions,

(4) violent infractions, and (5) threats to the facility. The specific CCDC infraction codes that were used within each strata grouping are described in the next section.

### Measures of Variables

Several dependent and independent variables were included in the current study. A total of two dependent variables and eleven independent variables were included in this study. The specific variables were chosen based on their individual or environmental relevance based on prior scholarly literature. The measurement of these variables is described below.

### Dependent Variables

The dependent variables in this study involve measures of the likelihood and seriousness of inmate infractions. The likelihood of an infraction was measured by whether or not the inmate had any record of an institutional infraction during the current period of detention (0= no; 1= yes). The seriousness of the infraction was measured on a 5-point ordinal scale (1= no infractions, 2= general disorder, 3= property infractions, 4= violent infractions, and 5= threats to the facility). The specific CCDC codes used within these infraction categories include the following:

#### General Disorder:

- 202 Refusing to obey a direct order from staff
- 233 Disrupting the module
- 234 Continuous unsatisfactory conduct by an inmate (five or more previously documented infractions during the current incarceration)
- 239 Refusing to accept assigned room or roommate

Property Infractions:

- 209 Tampering, altering, damaging, destroying jail property, or property of another, or missing jail property
- 210 Theft of jail property or the property of another person
- 211 Possession of anything not authorized for retention or receipt by inmate or possession of items not issued to him/her through regular institutional channels
- 212 Possession or receipt of any contraband including any attempt to receive or aid and abet another to receive any contraband by having it brought into or by any attempt to have it brought into the jail

Violent Infractions:

- 203 Threatening another person with physical harm
- 302 Assaulting another person
- 307 Fighting or wrestling with another person

Threats to the Facility:

- 311 Introduction into the facility, or possession of, a gun, firearm, weapon, knife, sharpened instrument, or unauthorized tool
- 313 Engaging in or encouraging others to riot
- 315 Battery
- 316 Violation of criminal law
- 318 Assault/Battery on staff



The misconduct groupings were subsequently condensed into two groups for further study. The first two misconduct groupings (general disorder and property infractions) were combined, as were the final two (violent and threats to the facility). This allowed a comparison of non-violent and violent infraction categories (0= none, non-violent; 1= violent) as well as a comparison of those without any misconduct and those with (0= no misconduct; 1= misconduct). After removing any subjects with multiple representations in the sample, the final overall sample size decreased to 447.

### Independent Variables

The independent variables in this study include measures of the individual's demographic characteristics (i.e., age, race), status characteristics (i.e., criminal history, prior institutional history, homelessness status, citizenship, mental health status, gang affiliation), offense attributes (i.e., most serious charge), and institution-related factors (i.e., time in custody, level of custody). Due to their distribution within the actual sample, the original coding of many of these variables was changed to dichotomous codes (0= absence of the attribute and 1= presence of the attribute) to have a sufficient number of cases within each category.

The inmate's age was originally grouped into four categories (1= 14-17; 2= 18-24; 3= 25-39; 4= 40 or older). It was subsequently recoded into a dichotomous variable (0= 18-24; 1= 25 and older) to make a clearer contrast between these two groups.

Race was also coded in four categories (1= white; 2= black, 3= hispanic, 4= other). However, due to the skewed distribution of this variable within the sample, it was subsequently recoded (0= white; 1= non-white). This was done in order to make a simpler and more discernable contrast between the groups.

The inmate's prior criminal history is based on the most serious previous charge and was coded into 3 categories (0= no prior record, 1= misdemeanor record, 2= prior felony record). This variable was later recoded to reflect those without a criminal history and those with (0= none; 1= criminal history).

Institutional history included any misconduct while previously housed in the detention center and was coded in three ordinal categories (0= none, 1= non-violent previous infractions, 2= violent prior infractions). This variable was subsequently recoded into a dichotomous variable (0= none; 1= prior infractions).

Dummy coding was used for the inmate's homelessness status at the time of criminal booking (0= no, unknown; 1= homeless), citizenship (0= U.S. resident, unknown; 1= non-resident), self-reported mental health status (0= no history, unknown; 1= mental health history or current psychological issue), and gang affiliation (0= no, unknown; 1= yes).

The seriousness of the original criminal charge is based on the coding of the most serious offense. This variable was originally coded into 3 categories (1= misdemeanor/gross misdemeanor; 2= non-violent felony; 3= violent felony) but was subsequently recoded into a dichotomous variable (0= non-violent; 1= violent).

The time in custody is measured in terms of the number of days the inmate was in custody prior to commission of the infraction within the facility. This variable was originally coded into 4 ordinal categories (1= 1-30 days; 2= 31-60 days; 3= 61-90 days; 4= 91 days or more), but it was subsequently recoded into a dichotomous variable (0= 1-30 days; 1= 30 days or more).

The inmate's custody level is based on their initial classification level as assigned by detention center staff, immediately following the booking interview. This variable was measured on a 4-category ordinal scale that ranged from lowest to highest custody (1= male south tower; 2= male north tower; 3= close custody and 4= maximum custody). Due to the fact that all inmates are housed in cells, with the exception of those classified as male south tower, this variable was recoded into a dichotomous variable for direct supervision versus celled housing assignment (0= direct supervision; 1= celled housing).

#### Analytic Plan

Four types of statistical analyses are conducted in this study to examine the impact of individual and institutional factors on the likelihood and seriousness of inmate infractions. First, the univariate frequency distributions of the dependent variables and independent variables are examined to explore their distribution within the sample and any possible problems with the coding of these variables. Second, the nature of the bivariate relationships between the independent variables and dependent variables are examined through the use of crosstabulations and chi-square tests of statistical significance. Third, logistic regression analyses are performed to assess the nature and magnitude of the net impact of each of the independent variables on the likelihood and seriousness of inmate infractions. Fourth, the method of conjunctive analysis is used to examine the particular combinations of individual and institutional factors that are most predictive of the nature and magnitude of inmate infractions.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### Results of the Univariate Analysis

As shown in Table 1, misconduct occurred among approximately two-thirds (77%) of the sample of 447 adult male county jail inmates. Violent misconduct was found less frequently, in about two of every five (39%). The following paragraphs will describe the univariate frequency distributions for each of the independent variables in this study.

The majority of inmates in this sample were United States citizens (87%), over 25 years of age (69%), and of minority descent (66%). Most were arrested on a non-violent criminal charge (77%) and the vast majority had been arrested at least once in the past (92%). Most of the inmates in this sample were found to have had a prior official institutional misconduct (56%) while incarcerated at the Clark County Detention Center. A substantial minority of the inmates were recognized as having a gang affiliation (28%) and about one in five (22%) had a mental health issue. Only a small minority of the sample were homeless (7%).

The Clark County Detention Center main facility housed approximately half of the sample in open dorm, direct supervision type housing (44%) and half in more traditional cell housing (56%). These housing assignments represent those identified as low classification risk-level (dorm housing) and higher risk classification level (cell housing). There was a similar distribution found regarding time in custody. In particular, a slight majority (56%) were in custody for thirty days or less, while nearly half (44%) were in custody for more than thirty one days when they committed an officially reported misconduct.

Table 1

*Variables, coding, univariate and bivariate distributions (n=447 inmates)*

<i>Variable (Name)</i>	<i>Coding</i>	<i>% (N)</i>	<i>% Any Misconduct</i>	<i>% Violent Misconduct</i>
<i>Violations:</i>				
1. Any Misconduct	0=none	23.5 (105)		
	1=yes	76.5 (342)		
2. Violent Misconduct	0=none/non-violent	61.1 (273)		
	1=yes	38.9 (174)		
<i>Offender characteristics:</i>				
1. Age	0=26 yrs or older	68.5 (306)	75.2	38.6
	1=18 to 25 yrs	31.5 (141)	79.4	39.7
2. Race	0=White	33.6 (150)	77.3	37.3
	1=Non-White	66.4 (297)	76.1	39.7
3. Violent Charge	0=non-violent	76.5 (342)	71.6	33.0
	1=violent	23.5 (105)	92.4**	58.1**
4. Criminal History	0=none	7.8 (35)	37.1	20.0
	1=prior arrest	92.2 (412)	79.9**	40.5*
5. Institutional History	0=none	44.1 (197)	60.9	31.0
	1=prior misconduct	55.9 (250)	88.8**	45.2**
6. Gang Affiliation	0=none	71.8 (321)	73.2	34.9
	1=yes	28.2 (126)	84.9*	49.2*
7. Mental Health Issue	0=none	77.9 (348)	71.6	35.1
	1=yes	22.1 (99)	93.9**	52.5**
8. Non-citizen	0=no	87.2 (390)	77.7	37.9
	1=yes	12.8 (57)	68.4	45.6
9. Homeless	0=no	93.5 (418)	75.8	38.5
	1=yes	6.5 (29)	86.2	44.8
<i>Institutional attributes:</i>				
1. Housing Assignment	0=dorm housing	43.6 (195)	61.0	27.7
	1=cell housing	56.4 (252)	88.5**	47.6**
2. Time in Custody	0=up to 30 days	56.2 (251)	62.5	30.3
	1=31 days or more	43.8 (196)	94.4**	50.0**

\*\* Significant difference at P<0.01.

\* Significant difference at P<0.05.

## Results of the Bivariate Analysis

Several individual-level characteristics were found to be significantly correlated with the likelihood of both general and violent misconduct. These statistically significant relationships are represented by asterisks in the last two columns in Table 1. The nature of the bivariate relationships between the independent variables and the two types of inmate misconduct is described below.

As shown in Table 1, significant bivariate relationships are found between the likelihood of any type of inmate infraction and the type of criminal charge, the inmate's criminal and institutional histories, gang affiliation, mental illness, housing assignment, and amount of time in custody. The actual risks of being involved in any type of institutional infraction are significantly greater among those inmates that have a violent criminal charge, prior arrest record, prior institutional misconduct, gang affiliation, mental health issue, assigned cell housing, and are in custody for more than 30 days, when compared to their respective counterparts in the other contrast categories. Table 1 also reveals that inmates who are younger, citizens, white, and homeless are slightly more likely to have a general institutional infraction, but these bivariate relationships are not found to be statistically significant (e.g., the Chi-Square tests of independence between each of these variables and the likelihood of any type of infraction could not be rejected at the traditional .05 level of statistical significance).

As shown in the last column of Table 1, significant bivariate relationships are found between the inmate's likelihood of having an infraction for a violent incident and the type of criminal charge, the inmate's criminal and institutional histories, their gang status, mental illness, housing assignment, and time in custody. The risks of being involved in a

violent infraction are significantly greater among those inmates that have a violent criminal charge, prior arrest record, prior institutional misconduct, gang affiliation, mental health issue, are assigned to cell housing, and are in custody for longer than thirty days, when compared to their respective counterparts in the other contrast categories. Table 1 also reveals that inmates who are younger, non-citizens, non-white, and homeless are slightly more likely to have a violent infraction, but these bivariate relationships are not statistically significant.

In summary, the bivariate analyses seem to support the Importation theory of inmate misconduct, which suggests that individuals bring certain characteristics and behaviors from outside society into correctional facilities (Cheeseman, 2003; Lahm, 2008; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008). While age and race were not significantly correlated with misconduct, the risks of infractions were significantly related to violent criminal charge, prior arrest record, prior institutional misconduct, gang affiliation, and mental illness. Housing assignment, which was used as a proxy for classification security level, as stated earlier (e.g., dorm housing=low classification; cell housing=high classification) was also found to be significantly correlated with all forms of inmate misconduct.

The two institutional-level variables were each found to be significantly correlated with both general and violent inmate misconduct. Those individuals that are assigned to cell housing and those that are in custody for longer periods are more likely to engage in general and violent forms of misconduct. These results provide some support for Deprivation theory, which suggests that the “pains of imprisonment” are what drives inmate misconduct, rather than characteristics that were brought by the individual from outside of the facility (Clemmer, 1940; Sykes, 1958).

## Results of the Logistic Regression Analysis

In order to assess the net effect of independent variables on a categorical dependent variable, a logistic regression was conducted. After controlling for the effect of the other variables, several variables were found to have a significant net impact on the likelihood of having an infraction and a violent infraction within the correctional setting. The particular independent variables that had a significant net impact on the risks of infractions differed slightly, depending upon the dependent variable.

As shown in Table 2, the logistic regression analysis revealed that the risks of having an infraction of any type were significantly higher for inmates who had prior institutional misconduct, mental health issues, cell housing assignments, and spent longer time in custody. These observed significant relationships are found after controlling for all other variables in this regression equation. The odds ratios in this table indicate that the net risks of infractions are over 3 times higher for inmates who had a prior institutional history than those without this history. Similarly, these relative risks are nearly 5 times higher for inmates with mental health issues (compared to those inmates without these problems), nearly 10 times higher for inmates who have been in custody for over 30 days compared to those with lower periods of confinement, and over two times higher for those housed in cell than those in dorm housing. None of the other measures of offender and offense characteristics had a significant net impact on the risks of any type of infraction. The values of the model Chi-Square and Nagelkerke  $R^2$  indicate that this entire group of independent variables explains a significant amount of the variability in the likelihood of receiving any type of infraction within this correctional institution.



Table 2

*Logistic regression analysis of infraction risks (n=447 inmates)*

<i>Variable (Name)</i>	<i>All Misconduct Odds ratios</i>	<i>Violent Misconduct Odds ratios</i>
Age	1.48	1.03
Race	.69	.82
Violent Charge	2.31	2.04*
Criminal History	2.33	1.57
Institutional History	3.05*	1.34
Gang Affiliation	.98	1.50
Mental Health Issue	4.80*	1.77*
Non-Citizen	.84	1.75
Homeless	1.89	1.40
Housing Assignment	2.38*	1.41
Time in Custody	9.52*	1.89*
Model Chi-square	159.14*	55.30*
df	11	11
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.45	.16

\* Significant difference at P&lt;.05

As shown in the last column in Table 2, the logistic regression analysis revealed that the risks of having a violent infraction were significantly higher for inmates who had a

violent criminal charge, suffered from mental illness, and those that spent a longer time in custody. These observed significant relationships were found after controlling for all other variables in this regression equation. The odds ratios in this table indicate that the net risks of violent infractions are over twice as high for inmates who had a violent charge than those without. These relative risks are nearly twice as high for inmates with mental illness and those in custody for over 30 days compared to those without mental illness and those with lower periods of confinement. None of the other measures of offender and offense had a significant net impact on the risks for a violent incident. The values of the model Chi-Square and Nagelkerke  $R^2$  indicate that this entire group of independent variables explains a significant amount of the variability in the likelihood of receiving a violent infraction.

#### Results of the Conjunctive Analysis

In order to explore the impact of several variables simultaneously, a conjunctive analysis was conducted to identify specific combinations of offender, offense, and institutional factors that are associated with higher and lower risks of infractions. This type of analysis allows an evaluation of whether particular variables have a similar impact on the risks of infractions or whether their impact on misconduct is context-specific, dependent upon the nature of the other independent variables in the analysis.

For purposes of conducting conjunctive analysis, a total of six independent variables were selected for inclusion in this analysis. These variables included the inmate's age, race, criminal history, institutional history, mental illness status, and gang status. These particular variables were selected based on the statistical significance of their bivariate relationships or their substantive importance for understanding the nature of group

differences in the risks of infractions. When considered simultaneously, these six variables represent 64 distinct types of situational contexts or profiles in which infractions may occur.

A conjunctive analysis begins with the identification of all possible combinations of attributes in the analysis and then looks at the relative prevalence of these particular combinations or profiles. Profiles that represent only a small number of the overall cases (e.g.,  $n's < 5$ ) are often excluded so that attention focuses on the more commonly occurring combinations of these attributes (see Miethe, Hart & Regoeczi, 2008). The relative prevalence of infractions within each of these profiles is then compared to the overall risks of infractions across all profiles. This overall risk is 77% for general infractions and 39% for violent infractions. If the risk of infraction in a profile is greater than 10 percentage points higher than this average, the particular profile is classified as a “high risk.” Risk rates that are at least 10 percentage points lower than this average are classified as “low risk.” Finally, examination of the specific attributes found within this “high” and “low” risk profiles allows the researcher to make decisions about the relative importance of particular variables in explaining the risks of infractions across different profiles. The results of the conjunctive analysis are found in Tables 3 through 6.

#### High and Low Risk Profiles of General Misconduct

Tables 3 and 4 provide the data matrix for the conjunctive analysis of the risks of any type of infraction. Of the total 64 possible combinations of these 6 independent variables, 56 profiles were found in this sample. Table 3 shows all of the observed profiles and classifies them as “High”, “Medium” or “Low” based on the relative prevalence of the risks of infractions within them.

Table 3

*Characteristics for varying risk levels associated with all misconduct (n=447)*

<i>Profile</i>	<i>Age &lt;25</i>	<i>Non White</i>	<i>Violent Charge</i>	<i>Inst. History</i>	<i>Mental Illness</i>	<i>Gang Affiliation</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Risk</i>
1	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	1	100	High
2	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	100	High
3	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	2	100	High
4	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	1	100	High
5	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4	100	High
6	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	5	100	High
7	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1	100	High
8	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	10	100	High
9	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	8	100	High
10	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	2	100	High
11	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	11	100	High
12	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	9	100	High
13	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	6	100	High
14	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	100	High
15	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	2	100	High
16	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	2	100	High
17	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	5	100	High
18	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	100	High
19	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	1	100	High
20	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	1	100	High
21	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	2	100	High
22	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	1	100	High
23	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	1	100	High
24	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	2	100	High
25	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	1	100	High
26	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	1	100	High
27	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	4	100	High
28	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	100	High
29	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	5	100	High
30	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	3	100	High
31	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1	100	High
32	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	14	93	High
33	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	13	92	High
34	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	10	90	High
35	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	16	88	High
36	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	8	88	High
37	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	8	88	High

Table 3

*Continued*

<i>Profile</i>	<i>Age &lt;25</i>	<i>Non White</i>	<i>Violent Charge</i>	<i>Inst. History</i>	<i>Mental Illness</i>	<i>Gang Affiliation?</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Risk</i>
38	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	18	83	Med
39	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	6	83	Med
40	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	28	82	Med
41	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	5	80	Med
42	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	5	80	Med
43	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	5	80	Med
44	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	45	80	Med
45	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	5	80	Med
46	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	12	75	Med
47	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	3	67	Med
48	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	9	67	Med
49	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	9	67	Med
50	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	9	67	Med
51	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	13	62	Low
52	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	2	50	Low
53	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	2	50	Low
54	No	No	No	No	No	No	35	49	Low
55	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	19	47	Low
56	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	47	40	Low

Note: Overall misconduct mean = .765

Table 4 is restricted to the dominant profiles in this same group that contain at least five cases per profile. When the profile data from Table 3 was evaluated, after removing the cases that were not found to be in the dominant group, there were 30 risk profiles remaining. The particular sets of offender and offense that are typically found within the “high” and “low” risk profiles are displayed within Table 4 and are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Table 4

*Characteristics for risk levels of all misconduct (dominant profiles n=>5)*

<i>Profile</i>	<i>Age &lt;25</i>	<i>Non White</i>	<i>Violent Charge</i>	<i>Inst. History</i>	<i>Mental Illness</i>	<i>Gang Affiliation</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Risk</i>
1	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	11	100	High
2	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	10	100	High
3	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	9	100	High
4	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	8	100	High
5	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	6	100	High
6	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	5	100	High
7	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	5	100	High
8	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	5	100	High
9	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	14	93	High
10	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	13	92	High
11	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	10	90	High
12	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	16	88	High
13	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	8	88	High
14	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	8	88	High
15	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	18	83	Med
16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	6	83	Med
17	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	28	82	Med
18	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	45	80	Med
19	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	5	80	Med
20	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	5	80	Med
21	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	5	80	Med
22	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	5	80	Med
23	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	12	75	Med
24	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	9	67	Med
25	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	9	67	Med
26	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	9	67	Med
27	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	13	62	Low
28	No	No	No	No	No	No	35	49	Low
29	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	19	47	Low
30	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	47	40	Low

Note: Overall misconduct mean =.765

As shown in Table 4, there are 14 combinations of offender and offense attributes that are associated with higher than average risks of infractions. Each of these particular profiles has a risk of infraction that is greater than 87% (i.e., at least 10 percentage points greater than the average infraction rate of 77% found in the total sample). In addition, there are 12 combinations that represent a medium risk and fall within 10 percentage points of the overall mean rate. The remaining 4 profiles involve combinations of attributes that have a rate of infractions that is at 67% or lower (i.e., 10 percentage points below the mean of 77%).

When evaluating the high risk group, a total of 8 profiles were associated with misconduct every single time they appeared in the data. This is striking as the “100%” group represents 59 inmates out of the total sample of 447. The entire group of 14 profiles in Table 4 that are designated as “high risk” for infractions represents approximately 29% of the entire sample. A close examination of the results in Table 4 reveals several patterns.

First, there are three variables that occur frequently within “high risk” profiles for the likelihood of any type of infraction, but they are never found in the “low risk” profiles. These variables are violent charge, institutional history, and mental illness. Among these variables, institutional history has the strongest impact on the risks of infraction across all profiles. In particular, an institutional history is found in all of the top 10 most prevalent profiles with the highest risks of infractions, but it is not present in any of the 4 profiles with the lowest risks of infractions.

Second, inmates that have all three of these attributes (i.e., violent charges, an institutional history and mental health problems) are always found within the “high risk”

profiles and these 3 characteristics are never observed within the “low risk” profiles. Inmates who have only 2 of these 3 characteristics are also almost assured of being in the “high risk” profiles. These findings suggest that the adverse impact of having a violent charge, institutional history, and mental health problem on receiving institutional infractions is largely constant across the contexts that are defined by combinations of the other offender and offense attributes.

Third, the impact of the inmate’s age, race, and gang status on the risks of infractions is highly context-specific, depending among the particular combination of other characteristics of the offense and offender. For example, non-white inmates have high risks of infractions in many contexts (see profiles 1-5 in Table 4), but they are sometimes found to have low relative risks (e.g., profile 27 involving over 25, non-white gang members charged with a non-violent offense and with no institutional history or mental health problems). A similar conclusion of context-specific effects is found for the inmate’s age (e.g., compare the prevalence of infractions for young males in “high risk” profile #13 and “low risks” profile #29) and gang status (compare the “high risk” gang members in profiles #3 and #4 with the “low risk” gang members in profile #27).

#### High and Low Risk Profiles of Violent Misconduct

Tables 5 and 6 provide the data matrix for the conjunctive analysis of the risks of violent infractions. Of the total 64 possible combinations of these 6 independent variables, 56 profiles were also found to be represented in this sample. Table 5 shows all of the observed profiles and classifies them as “High”, “Medium” or “Low” based on the relative prevalence of the risks of violent infractions within them. The following tables and paragraphs describe the conjunctive analysis for risk of violent infractions.



Table 5

*Characteristics for varying risk levels associated with violent misconduct (n=447)*

<i>Profile</i>	<i>Age &lt;25</i>	<i>Non White</i>	<i>Violent Charge</i>	<i>Inst. History</i>	<i>Mental Illness</i>	<i>Gang Affiliation</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Risk</i>
1	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	1	100	High
2	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	2	100	High
3	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	1	100	High
4	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1	100	High
5	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	1	100	High
6	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	1	100	High
7	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	1	100	High
8	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	2	100	High
9	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	1	100	High
10	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	100	High
11	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	3	100	High
12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1	100	High
13	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	5	80	High
14	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	5	80	High
15	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	9	78	High
16	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	3	67	High
17	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	11	64	High
18	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	8	63	High
19	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	8	63	High
20	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	5	60	High
21	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	10	60	High
22	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	14	50	High
23	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	50	High
24	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4	50	High
25	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	12	50	High
26	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	2	50	High
27	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	50	High
28	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	2	50	High
29	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	50	High
30	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	6	50	High
31	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	4	50	High
32	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	18	44	Med
33	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	5	40	Med
34	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	5	40	Med
35	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	5	40	Med
36	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	13	38	Med

Table 5

*Continued*

<i>Profile</i>	<i>Age &lt;25</i>	<i>Non White</i>	<i>Violent Charge</i>	<i>Inst. History</i>	<i>Mental Illness</i>	<i>Gang Affiliation</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Risk</i>
37	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	8	38	Med
38	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	45	36	Med
39	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	6	33	Med
40	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	9	33	Med
41	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	9	33	Med
42	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	28	32	Med
43	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	13	31	Med
44	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	10	30	Med
45	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	19	26	Low
46	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	9	22	Low
47	No	No	No	No	No	No	35	20	Low
48	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	5	20	Low
49	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	47	19	Low
50	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	16	19	Low
51	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	2	0	Low
52	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	2	0	Low
53	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	1	0	Low
54	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	2	0	Low
55	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	1	0	Low
56	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	2	0	Low

Note: Violent misconduct mean = .389

Table 6 is restricted to the dominant profiles in this same group that contain at least five cases per profile. A description of the nature of these 30 dominant profiles, with the particular sets of offender and offense profiles that are typically found within the “high” and “low” risk categories are displayed. The following paragraphs describe the analysis of all dominant profiles associated with violent inmate misconduct among the sample analyzed in this study.

Table 6

*Characteristics for risk levels of violent misconduct (dominant profiles n=>5)*

<i>Profile</i>	<i>Age &lt;25</i>	<i>Non White</i>	<i>Violent Charge</i>	<i>Inst. History</i>	<i>Mental Illness</i>	<i>Gang Affiliation</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Risk</i>
1	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	5	80	High
2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	5	80	High
3	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	9	78	High
4	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	11	64	High
5	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	8	63	High
6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	8	63	High
7	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	10	60	High
8	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	5	60	High
9	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	14	50	High
10	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	12	50	High
11	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	6	50	High
12	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	18	44	Med
13	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	5	40	Med
14	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	5	40	Med
15	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	5	40	Med
16	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	13	38	Med
17	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	8	38	Med
18	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	45	36	Med
19	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	9	33	Med
20	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	9	33	Med
21	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	6	33	Med
22	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	28	32	Med
23	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	13	31	Med
24	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	10	30	Med
25	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	19	26	Low
26	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	9	22	Low
27	No	No	No	No	No	No	35	20	Low
28	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	5	20	Low
29	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	47	19	Low
30	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	16	19	Low

Note: Violent misconduct mean = .389

As shown in Table 6, there are 11 combinations of offender and offense attributes associated with higher than average risks of infractions for violent activities. Each of these particular profiles has a risk of violent infractions that is greater than 49% (e.g., at least 10 percentage points greater than the average infraction rate of 39% found in the total sample). In addition, there are 13 combinations that represent a medium risk and fall within 10 percentage points of the overall mean rate. The remaining 6 profiles involve combinations of attributes that have a rate of violent infractions that is at 29% or lower (e.g., 10 percentage points below the mean of 39%).

When evaluating the high risk group, in contrast to the evaluation of all misconduct, none of these profiles were linked to violent misconduct every time in this sample. The highest risk profiles were only found to have committed a violent infraction 80% of the time when those groupings occurred in the sample (see profile 1 and 2 in Table 6). The entire group of 11 profiles that are designated as “high risk” for violent infractions represents approximately 21% of the total sample. A close examination of the results in Table 6 reveals several patterns.

First, there are four variables that occur frequently within “high risk” profiles for the likelihood of violent infractions, but they are never or rarely found in the “low risk” profiles. These variables are violent charge, institutional history, mental illness, and gang affiliation. Among these variables, institutional history has the strongest impact on the risks of violent infraction across all profiles. In particular, an institutional history is found in 10 of 11 profiles with the highest risks of infractions, but it is only present in 1 of the 6 profiles with the lowest risks of infractions.

Second, inmates that have at least three of these four attributes (i.e., violent charges, an institutional history, mental health problems, and gang affiliation) are almost always found within the “high risk” profiles and these joint characteristics are never observed in the profiles within the “low risk” category. These findings suggest that the adverse impact of having a violent charge, institutional history, mental health problems, and gang affiliation on the likelihood of receiving violent institutional infractions is largely constant across the contexts that are defined by combinations of the other offender and offense attributes.

Third, similar to the results for infractions in general, the impact of inmate’s age and race on the risks of violent infraction is highly context-specific, depending upon the particular combination of other characteristics of the offense and offender. For example, non-white inmates have high risks of infractions in many contexts (see profiles 2-7 in Table 6), but they are sometimes found to have low relative risks (e.g., profile 29 involving an inmate over 25, non-white, charged with a non-violent offense and with no institutional history or mental health problems). A similar conclusion of context-specific effects is found for the inmate’s age (e.g., compare the prevalence in infractions for young males in “high risk” profile #6 and “low risks” profile #30).

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of this research is to examine the individual- and institutional-level variables associated with inmate misconduct. Prior research has mainly focused upon the prison environment and its inhabitants, while this research focuses upon a jail facility and the individuals housed therein. By examining what variables are correlated with misconduct, institutional managers may be able to more accurately identify those individuals and situations that lead to violence and disorder, thus improving safety, security, and overall management of jail operations.

#### Summary of Findings

Examination of the individual- and institutional- level characteristics indicate that there are several significant predictors of misconduct among the inmates within this sample. When these characteristics are considered as a group, they explain approximately 45% of the variation in the likelihood of any type of institutional misconduct and 16% of the variation in the likelihood of violent infractions.

Based on the majority of existing scholarly research, it was expected that age, race, violent charge, prior institutional misconduct, mental illness, gang affiliation, long term imprisonment, and assignment to higher security levels would be predictive of inmate misconduct. Less research had been conducted on the adverse impact of homelessness and non-citizenship, but social bond theory would suggest that these variables should be associated with institutional misconduct. The following paragraphs summarize the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables in the current study.

### *Age*

In the context of existing theory (e.g., labeling and social bond theories), it was expected that the volatility of youth would result in the finding of higher rates of both general institutional misconduct and violent infractions among younger, rather than older inmates. While the bivariate analysis indicated that the rate of misconduct is slightly higher among those younger than 25 years of age, this difference was not statistically significant. A similar null finding for age was found in the logistic regression analysis when controlling for other variables. However, when evaluated within the conjunctive analysis, the impact of age was found to be highly context specific. For some combinations of other risk factors, younger inmates had greater risks of violent infractions than older inmates (e.g., compare profile 2 and 4 in Table 6), but in other combinations, older inmates were found to have had the lower risks (e.g., compare profile 18 and 30 in Table 6).

### *Race*

According to scholarly research and several criminological theories (e.g., social bond, labeling theory), the race of an individual has often been associated with misconduct but the overall magnitude of this relationships across studies has been mixed. When the bivariate relationship between race and overall misconduct was examined, white inmates were found have slightly higher risks of infractions than non-white inmates. For violent infractions, the nature of this relationship was in the opposite direction; with non-whites having slightly higher risks. However, an inmate's race did not have a statistical significant relationship in either the bivariate or multivariate analyses. In the conjunctive

analysis, there was also no clear racial differences across particular profiles in the relative likelihood of either type of infractions.

### *Criminal Charge*

Violent criminal charge has often been correlated with inmate deviance and misconduct in previous research (Kane, 1986; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008). Consistent with this research and several theories (e.g., labeling, importation theory), the current study found a significant bivariate relationship between having a charge for violent behavior and the risks of having an incident of general misconduct and the risks of violent infractions. The logistic regression results revealed that individuals with a violent criminal charge were over twice as likely to engage in misconduct, when compared to those without a violent criminal charge. The conjunctive analysis indicates the impact of a violent charge on the risks of misconduct is fairly stable across different profiles. Among persons with a violent charge and other risk factors (e.g., having an institutional history and history of mental illness), the risks of infractions were always higher than the average risks. When none of these attributes were present, inmates were almost always in the low-risk categories for general infractions and violent misconduct.

### *Criminal History*

According to existing research and theory (e.g., labeling, social bond, importation theories), criminal history has often been correlated with increased risk for misconduct among incarcerated individuals. Based on the bivariate analysis, a significant relationship was found between having a prior criminal record and both overall misconduct and violent misconduct. However, these relationships did not remain significant during the logistic regression analysis.



### *Institutional History*

Prior institutional misconduct has often been found to have a significant relationship with future inmate misconduct. Several theories (e.g., labeling, importation theories) also suggest that a prior institutional misconduct would be related to future misconduct. Across all of types of analysis conducted in this study (e.g., bivariate, multivariate logistic regression, conjunctive analysis), prior institutional misconduct had a strong and significant impact on both the risks of general misconduct and violent infractions. In particular, the logistic regression analysis indicated that inmates with prior institutional history were over three times more likely to commit an act of misconduct than other inmates. In the conjunctive analysis, prior institutional history is found in nearly every high-risk profile for both overall misconduct and violent infractions but it is almost never found in the low-risk profiles.

### *Gang Affiliation*

According to existing theories (e.g., differential association, social bond, social learning, and labeling), gang affiliation was expected to be associated with misconduct. Consistent with these theories, the current study also found a significant bivariate relationship between gang membership and all forms of misconduct. However, the impact of gang affiliation on these risks of misconduct became statistically insignificant once controls for other variables were introduced in the logistic regression analysis. In contrast, the results of the conjunctive analysis suggest that the impact of gang affiliation on the risks of institutional infractions is context-specific. Among inmates with particular combinations of attributes, differences between gang and non-gang inmates may be quite large (e.g., compare Profiles 8 and 22 in Table 6), whereas among inmates

with other combinations of attributes, there may be only minor differences between these groups in their risks of institutional infractions (e.g., compare Profile 5 and 7 in Table 6).

### *Mental Illness*

Existing research suggests those suffering from mental illness may be more susceptible to deviant and anti-social behavior. Several theories (e.g., labeling, social bond theory, importation theory) would also suggest that the mentally ill would have higher risks of institutional misconduct. Across the various analyses in this study, the inmate's mental health status was found to be one of the stronger predictors of institutional misconduct. According to the logistic regression, mentally ill inmates are nearly five times more likely to commit an act of misconduct than the average inmate. When examined jointly with other variables associated with high risk (e.g., violent criminal charge, prior institutional history, and gang affiliation), the conjunctive analysis revealed that persons who were considered mentally ill were almost always in the "high risk" groups and they were almost never in the "low risk" group when these joint attributes were absent.

### *Citizenship Status and Homelessness*

According to several theories (e.g., labeling, social bond theory), citizenship status and homelessness should be associated with the risks of inmate misconduct. While both non-citizens and homeless individuals were slightly more likely to be engaged in violent misconduct, the relationships between these variables and risks of institutional misconduct were not statistically significant in either the bivariate analysis or the logistic regression analyses. The results of the conjunctive analysis revealed that the impact of these variables was highly idiosyncratic across profiles.

### *Housing Assignment and Time in Custody*

The two institutional-level variables that were examined were housing assignment (proxy for custody level as low classification = dorm housing and high classification = cell housing) and time in custody. Both of these variables were found to be significantly correlated with institutional misconduct in both the bivariate and multivariate analyses. According to results of the logistic regression analysis, those inmates that were assigned to housing in a cell were over twice as likely to engage in misconduct. Consistent with deprivation theory, the logistic regression analysis also indicated that inmates with longer terms of confinement had risks of institutional misconduct that were nearly ten times higher than those with short jail sentences.

### Limitations

This study involves data that was collected and analyzed from one large urban jail facility, located in the southwest United States. This region has experienced substantial population growth over the last thirty years. It is well known that jails vary greatly in size and occupancy, housing from one individual to tens of thousands in the biggest cities in the nation. The Clark County Detention Center is the main correctional facility for the Las Vegas valley and it regularly houses more than three thousand inmates. Approximately one half of the facility is managed with a “direct supervision” philosophy, with housing units made up of open bay dorm-style housing, while the other half is a more traditional jail with cell housing. The facility is continuously overcrowded and is forced to regularly send overflow inmates to other local jail facilities. This study focused solely on adult male inmates that were housed within CCDC during a one year period.

All of these factors make CCDC a unique environment and may limit the generalizability of this sample to other correctional populations.

Another important limitation of this study involves the measures of the major variables underlying this research. In particular, all of the measures of the independent and dependent variables were derived from secondary data sources. All data was collected from the institutional computer system and there was no way to verify if all information had been correctly entered. As such, there was no way to assess the reliability of the initial coding and classification of these variables. The limited number of variables available in this analysis also restricts the ability to make strong conclusions about the relative importance of the different theories underlying this study. Nonetheless, the current study provides a preliminary assessment of both the relative importance of particular factors in influencing the risks of institutional misconduct and the consistency of these results with existing criminological theories.

#### Implications for Jail Management

The jail environment differs substantially from prison institutions. Prisons are generally much more static as they house individuals for long periods of time that are typically sentenced to a period of imprisonment. Jail facilities process, detain, and release inmates every day. Jail facilities are far more likely to experience individuals entering the facility while intoxicated or experiencing some kind of medical or psychological crisis. The dynamic jail environment poses several management challenges that can affect the safety and security of staff and inmates.

One of the major advances in jail facility management in recent decades has been the transition from subjective evaluation of arrestees to objective classification evaluation

tools. Objective classification systems house inmates based on a set of factors that assess risk and endeavor to effectively separate individuals based upon their security, housing, and programming needs.

This research examined several factors that are commonly utilized to assign custody levels for individuals booked into jail facilities. This study included several individual and institutional characteristics that supported the importation theory of the correlates of inmate misconduct. This theory essentially posits that individuals bring into an institution a set of values, experiences, and attitudes that they had prior to being arrested and incarcerated. Those individual characteristics may be at odds with facility rules and regulations, resulting in deviant behavior and misconduct of both general and violent nature.

As a result of the empirical evidence found in this study, it is recommended that jail managers evaluate all individuals housed in their facilities to determine the status of their criminal charge, criminal history, institutional history, gang affiliation, and mental health status. These characteristics, especially when in combination with one another, place inmates at a significantly greater risk of engaging in all forms of misconduct while incarcerated.

In contrast to the significantly correlated factors listed above, this research found some individual-level variables that were not significantly associated with inmate misconduct. Age, race, citizenship status, and homelessness did not have an impact upon the likelihood of engaging in misconduct. However, these variables should also be examined in future research because, as suggested by the conjunctive analysis, their

impact on the risks of institutional misconduct may be highly contextual and dependent upon the other variables included in the analysis.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

This research focused on misconduct among inmates housed in a jail environment. This is an area that has been largely overlooked by academicians, as the vast majority of scholarly research has focused upon prison populations. According to the National Institute of Corrections (1998), jails represent the most widespread single component of the overall American criminal justice system. The research contained within this study will hopefully be a step toward a greater focus upon this largely undiscovered population.



## **Social/Behavioral IRB – Exempt Review Approved as Exempt**

**DATE:** January 19, 2010

**TO:** **Dr. Terance Miethe**, Criminal Justice

**FROM:** Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

**RE:** Notification of IRB Action by Dr. Paul Jones, Chair  
Protocol Title: **Adjustment to Correctional Confinement: Investigating  
the Correlates of Violence and Disorder in a Jail Environment**  
OPRS# 0911-3295M

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This memorandum is notification that the project referenced above has been reviewed by the UNLV Social/Behavioral Institutional Review Board (IRB) as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45CFR46.

The protocol has been reviewed and deemed exempt from IRB review. It is not in need of further review or approval by the IRB.

*Any* changes to the exempt protocol may cause this project to require a different level of IRB review. Should any changes need to be made, please submit a **Modification Form**.

If you have questions or require any assistance, please contact the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at [OPRSHumanSubjects@unlv.edu](mailto:OPRSHumanSubjects@unlv.edu) or call 895-2794.

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