Gender, Race, and Juvenile Court Outcomes: An Examination of Status Offenders

Jennifer H. Peck¹, Michael J. Leiber², and Sarah Jane Brubaker³

Abstract
The intersectionality perspective suggests that the treatment of females and minority youth may be based on one’s social location in terms of oppression and privilege. Applying this perspective to juvenile court outcomes and based on prior research, the current study attempts to understand the individual and joint effects of gender and race on the treatment of status offenders at two decision-making stages of the juvenile justice system. Results from juvenile court referrals in two mid-Atlantic states indicate that gender and race, both individually and in combination, impact case outcomes in terms of both severity and leniency. While results are not always in the anticipated direction, the findings reveal that gender and race still matter in the decision to receive a court referral at intake and whether to adjudicate status offenders.

Keywords
gender, race, status offenders, juvenile court processing

The benevolent underpinnings of the juvenile justice system means that decision makers properly focus on legal, extralegal, and contextual aspects that have an influence on youth’s treatment needs within a variety of domains (e.g., school, family, and peers). For example, the court’s therapeutic mission prompts inquiry into the offender’s progress in school and the adequacy of parental guidance and supervision (Feld, 1999). Although the juvenile court provides a venue for responding to wayward youth, the discretion given to juvenile court decision makers has also led to a reliance on cultural, gender, and race stereotypes when assessing culpability, dangerousness, and treatment needs of the offender (Bishop & Leiber, 2011; Boritch, 1992; Bridges & Steen, 1998; Chesney-Lind, 1977; Gaarder, Rodriguez, & Zatz, 2004; Mallicoat, 2007; Mann, 1979; Odem, 1995; Platt, 1977).

¹ School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL, USA
² Department of Criminology, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, USA
³ L. Douglas Wilder School of Government & Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA, USA

Corresponding Author:
Michael J. Leiber, Department of Criminology, University of South Florida, 4202 East Fowler Ave, SOC107, Tampa, FL, 33620, USA.
Email: mjleiber@usf.edu
The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP Act) of 1974 and its subsequent reauthorizations (especially in 1992) attempted to ensure greater equality in the handling of all youth (Holden & Kapler, 1995). In particular, the JJDP Act encouraged the development and implementation of services for females, minorities, and status offenders for the purposes of reducing their presence in the juvenile justice system and ensuring equitable treatment (Hsia, Bridges, & McHale, 2004; Schwartz, Steketee, & Schneider, 1990; Zahn, Day, Mihalic, & Tichavsky, 2009). Currently, the presence of the status offender and to some degree minority youth in the juvenile justice system has somewhat declined (Chesney-Lind, 1988; Davis & Sorensen, 2010; Handler & Zatz, 1982).

Some studies also report little to no disparate treatment of status offenders, girls, or minorities once extralegal factors such as crime severity and prior record are taken into account (e.g., Bishop & Frazier, 1996; Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004; Feld, 2009; Freiburger & Burke, 2011; Freiburger & Jordan, 2011; Kempf-Leonard & Sontheimer, 1995; Pope, Lovell, Stojkovic, & Rose, 1996; Teilmann & Landry, 1981; Tracy, 2002).

Still, research continues to report gender disparities among status offenders, delinquents, and most recently among probation violators (Bishop & Frazier, 1992; Chesney-Lind, 1997; MacDonald & Chesney-Lind, 2001; Mallicoat, 2007; Tracy, Kempf-Leonard, & Abramoske-James, 2009). More specific, when comparisons have been made that involve female status offenders relative to female delinquents, some prior research has found that the female status offender is responded to more severely than the female delinquent offender (Bishop & Frazier, 1992; Chesney-Lind, 1997). Concomitantly, an abundance of studies reveal that minority youth, especially African Americans, are also likely to be subject to disparate treatment compared to Whites (e.g., Bishop, 2005; Bishop & Frazier, 1988; Graham & Lowery, 2004; Harris, 2007, 2009; Leiber & Johnson, 2008; Pope & Feyerherm, 1992). Similar to females, minorities have also reported to be more likely than Whites to reenter the juvenile justice system as a probation violator (e.g., Austin, Johnson, & Weitzer, 2005; Gies, Cohen, & Villarruel, 2009; Holman & Ziedenberg, 2006; Moeller, 2011).

Despite the wealth of research that examines gender, minority youth, status offenders, and juvenile court outcomes, very few studies have been undertaken that examine the joint effects of gender and race on the treatment of status offenders in the juvenile justice system. Furthermore, of the research that does exist, these studies either rely on data from the mid-1980s (e.g., Bishop & Frazier, 1992, 1996) or inferential statistics (e.g., Tracy et al., 2009). While inferential statistics provide a descriptive picture of the relationship between gender, race, and status offenders, the addition of multivariate analyses also have the potential to examine this relationship with juvenile court outcomes by controlling for the potential influence of other confounding factors (e.g., age, prior record, etc.).

In light of these limitations and framed by the intersectionality perspective, the present study uses data from two mid-Atlantic states to examine the individual and joint relationships between gender and race with the treatment of status offenders on intake and adjudication outcomes. The results have a potential to provide greater insights into the contexts of gender and race inequities in decision-making and inform policy strategies to improve equality in the treatment of status offenders in juvenile justice proceedings.

**Theoretical Background**

Literature addressing gender and race bias within the juvenile justice system has been informed by a variety of theoretical frameworks, although some have argued that much of the research in this area has been largely atheoretical (Guevara, Herz, & Spohn, 2006). One approach that has recently emerged as a theoretical explanation for the presence of gender and race bias is the intersectionality perspective (Burgess-Proctor, 2006; Crenshaw, 1991; Daly, 1993; Daly & Stevens, 1995; Guevara et al., 2006). The intersectionality approach is a general and broad framework that illuminates the influence of extralegal factors (i.e., gender and race) on juvenile court outcomes.
Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that stresses the importance of recognizing the simultaneity of multiple social locations including race/ethnicity, social class, and gender in affecting social experiences and phenomena (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991). One’s social location within these axes can be viewed in terms of oppression or privilege, depending on the relative status and power of the group to which they are viewed as belonging. In addition to attending to the overlapping nature of social locations, scholars emphasize that oppression and privilege along these dimensions occur at multiple levels of social life (i.e., structural/institutional, group/cultural, and individual/personal levels). A growing body of research incorporating an intersectional approach has focused on various dimensions and levels of oppression and privilege and utilized both quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches, and researchers continue to call for its inclusion in this literature (Burgess-Proctor, 2006; Guevara et al., 2006, p. 277).

For the purposes of the current study, the intersectionality framework informs an analysis of the variation in juvenile court outcomes along the lines of gender and race, within both institutional and group contexts. Examining court outcomes allows for inquiry into whether members of particular social groups, defined by gender and race, receive differential treatment from the juvenile justice system as a social institution that perpetuates oppression and privilege at the structural level. It could be that the marginalization of females and minorities results in disadvantaged outcomes, especially concerning official reactions to delinquent and criminal behavior (Moore & Padavic, 2010). Findings to that effect have the potential to delineate possible cultural, gender, and race stereotypes and biases that operate at the group/cultural level to perpetuate oppression.

Moreover, the perspective focuses on simultaneously being a female and/or a minority, instead of assuming that individuals across all situations have the same experiences (Leiber, Brubaker, & Fox, 2009). In other words, an individual’s experiences vary by gender and race/ethnicity. African American girls’ experiences in the juvenile justice system may be completely different than White females, whose experiences may also be unlike African American males’ experiences. Therefore, the intersectionality perspective recognizes the potential for multiple and intersecting inequalities in regard to court outcomes within a “race/gender/crime nexus” (Chesney-Lind, 2006, p. 10).

**Prior Literature**

This study contributes to the existing literature on differential gender and race juvenile court outcomes within the context of status offenders. In this section, a review of the literature is conducted that highlight the effects of gender and race on processing decisions in general, as well as specifically related to status offenses.

**Gender, Race, and Court Outcomes.** Gender differences have been reported in terms of court outcomes for various types of offenses (delinquent, status, probation violation, contempt). Female youth have been subjected to both lenient and harsh treatment compared to males across court outcomes (Carr, Hudson, Hanks, & Hunt, 2008; Cauffman et al., 2007; Chesney-Lind, 1977; MacDonald & Chesney-Lind, 2001; Wordes & Bynum, 1995). For example, research has shown that females are sentenced to detention longer than males for violating probation rules, and once placed on probation, are less likely than the larger male offender population to receive services specifically tailored to their unique needs (Beger & Hoffmann, 1998). These findings may have resulted from the perception that female offenders violated gender roles; therefore, the juvenile justice system intervenes and treats females more harshly to help and protect this population. It has also been suggested that female offenders are more likely than male offenders to be handled informally at the early stages of the system (e.g., intake), but that the court’s treatment becomes more severe as girls move into the adjudication and dispositional stages (Leiber & Peck, in press; MacDonald & Chesney-Lind, 2001).
Similar to research on gender differences in juvenile court outcomes, studies on race differences have also focused on various decision-making stages (Bishop, Leiber, & Johnson, 2010; Guevara, Boyd, Taylor, & Brown, 2011; Rodriguez, 2010; Steen, Bond, Bridges, & Kubrin, 2005). Results continue to demonstrate racial bias in court outcomes in that legal and extralegal factors alone are unable to account for race differences in involvement in the juvenile justice system (Bishop, 2005; Mallett, Stoddard-Dare, & Seck, 2011; Pope & Feyerherm, 1993). This finding highlights a process of cumulative disadvantage that minority youth encounter compared to Whites, where racial disparities at earlier stages lead to more harsh outcomes at the back end of the juvenile justice system (Fagan, 2010; Guevara et al., 2006). Even small race effects accumulate and become more distinct in later outcomes (Bishop & Leiber, 2011; Steen et al., 2005). For example, Rodriguez (2010) found that Black, Latino/Latina, and American Indian youth were treated more severely than similarly situated White youth throughout front- and back-end court processes. Black youth received more severe outcomes at the decision points of diversion (i.e., petition), detention, and out-of-home placement, but more lenient treatment at the adjudication stage. Latinos/Latinas and American Indians, however, received more severe treatment across the outcomes of diversion and detention.

Gender and race individually and in combination have also influenced court outcomes; yet, the research has been limited to only a handful of studies. Guevara, Herz, and Spohn (2006) examined the potential joint influence of gender and race on preadjudication detention and dispositional outcomes. Contrary to expectations, White females were treated similarly to non-White females in that no race differences were found in detention decisions. White females were also more likely than non-White females to receive an out-of-home placement at judicial disposition. In addition, minority males did not consistently receive more severe outcomes. While non-White males were more likely to be detained compared to other racial groups, they received leniency at disposition (Guevara et al., 2006).

Leiber, Brubaker, and Fox’s (2009) examination of multiple court decision points also found that certain gender and race combinations resulted in both severe and lenient outcomes. White girls were not subjected to differential treatment; however, African American girls overall, were treated differently than African American boys. African American girls received lenient outcomes at the stages of intake and petition, while African American boys were more likely to receive both lenient (i.e., release compared to diversion participation; community-based treatment) and harsh (i.e., detention) outcomes.

**Gender, Race, and Status Offenses.** Status offenses are specific to juveniles and refer to acts that, committed by adults, would not be considered or processed as crimes (Holden & Kapler, 1995). Common and familiar types of status offenses include truancy, curfew violation, and running away from home. There is a wealth of research that documents the overrepresentation of girls as status offenders (e.g., Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004; Feld 2009; Mann, 1979; Odem, 1995; Platt, 1977; Shelden, 1981) who are often responded to differently than her male counterparts in the juvenile justice system (e.g., Bishop & Frazier, 1992; Mallicoat, 2007; Tracy et al., 2009). Most studies and scholars suggest that this is due to a more protective approach to girls, as well as the enforcement of more strict moral expectations for their behavior (e.g., Pasko, 2010). One goal of research in this area is to identify ways to effectively reduce the presence of the female status offender in the juvenile justice system and ensure the equitable treatment of these youth and in general, all youth (Brubaker & Fox, 2010; Kempf-Leonard, 2007; Leiber, Bishop, & Chamlin, 2011; Nellis, 2005; Schwartz et al., 1990; Zahn et al., 2009).

Similar to the overall literature that addresses gender, race, and court outcomes, research has also produced mixed results concerning the intersection between gender, race, and the treatment of status offenders and court processing. Concerning gender, some research has found that female status offenders are treated harsher compared to their male counterparts, including male delinquents (Chesney-Lind, 1973; Mann, 1979; Pope & Feyerherm, 1990a; Tracy et al., 2009). Additional research, however, has found no evidence of gender disparity in status offense processing (Dannefer
Schutt, 1982; Teilmann & Laundry, 1981). In regard to race differences in the treatment of status offenders, most prior research has either treated race as a control variable or compared White and non-White boys and girls who were referred to the juvenile court for status offenses.

Three studies in particular have focused on the relationship between gender, race, status offenders, and juvenile court outcomes (Bishop & Frazier, 1992, 1996; Freiburger & Burke, 2011). Bishop and Frazier (1992) compared the treatment of male and female status offenders to delinquent offenders. Results indicated little evidence of overall gender bias in the treatment of status offenders throughout three court processing stages. While female status offenders were slightly more likely to be referred to the juvenile court, they were no more likely than male status offenders to be adjudicated or be placed at judicial disposition. Bishop and Frazier (1992) potentially attribute this finding to the deinstitutionalization of status offenders from the JJDP Act, yet also warn that it may be premature to argue that the JJDP Act has succeeded in eliminating gender bias in the treatment of status offenders. This is especially true since female youth charged with contempt (i.e., repeat status offenders) had a higher probability of being held in secure detention compared to males. In addition, there was minimal evidence of racial bias in the treatment of status offenders in the Bishop and Frazier (1992) study. While White status offenders were more likely to receive a court referral at petition, non-White and White youth were treated similarly at the other two stages of adjudication and judicial disposition. It is important to note though, that while Bishop and Frazier (1992) did find some gender and race effects (to the disadvantage of White status offenders) at an early stage of court proceedings, they concluded overall that there was little evidence of gender or race bias.

The potential for gender and racial bias was examined again in a later study by Bishop and Frazier (1996) who compared the treatment of status offenders to delinquent offenders. Mirroring the results from Bishop and Frazier (1992), the findings indicated that non-White status offenders received leniency at the stage of intake compared to their White counterparts, where no race differences were found at judicial disposition. Female status offenders were also more likely to receive a court referral compared to males. White youth charged with contempt (i.e., repeat status offenders), however, were more likely to be incarcerated than non-White youth. Both studies by Bishop and Frazier (1992, 1996) provide some evidence for gender and racial bias, but this effect was more evident at the initial stage of intake compared to later court proceedings. In addition, both Bishop and Frazier’s (1992, 1996) studies failed to examine the joint effects of gender and race on juvenile court outcomes by treating either gender or race as a control variable in each study.

Overall, there is a paucity of recent research that examines gender and race effects of status offense processing. One exception is Freiburger and Burke’s (2011) examination of the relationship between gender, race/ethnicity, and the treatment of status offenders on adjudication decision making. Freiburger and Burke argued that the effect of gender on the decision to adjudicate may be conditioned by the race and ethnicity of the juvenile offender. In regard to gender, results paralleled Bishop and Frazier (1992) in that gender overall was not a significant predictor of adjudication. Race/ethnicity, however, mattered in the decision to adjudicate status offenders. Native American boys were most likely to be adjudicated, followed by Black girls and Hispanic girls. Among females, White girls were the least likely to be adjudicated, while Hispanic females were more likely to be adjudicated compared to their White counterpart. Among males, Native American boys, followed by Hispanic boys, were the groups most likely to be adjudicated. Overall, Freiburger and Burke argued that in some conditions, the effect of gender may vary by race and ethnicity; yet, more decision points need to be examined to solidify these conclusions.

**Implications for the Present Research**

To some degree, prior research has advanced our knowledge of the relationship between gender, race, status offenders, and the juvenile justice system. Still, there is a lack of inquiry that has
examined the joint effects of gender and race and the treatment of status offenders on juvenile court outcomes. A review of the research, for example, yielded only three significant studies on the subject and each of these has limitations that served as the impetus for the present study. While the research by Bishop and Frazier (1992, 1996) is noteworthy, the studies relied on data from the mid-1980s and depending on each study; race or gender was treated simply as a control variable. The present study has the ability to extend the research by Bishop and Frazier (1992, 1996) and provide a more recent examination of the relationship concerning the gender/race nexus and the treatment of status offenders within juvenile court outcomes. In addition, while the research by Freiburger and Burke (2011) provides the most recent examination concerning the outcomes of status offenders to date, the study only focused on status offenders at one stage of juvenile justice proceedings (adjudication).

The current research is also able to disentangle the relationship between gender, race, and status offenders by examining decision making at intake and adjudication. The significance of assessing decision making at multiple stages provides an opportunity to examine the presence of potential gender and race biases at both an earlier (intake) and later (adjudication) stage of the juvenile justice system. It has been argued that juvenile justice decision making is a multistage process and it is important to examine multiple decision points in order to fully examine if race and gender interact to influence court outcomes (Leiber et al., 2009; Zatz, 2000). Furthermore, if only a single decision point is examined, the effects of race and/or gender may be underestimated or missed entirely, as potential gender/race effects may be present at additional stages (Bishop & Frazier, 1996). This specific focus is able to provide a more direct assessment of the 1992 renovations to the JJDP Act and its goal toward the equitable handling and treatment of females and minority youth.

Drawing upon concepts from the intersectionality approach and prior research, two general questions are examined. The first question assesses to what extent gender and race individually and in combination influence intake and adjudication decision making for those charged as a status offender? Expectations are that female status offenders and minority youth, especially Blacks, should receive severe intake and adjudication outcomes. The second research question asks if the observed gender and race relationships with court outcomes are more evident for certain gender/race combinations compared to others? It is expected that the joint effects of gender/race should result in differential outcomes once all relevant factors are considered. More specifically, it is anticipated that the Black female status offender will be the recipient of harsh outcomes compared to all other gender/race combinations (e.g., White female, Black male, Other female, etc.). While prior research is mixed concerning what gender/race combinations yield either harsh or lenient outcomes, we side with the intersectionality perspective and argue that Black females will subsequently receive more severe outcomes throughout juvenile justice proceedings (e.g., Leiber et al., 2009; Moore & Padivic, 2010).

**Method**

**Data**

Data for the present study come from two states in the mid-Atlantic region (State A and State B). All referrals to the juvenile court for status offenses starting in 2003 through 2008 in the largest six jurisdictions comprise the sample for State A ($N = 6,175$). All referrals for 2009 in seven counties with the largest African American population represent the sample for State B ($N = 1,604$). It is possible that the same youth was referred to the juvenile court for a status offense at multiple times during the selected time period; yet, this unit of analysis is common in studies of juvenile justice decision making (Armstrong & Rodriguez, 2005; Guevara et al., 2011; Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Rodriguez, 2007). The total sample size is 7,779. Case-level data were provided by each state’s central repository of juvenile justice information.
Variables

Table 1 presents the coding and distribution of the independent and dependent variables. Selection and operationalization of variables were based on theory and prior research (Bishop & Frazier, 1992, 1996; Freiburger & Burke, 2011). The gender distribution of the sample is 54% male and 46% female. Race was coded to distinguish between Whites (42%), Blacks (46%), and Other (12%). The Other category includes Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Other youth. Six dummy variables were created to represent interactions between race and gender: White males (23%), Black males (25%), White females (19%), Black females (21%), Other males (6%), and Other females (6%). While Other males and females comprise the smallest percentages of the sample, each group consists of 479 and 482 cases, respectively. The reference group for each of the dummy variables differed depending on the comparison being made (e.g., Black female to Other male), and will be identified throughout the analyses. The remaining independent variables are treated as controls. Control variables for prior referrals and age were coded as continuous measures. The range of the number prior referrals is between 0 and 10, while youth are between ages 8 and 18 in the present sample. The sample on average has 1.37 prior referrals and is 15 years of age. A control variable representing state is also included. A majority of the cases come from State A (79%).

We examine decision making at two processing junctures. The outcomes at both stages constitute the dependent variable. Initial processing decisions at intake were coded to differentiate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0—Male</td>
<td>4,193</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1—Female</td>
<td>3,586</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racea</td>
<td>0—White</td>
<td>3,259</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1—Black</td>
<td>3,559</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2—Other</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/gender subgroups</td>
<td>1—White Male</td>
<td>1,796</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1—Black Male</td>
<td>1,918</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1—White Female</td>
<td>1,463</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1—Black Female</td>
<td>1,641</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1—Other Male</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1—Other Female</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Controls</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior referrals (low–high)</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>M = 1.37</td>
<td>SD = 2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 0–10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (low–high)</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>M = 15.09</td>
<td>SD = 1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 8–18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
<td>0—State A</td>
<td>6,175</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1—State B</td>
<td>1,604</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intake</td>
<td>0—Release/diversion</td>
<td>4,261</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1—Referral</td>
<td>3,518</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjudication</td>
<td>0—No</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1—Yes</td>
<td>2,561</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Treated as dummy variable; reference category is White; Other category consists of Hispanic, Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Other.

Table 1. Description of Variables (N = 7,779).
between youth who were released or diverted from the juvenile justice system (coded 0) and those who were referred on to formal court processing (coded 1). Forty-five percent of youth were referred on at intake for further court proceedings. At the adjudicatory stage, outcomes were coded to differentiate between youth whose cases were dismissed (coded 0) and those who were adjudicated delinquent (coded 1). Seventy-three percent of youth who made it to the adjudication stage were subsequently adjudicated delinquent.

**Analysis Procedures**

First, logistic regression analyses were used to estimate the individual effects of gender, race, and control variables on decision making at intake and adjudication. The second step in the analyses involved the estimation of gender-specific models to examine in greater detail possible statistically significant gender/race differences among status offenders in predicting the dependent variables. This stage also included coefficient comparison tests involving z-scores to observe possible significant effects that may vary by gender/race when predicting both dependent variables (Paternoster, Brame, Mazerolle, & Piquero 1998).9 Finally, comparisons in the treatment of status offenders across subgroups (e.g., White female compared to Black male) were made when predicting intake and adjudication. An examination of multicollinearity diagnostics (variance inflation factor and tolerance) indicated acceptable levels of sharedness among the variables. All models include the control variables.10

**Results**

The additive and gender-specific logistic regression results predicting intake and adjudication decision making for status offenders is presented in Table 2. Contrary to expectations, gender does not have an additive effect that is statistically significant with either of the dependent variables after taking into consideration relevant controls (columns 1 and 4). The failure to find a main effect of gender with juvenile justice decision making among status offenders is consistent with the results reported by Freiburger and Burke (2011) and additional prior research (e.g., Cohen & Kluegel, 1979).

Blacks and Other minority youth are treated similarly compared to White youth at intake once controls are taken into account (column 1), and as shown in columns 2 and 3, these relationships are not conditioned by gender (Gender/Black, z-score = −1.41; Gender/Other, z-score = 1.03). Black status offenders, however, have an increased likelihood of being adjudicated, while there is a decreased likelihood of being adjudicated for Other minority youth (column 4). More specific, for Black status offenders, the chances of adjudication increase by 128% (column 4). Concerning Other minorities, there is a 46% decrease in the odds of receiving a severe adjudication outcome. Results from coefficient comparisons tests (z-scores) indicate a tempering effect by gender with adjudication, in that the relative impact of the positive relationship between Black youth and being adjudicated results in a stronger effect for females relative to males (columns 5 and 6). More specifically, Black females are significantly more likely to be adjudicated compared to Black male status offenders (z-score = −2.35). As presented in columns 5 and 6, the inverse effect between Other minority youth and an adjudicatory outcome is not conditioned by gender (z-score = −0.70).

Of the three control variables, prior referral has a positive main statistically significant relationship with the stage of intake (column 1) and an inverse main effect with decision making at adjudication (column 4). Younger status offenders have a decreased likelihood of being adjudicated compared to older status offenders (column 4). Finally, status offenders in State B have a 79% decreased odds of receiving an intake referral than those in State A, but youth in State B are almost 3 times more likely to be adjudicated compared to youth who reside in State A (columns 1 and 4).
None of the relationships concerning the control variables and intake and adjudication outcomes differ by being a male status offender or a female status offender, with the exception that a male status offender with a prior record is more likely to be referred on at intake compared to a similarly situated female.

Next, two-way interactions involving race and gender with decision making were estimated to compare the treatment of specific subgroups across intake and adjudication outcomes. Comparisons were estimated in order to determine whether different gender/race combinations resulted in diverse outcomes. Recall that the intersectionality perspective argues that an offender’s experiences in the juvenile justice system may vary by gender and race/ethnicity; therefore, it was predicted that a Black female status offender would be treated more harshly compared to all other gender/race combinations. The results are presented in Table 3. All models include the control variables.

Compared to White male status offenders, Black youth are more likely to be adjudicated (column 2). This result does not seem to be conditioned by gender, in that Black males are 86% more likely to be adjudicated, and Black females are almost 3 times more likely to be adjudicated compared to White males. Other minorities, irrespective of gender, have decreased odds of being adjudicated.

### Table 2. Logistic Regression Results for Decision Making: Main and Two-Way Interaction Effects Involving Gender and Race (N = 7,779).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Intake</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Adjudication</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main (1)</td>
<td>Male (2)</td>
<td>Female (3)</td>
<td>Z-Score</td>
<td>Main (4)</td>
<td>Male (5)</td>
<td>Female (6)</td>
<td>Z-Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.08a</td>
<td>(1.08)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>(1.10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>(.93)</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>(1.02)</td>
<td>.82*</td>
<td>(2.28)</td>
<td>.62*</td>
<td>(1.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>(1.09)</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>(1.19)</td>
<td>-.61*</td>
<td>(.54)</td>
<td>-.68*</td>
<td>(.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priors referrals</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>(1.04)</td>
<td>.06*</td>
<td>(1.07)</td>
<td>-.05*</td>
<td>(.95)</td>
<td>-.06*</td>
<td>(.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>(.99)</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>(1.03)</td>
<td>-.08*</td>
<td>(.92)</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td>(.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>-1.57*</td>
<td>(.21)</td>
<td>-1.37*</td>
<td>(25)</td>
<td>1.20*</td>
<td>(3.31)</td>
<td>1.64*</td>
<td>(5.17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Boldface indicates statistically significant findings in each model.

Regression coefficient; Exp(B) is presented in the parentheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Intake</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Adjudication</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main (1)</td>
<td>Male (2)</td>
<td>Female (3)</td>
<td>Z-Score</td>
<td>Main (4)</td>
<td>Male (5)</td>
<td>Female (6)</td>
<td>Z-Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.08a</td>
<td>(1.08)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>(1.10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>(.93)</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>(1.02)</td>
<td>.82*</td>
<td>(2.28)</td>
<td>.62*</td>
<td>(1.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>(1.09)</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>(1.19)</td>
<td>-.61*</td>
<td>(.54)</td>
<td>-.68*</td>
<td>(.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priors referrals</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>(1.04)</td>
<td>.06*</td>
<td>(1.07)</td>
<td>-.05*</td>
<td>(.95)</td>
<td>-.06*</td>
<td>(.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>(.99)</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>(1.03)</td>
<td>-.08*</td>
<td>(.92)</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td>(.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>-1.57*</td>
<td>(.21)</td>
<td>-1.37*</td>
<td>(25)</td>
<td>1.20*</td>
<td>(3.31)</td>
<td>1.64*</td>
<td>(5.17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Boldface indicates statistically significant findings in each model.

Regression coefficient; Exp(B) is presented in the parentheses.

Indicates a significant coefficient difference (p < .05).

*p < .01.

None of the relationships concerning the control variables and intake and adjudication outcomes differ by being a male status offender or a female status offender, with the exception that a male status offender with a prior record is more likely to be referred on at intake compared to a similarly situated female.

Next, two-way interactions involving race and gender with decision making were estimated to compare the treatment of specific subgroups across intake and adjudication outcomes. Comparisons were estimated in order to determine whether different gender/race combinations resulted in diverse outcomes. Recall that the intersectionality perspective argues that an offender’s experiences in the juvenile justice system may vary by gender and race/ethnicity; therefore, it was predicted that a Black female status offender would be treated more harshly compared to all other gender/race combinations. The results are presented in Table 3. All models include the control variables.

An examination of column 1 representing the stage of intake reveals the presence of only 4 statistically significant effects of the 15 comparisons. A Black male status offender has a 22% decreased chance of receiving an intake referral compared to a White female status offender. The appearance of leniency at intake to the Black male status offender seems to extend when comparisons are made to the Black female and Other minority youth, regardless of gender. Thus, a Black female, Other male, and Other female are more likely to receive an intake referral compared to a Black male status offender. Of the effects that are statistically significant, the findings in regard to gender are consistent with the research hypotheses and prior research, as White, Black, Other female status offenders are more likely to receive an intake referral compared to Black males (e.g., Bishop & Frazier, 1992, 1996).

Compared to White male status offenders, Black youth are more likely to be adjudicated (column 2). This result does not seem to be conditioned by gender, in that Black males are 86% more likely to be adjudicated, and Black females are almost 3 times more likely to be adjudicated compared to White males. Other minorities, irrespective of gender, have decreased odds of being adjudicated.
compared to White males. No statistically significant differences exist in adjudication outcomes when comparisons are made between White females and White males. Compared to White female status offenders, both Black males and Black females are treated harsher at the stage of adjudication, with both gender/race subgroups being over 2 times more likely to be adjudicated compared to White females. In contrast, Other minority males and females are less likely to receive this outcome compared to their White female counterpart.

Among minorities and as discovered in Table 2, being a Black female increases the odds of being adjudicated relative to a Black male by 46%. Other male and Other female minority youth are less likely to be adjudicated compared to a Black male status offender, by 72% and 70%, respectively. Black female status offenders are also over 5 times more likely than Other males and 4 times more likely than Other female youth to be adjudicated.

In summary, neither race nor gender individually impact decision making at the stage of intake. However, the combination of being Black and male increased the likelihood of receiving leniency in the form of release or diversion at intake. At the stage of adjudication, and irrespective of gender, Blacks are likely to receive the more severe outcome of adjudication when compared to Whites and Other minorities. Among Blacks, a female has increased odds of being adjudicated compared to all other race/gender comparisons, including the Black male status offender. The finding that Black females are subject to harsh treatment at adjudication is consistent with the research hypotheses in that Black females are more likely to be adjudicated compared to all other gender/race dyads. Finally, among Other minority youth, both boys and girls are less likely to be adjudicated compared to both White and Black status offenders. No differences were found to exist in adjudication outcomes by gender among Other minority youth.

Table 3. Logistic Regression Coefficients for Subgroup Interactions Involving Race/Gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Intake (1)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Adjudication (2)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White male reference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black male</td>
<td>-.14* (.87)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.62* (1.86)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White female</td>
<td>-.01 (.98)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.19 (.83)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other male</td>
<td>.17 (1.18)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.68* (.51)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black female</td>
<td>.09 (1.09)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.99* (2.69)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other female</td>
<td>.10 (1.11)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.67* (.51)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White female reference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black male</td>
<td>-.24* (.78)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.70* (2.02)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black female</td>
<td>.02 (1.02)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.08* (2.95)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other male</td>
<td>.08 (1.08)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.57* (.53)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other female</td>
<td>.02 (1.03)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.52* (.60)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black male reference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black female</td>
<td>.19* (1.21)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.38* (1.46)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other male</td>
<td>.33* (1.39)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.29* (.28)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other female</td>
<td>.28* (1.32)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.22* (.30)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other male reference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black female</td>
<td>-.06 (.94)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.66* (5.25)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other female</td>
<td>-.08 (.92)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.04 (1.04)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other female reference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black female</td>
<td>.03 (1.03)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.58* (4.85)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Boldface indicates statistically significant findings in each model.
All regression models include the control variables.
*Regression coefficient; Exp(β) is presented in parentheses.
*p < .01.
Discussion

An interpretation of the intersectionality perspective framed the present study, with a focus on the potential multiple and intersecting inequalities concerning court outcomes within a “race/gender/crime nexus” (Chesney-Lind, 2006, p. 10). In conjunction with results from prior research (e.g., Bishop & Frazier, 1992; Freiburger & Burke, 2011), two research questions were examined. These two questions focused on the individual and joint relationships between gender and race with intake and adjudication decision making and whether the observed relationships were more evident for certain gender/race combinations compared to others. More specific, the research examined the extent status offense case outcomes were tempered by being a female and/or a minority, especially being a Black female. Overall and although not consistent with all expectations, the results show individually and in combination the continued influence of gender and race on processing decisions at intake and adjudication. These relationships, for the most part, seem to effect adjudication decision making more so at the stage of intake. It was expected that the influence of gender and race would affect both decision-making stages; yet, the present study found more support for the research expectations when examining the decision to adjudicate youth.

Consistent with some research (e.g., Freiburger & Burke, 2011) but inconsistent with other studies (e.g., Mallicoat, 2007), few gender or race differences were found in the treatment of status offenders at intake. Blacks in general and a Black female status offender, however, were over 2 times more likely to be adjudicated than both Whites and a Black male status offender, respectively. When specific gender/race combinations were examined, the Black female status offender was consistently the recipient of harsh treatment at adjudication compared to all other gender/race dyads, including the Black male status offender.

Although the findings are not always consistent with prior research or even the expectations driving the present study, they are consistent with a significant body of literature showing the continued presence of differential treatment contingent upon gender, race, and in some instances the combination of the two with justice outcomes (Bishop & Frazier, 1992; Freiburger & Burke, 2011; Graham & Lowery, 2004; Guevara et al., 2006, 2011; Harris, 2007, 2009; Leiber et al., 2009; Leiber & Peck, in press; Pope & Feyerherm, 1992). Concomitantly, findings of outcomes involving both leniency and harshness for girls, Blacks, and Other minorities is also consistent with prior research (e.g., Bishop et al., 2010; Freiburger & Burke, 2011; Leiber & Mack, 2003; Moore & Padavic, 2010).

It may be that a contextual explanation can provide insights into the variable presence of gender and race with decision making. One such approach has been to view juvenile court proceedings as a “loosely coupled system,” comprised of different stages in the proceedings made up of different decision makers, goals, and objectives (e.g., Bishop et al., 2010; Freiburger & Jordan, 2011; Hagan, 1974; Harris, 2009; Singer, 1996; Rodriguez, 2007). This explanation may explain the inconsistency in the treatment of disadvantaged youth and in this case, females, Blacks, and Other minority youth. More specific, at intake where discretion is pervasive, the primary focus is the notion of individualized treatment based on the decisions of probation and intake officers. At petition, the prosecutors focus is on community interests in retribution and social defense, while at adjudication, judges stress accountability and a reliance on legal criteria (Harris, 2007; Singer, 1996). Discretion is more constrained at these two stages compared to intake, and in some places, detention. At judicial disposition, judges are likely to attempt to balance between individual needs and treatment planning (Harris, 2007; Sanborn & Salerno, 2005). Parallel to the stage of intake, judicial disposition is best described as loosely coupled. Stages where discretion is most prominent allows for a greater possibility of a reliance on typescripts and attributions linked to offender characteristics. Some of these characteristics include stereotypes tied to gender, race/ethnicity, and class (Bishop et al., 2010; Gaarder et al., 2004; Rodriguez, 2007).
Although relatively still in the infancy stage of development and empirical examination, this line of thinking provides some contexts and understanding of the presence of gender/race findings that vary from one stage to the next. For the purpose of this study, the perspective, for example, gives insights into the findings that Black males receive leniency at intake and both Black females and males receive a severe outcome at adjudication. In addition, Other minorities are more likely to receive a referral at intake, yet receive leniency at adjudication. The findings of leniency at intake for Black males could reflect probation or intake officers compensating or “correcting” for gender and racial inequities that occurred at arrest. For minority status offenders other than Blacks, a similar correction could be taking place at adjudication. Others have offered a similar explanation to account for variability in the severity/leniency of case outcomes (e.g., Bishop et al., 2010; Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; MacDonald & Chesney-Lind, 2001; Rodriguez, 2007, 2010).

Concomitantly, the findings that Other and Black status offenders receive severe outcomes at either intake and/or adjudication also fit into this contextual framework, as gender/racial stereotyping is assumed to be part of the decision-making process (Bishop et al., 2010; Freiburger & Burke, 2011; Leiber et al., 2009; Moore & Padavic, 2010). Prior research, for example, has reported that at the front end of the system (intake) leniency may be given due to assumptions that girls should be given “the benefit of the doubt” or are “incapable of committing crime” but as they move further into the system (adjudication) females are subjected to more punishment because of beliefs that girls who get this deep in are “very problematic” or “difficult cases” (e.g., Leiber & Mack, 2003). The findings pertaining to Black female status offenders at adjudication also conform to perceptions of criminality and/or being more problematic and thus should be responded to severely (e.g., Bishop & Frazier, 1992, 1996; Feld, 1999; Graham & Lowery, 2004). Overall, the findings highlight the complexity of decision making and the need to examine multiple stages and the intersections of gender and race.

The present study is not without limitations. Important measures including the youth’s family, living, and school situation were missing from the current research. These variables have been found in prior research to disadvantage minority youth throughout various court proceedings (Bishop, 2005; Rodriguez, Smith, & Zatz, 2009). In addition, there is the potential for the discretion of the youth and his or her parent to affect decision-making outcomes, which can lead to the disadvantage of certain gender/racial groups. For example, status offenders may be given the option of diversion rather than to continue on into the system; however, they must accept some responsibility and culpability for the offense to receive diversion. There may be personal, cultural, or class dynamics between the youth, parents, and decision makers that preclude youth from agreeing to diversion (see also Bishop, 2005; Leiber, 1994). The study was also limited in that the Other minority group category was collapsed to include Hispanic, Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Other youth. There may be differences in the way that Hispanic status offenders are treated compared to Native American youth; yet, the limited number of Other minority cases precluded the examination of additional racial/ethnic groups.

In addition, the present study combined data from two mid-Atlantic states. While each state was controlled for in statistical analyses, there may be inherent differences between each state which could have contributed to the results. For example, youth residing in State B were more likely to be released or diverted from the system at intake; yet, those who reached the adjudication stage were subsequently adjudicated guilty. Due to confidentiality agreements, detailed information about the contextual composition of each state cannot be described; however, it is important to note that there are potential community-level differences between each state. For example, the counties included in the analyses for State A are more urban in nature, have a larger overall population, larger Black population, and smaller percentage of individuals living below the poverty line compared to the counties included in the analyses for State B (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Although speculative, jurisdictions that differ along these contextual dimensions have resulted in the disadvantage of minority youth
(Armstrong & Rodriguez, 2005; Sampson & Laub, 1993). Therefore, it is possible that the states are different in a way that may influence gender and/or race bias that occurs throughout decision making. A task for future research is to consider the potential impact of state differences across decision-making outcomes.

The task for future research is to replicate and attempt to further clarify these results. One possible strategy would be to include a greater number of stages (e.g., detention, petition, judicial disposition) and juvenile court jurisdictions. A second suggestion would be to assess the influence of historical, structural, and organizational contexts on decision making and social control. As mentioned earlier, data on assessments concerning the family, school status, and if a status offender, the specific reason/ reasons or behavior for the referral (See Freiburger & Burke, 2011), should be incorporated to examine whether the findings reported in the present study hold. It may be that a Black female runaway is treated differently compared to a White male truant. In addition, future research could benefit by a more detailed inquiry into decision-makers’ perceptions regarding the intersectionality and interplay between gender and race. For example, how these beliefs are tied to or shaped by notions concerning criminality and sexuality and, in turn, influence their responses when dealing with youth involved in status offending, as well as various types of delinquent offending, probation violations, and contempt cases.

Despite the need for further research, the results confirm that individually and in combination gender and race still influence decision making. While the more equitable treatment of status offenders regardless of gender and race at the stage of intake compared to adjudication may be attributable to the efforts put forth by the JJDP Act, more research in this area is still needed. The relationships involving gender and race vary and reveal that decision making is multifaceted and although speculative, are theorized to be tied to stereotypical perceptions and beliefs. The policy implications of the findings center on the continued need to strive for the equitable treatment of all youth irrespective of gender and race.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests
The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding
The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes
1. Status offenses are noncriminal misbehaviors, such as “incorrigibility,” “immorality,” truancy, running away, and “indecent and lascivious conduct” that would not be crimes if committed by adults (Feld, 2004; Holden & Kapler, 1995).
2. Many reasons have been used to explain the decreased presence of status offenders in the juvenile court. Most notably, the deinstitutionalization of status offenders by the 1974 federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) requires status offenders to be removed from juvenile detention and correctional facilities (Holden & Kapler, 1995). This mandate, however, has been argued by some researchers as encouraging “bootstrapping” or upgrading status offenders to delinquents (Feld, 2009). While “bootstrapping” does decrease the presence of status offenders, a 1980 amendment to the JJDP Act allowed states to continue to confine status offenders if they violated a “valid court order” or charged with contempt (Bishop & Frazier, 1992; Hoyt & Scherer, 1998; Schwartz, 1989). In addition, youth may be charged with a delinquent act (i.e., simple assault) instead of a status offense (i.e., incorrigibility) which leads to youth being labeled as delinquent rather than a status offender (Chesney-Lind & Belknap, 2004; Feld, 2009).
3. The intersectionality perspective has included sexuality and ability as additional forms of social locations.
4. While prior research has found social class to be an important element of the intersectionality perspective (Abrams, 2002; Bourgois, 2006; Wilson, 1996), data limitations precluded the use of economic conditions in the present study.

5. The counties that comprise State A are also the six counties with the largest African American population. The racial composition of the counties included in both States A and B were determined by the population data from the 2000 census.

6. The Other category is collapsed due to a small number of cases that represent Hispanic, Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Other youth. There were not enough cases within the individual groups to warrant enough power to include them separately in the analyses.

7. Since the primary focus of the research is to examine the effects of gender and race on juvenile court outcomes, it is not advantageous to separate the analyses to test for year and/or jurisdictional effects. Preliminary tests for year differences indicated no significant differences across time, and there were not enough cases in each county (at least 200 court referrals) to separate the analyses out by jurisdiction. In order to increase statistical power, cases throughout all years and jurisdictions were collapsed.

8. Due to data limitations, only two processing stages can be examined. Open cases and incomplete data precluded the use of secure detention and judicial disposition as additional outcome variables. More specifically, information on secure detention was not available for one of the states, and 40% of the cases from the stages of adjudication to judicial disposition were missing in the other state. In order to be confident in the results of the current research, the author’s chose to exclude secure detention or judicial disposition due to the number of missing cases.

9. The purpose of coefficient comparison tests is to test the significant difference between two regression coefficients. More specifically, this tests for the equality of the regression coefficient and its invariance across gender and race.

10. All regression results are available from the first author on request.

11. It is important to note that there may also be an additional correction effect occurring at the adjudication stage, as there was a statistically significant negative relationship between prior referrals and the decision to adjudicate. Another potential reason for the positive effect of prior referrals at intake and negative effect at adjudication is that the juvenile court may attempt to “scare” status offenders at intake by referring them on to further court proceedings, then judges subsequently decide to not adjudicate youth for the status offense, even though they may have a history of prior referrals. While legal factors are normally the strongest predictors of severe court outcomes for delinquent offenses, there may be differences in outcomes between the treatment of status offenders with prior referrals compared to delinquent offenders with prior referrals (Harris, 2007).

References


**Author Biographies**

Jennifer H. Peck is an assistant professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida Atlantic University. Her recent research has been accepted for publication in *Crime & Delinquency, Deviant Behavior,* and the *Journal of Family Violence.* Her research interests include the role of race and ethnicity in the juvenile justice system and criminological theory.

Michael J. Leiber is Interim Chair and professor in criminology at the University of South Florida. He earned his doctorate in criminal justice from the State University of New York at Albany. His main research interests and publications lie in juvenile delinquency, juvenile justice, and race/ethnicity. Currently, he serves as the editor of the Midwestern Criminal Justice Association journal, the *Journal of Crime & Justice.*

Sarah Jane Brubaker is an associate professor and associate director in the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University. She conducts research in the areas of adolescent sexuality and pregnancy, especially among African American girls, girls and juvenile justice, and gender and medicalization. Her research has been published in the *Journal of Marriage and Family, Gender & Society,* and *Feminist Criminology.*