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## Effect of Detention Facilities Toward Juvenile Delinquency and Exposure to Criminalization

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*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

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Calvin Clark, Jr.

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Walden University  
2023

Abstract

Effect of Detention Facilities Toward Juvenile Delinquency and Exposure to  
Criminalization

by

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MS, Saint Leo University, Chesapeake Campus, 2014

BA, Hampton University, 2011

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

May 2023

## Abstract

Detention facility settings present opportunities and risks in relation to violent extremism. Criminalization as the main concern would increase the crime rates in the United States while allowing the formation of terrorist groups on U.S. soil. The purpose of this quantitative cross-sectional study was to investigate the relationship between juveniles' experiences in detention centers and their exposure to criminalization. The study was guided by social control theory, narrative theory, and differential opportunity theory. Data were collected using a survey of 15 juvenile detention officers. Results of correlation analyses indicated a significant relationship between detention experience and increased exposure to criminalization among juveniles. The findings highlight the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of detention centers in preventing or reducing criminal behavior among juveniles. Findings may also be used to develop effective interventions to support juveniles in detention centers, reduce the risk of criminalization, and provide positive social change.

Relationship Between Detention Facility Experiences of Juvenile Delinquents and Their

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

*Juvenile delinquency* refers to the participation of a child between the ages of 10 and 17 years in illegal activities or behavior (Bhatta et al., 2014). Borum and Patterson (2019) defined juvenile delinquency as a case in which a child exhibits persistent behavior of disobedience and mischievousness. Juvenile delinquents are usually considered to be out of parental control and subject to the legal system, such as detention facilities. States have different strategies for dealing with juvenile delinquents. Some of the most common causes of juvenile delinquency include economic problems, substance abuse, physical abuse, lack of adult interaction, peer pressure, and school problems (García-Carrión et al., 2018). These children often show aggressive behaviors, making them highly vulnerable to criminalization. Criminalization in this context refers to a phased process in which previous behaviors of an individual or group of individuals are transformed into crimes, whereby individuals are considered criminals (Juárez et al., 2018). The criminalization process differs from one individual to another, but in most cases, it involves a combination of shared behavioral traits, structural grievances, and politicized unifying ideology. Within detention facilities, juveniles live with individuals who may have been criminalized (Robles-Ramamurthy & Watson, 2019). As a result, juveniles become exposed to individuals or settings that challenge their established norms and values.

Juvenile delinquents in juvenile detention facilities face different challenges in relation to access to quality health care. Though access to health care is a basic human right and one of the necessities of healthy living, children in detention often do not receive sufficient health care, especially adequate mental health care (Capano &

Molenkamp, 2018). Without adequate health care, these children are more vulnerable to psychological disorders, making them disproportionately susceptible to violence and criminalization. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2017) highlighted that the juvenile justice system (i.e., detention, probation, and youth correctional facilities) is faced with the responsibility to provide adequate mental health assessments and treatment to all its clients. Multiple studies have shown that certain types of mental disorders are common with youth offenders, while some symptoms increase the risk of young individuals engaging in aggressive behaviors (International Juvenile Justice Observatory [IJJO], n.d.; Schaefer & Erickson, 2016). Aggression risks increase when an individual is suffering from comorbid disorders due to emotional symptoms, such as anger, and self-regulatory symptoms, such as impulsivity. Schaefer and Erickson (2016) found mental health disorders (i.e., depression, psychotic disorders, anxiety disorders, substance use disorders, and disruptive disorders) to be higher among youth offenders. In the current study, I addressed the risks and opportunities of violent extremism by examining the relationship between detention facilities and juvenile delinquency and the exposure to criminalization to address a gap in the literature.

In this chapter, I introduce the study. The background section includes a brief analysis of the research literature and a description of the gap in the research regarding the effects of detention facilities on juvenile delinquents and exposure of juveniles to criminalization. This chapter also includes the problem statement, purpose statement, research question and hypotheses, theoretical framework, nature of the study, operational definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance. A summary concludes the chapter.

## **Background**

Detention facility settings present opportunities and risks in relation to violent extremism. Detention facilities have the twofold mission of protecting society through the confinement of offenders in safe, humane, and secure facilities and ensuring that offenders actively participate in programs assisting law-abiding citizens upon returning to their communities. According to Bhatta et al. (2014), the juvenile justice system acts as rehabilitative and preventative measures for juvenile delinquency. The system should focus on the needs and rights of children rather than punishing them. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 highlighted that the goal of the juvenile justice system should be a diversion of youths from formal and punitive approaches associated with the adult justice system. The Act also promoted community-based programs over large institutions for juveniles. As the rate of delinquency increased, the need to protect the community became the system's primary goal. However, poor management of detention facilities could make them potent breeding grounds for criminalization. Violent extremist ideologies are often present in these settings to manipulate young offenders' beliefs and values (McGregor et al., 2015). There is a high likelihood that many children will adopt radical views while in the juvenile justice system. Although the effect of detention facilities on juvenile delinquency and exposure to criminalization is not known, the detention facility environment poses significant threats to juvenile offenders.

Research findings showed that prisons and juvenile detention facilities played a crucial role in initiating and reinforcing the criminalization process (Capano & Molenkamp, 2018; McGregor et al., 2015). With the studies covering different jurisdictions, it is believed that the number of prisoners and juvenile detainees engaging

in violent extremist and terrorist offenses is increasing globally (García-Carrión et al., 2018). There is a growing concern that criminalized prisoners are spreading extremist ideologies among other prisoners, and the influenced detainees are engaging in extremist activities upon release. In this regard, the treatment of juvenile detainees is a defining issue in the development of juvenile justice policy that ensures rehabilitation and reintegration into society without compromising the safety and security of the public.

Detention facility criminalization does not always lead to terrorist activities being routinely plotted in these settings (Crone, 2016). More often, these children grow up with adopted radical ideologies, which may lead to terrorism after release or sometimes in the future, and eventually criminalization. Bhatta et al. (2014) suggested that criminalization in detention facilities is possible because these are places where disaffected, violent individuals are concentrated to be punished by the state. Individuals in those settings develop a mental state that is receptive to antisocial and anti-state ideologies. It is easier for these individuals to adopt intolerant solutions to complex problems of belonging and identity. Also, recruiters can leverage the detainees' anger, frustration, and sense of injustice to promote an extremist agenda.

Researchers indicated that 15%–30% of youths involved in the juvenile justice systems were diagnosed with depression, while 13% were diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. For example, van de Weert and Eijkman (2019) found that the rate of conduct disorders and substance use disorders was high in the juvenile courts. These data may not suggest a causal relationship between the variables, except for more prevalent mental illnesses and terrorism rates among juveniles in detention centers than those in the community. Lack of proper mental health assessments and treatment within

the juvenile justice system could lead to a greater risk of aggressive behavior, violence, and extremism. Detention facilities can be initiation environments for juvenile delinquency and criminalization (Corner & Gill, 2015). Given the revolving nature of prison and detention facilities' populations, these settings serve as a continuous supply of potential new converts. Without effective management of individuals within detention facilities, criminalization and extremism problems may grow worse. On the other hand, well-managed detention facilities provide effective programs and policies that positively influence a detainee's behavior (Barnert et al., 2016). Although detention facilities are not the only place where violent extremist criminalization occurs, they are part of the solution. To address the problem of criminalization and juvenile delinquency, researchers should examine the contribution of these detention facilities toward criminalization. Based on this justification, I examined the relationship between detention facilities, juvenile delinquency, and exposure to criminalization.

### **Problem Statement**

Detention plays a vital role in youth criminalization (Capano & Molenkamp, 2018). Studies conducted on the key factors influencing the criminalization and extreme violence among youths indicated that most criminalized juveniles have a history of detention, and the time served in detention played a significant role in their criminalization process (Kysel, 2012). Many factors contribute to the criminalization of juveniles in detention centers. These factors, according to reports, include exposure to bad treatment and extreme violence and being in contact with terrorist detainees or situations that affect their mental and emotional health (Corner & Gill, 2015). The seriousness of juvenile criminalization constitutes a threat to global security.

Disconnected juveniles between 14 and 17 years of age who are not in school are likely to end up in juvenile detention centers.

Violent conditions that juveniles are exposed to, including aggression and violations of human rights, impact them in various ways. Not only is their mental health affected, but they are also exposed to situations that are beyond their age (Verbeeck, 2017). The United States is experiencing an increasing number of juveniles in detention centers, which can be attributed to poverty, family background, religious discrimination, and other issues related to education and economic and political marginalization (Abrahams, 2020). Criminalization as the main concern would increase the crime rate in the United States while allowing the formation of terrorist groups on U.S. soil. Many studies have been conducted to assess the factors causing many juveniles to end up in detention centers, but few have addressed how youths in detention are likely to be exposed to criminalization and how this constitutes a serious security threat to the United States (Verbeeck, 2017). I used a quantitative method to evaluate the relationship between experiences in juvenile detention centers and exposure to criminalization. I performed a correlation analysis to examine the relationship between the independent variable (background in the detention facility) and the dependent variable (exposure to criminalization) to achieve the objective of this study.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative cross-sectional study was to investigate the relationship between the conditions and treatment that juveniles are exposed to in detention centers and juvenile delinquents' exposure to criminalization. I examined the

way criminalization of poverty occurs in the United States, especially when it comes to marginalized youths, and the reasons why this phenomenon occurs. I sought to examine the process of criminalization of this group to identify a solution to the challenges provided by a state structure that does not allow the equalization of economic and social differences less the insertion of all citizens within the social dynamics. The prison solution is thought to be the most efficient way to deal with criminals. I sought to examine the perceived influence of detention facilities on the juvenile's emotional, physical, and mental health and how this relates to criminalization. I examined the relationship between conditions and treatment at detention facilities and juveniles' exposure to criminalization. I used a quantitative approach adopting a cross-sectional design to address the gap in the literature with regard to how detention facilities contribute to the criminalization of juveniles. I developed a survey to examine juveniles' perceptions of the juvenile detention officers and those who had gone through the detention centers as juveniles.

Within the detention facilities, juveniles live with individuals who may have the capacity to influence their behaviors and perceptions (Barnert et al., 2016). As a result, juveniles become exposed to individuals or settings that challenge their established norms and values. Juvenile delinquents in juvenile detention facilities face different challenges in relation to access to quality health care. Though access to health care is a basic human right and one of the necessities of healthy living, children in detention often do not receive adequate health care, especially good mental healthcare (Capano & Molenkamp, 2018). Without adequate health care, these children are more vulnerable to psychological disorders, making them disproportionately susceptible to violence and criminalization.

UNODC (2017) highlighted that the juvenile justice system (i.e., detention, probation, and youth correctional facilities) is faced with the responsibility to provide adequate mental health assessments and treatment to all of its clients. Multiple studies have shown that certain types of mental disorders are common with youth offenders, and some symptoms increase the risk of young individuals engaging in aggressive behaviors (IJJO, n.d.; Schaefer & Erickson, 2016).

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between experiences at detention facilities of juvenile delinquents and their exposure to criminalization. Previous studies that the experiences and conditions within the detention facilities could have considerable effects on children's behavior and mental health (IJJO, n.d.; Schaefer & Erickson, 2016). I examined the relationship between these experiences in juvenile detention and criminalization. I addressed the following research question (RQ) and hypotheses:

RQ: What is the relationship between the experiences of juveniles in juvenile detention centers and exposure to criminalization?

$H_0$ : There is no statistically significant relationship between the detention experiences of juveniles and their exposure to criminalization.

$H_a$ : There is a statistically significant relationship between the detention experiences of juveniles and their exposure to criminalization.

### **Theoretical Framework**

I used three major sociological theories to guide the study: (a) social control theory, (b) narrative theory, and (c) differential opportunity theory. Social control theory

describes an individual's behavior, which is dependent on their relationship with others and their traditions and beliefs, preventing them from breaking the law, thereby providing social order (Agnew, 2019). When an individual's bond to society and its beliefs breaks, they have the propensity to break the law. At an individual level, having no goals or means implies that the individual is uncommitted and uncontrolled (Hirschi, 2017). Proponents of this theory argued that, without control, an individual is likely to develop delinquent behavior (Henry & Lanier, 2018). Some forms of control adopted to prevent delinquency include involvement in schools and other activities, attachment to family and friends, and belief in certain values and principles. In cases in which a child is exhibiting delinquent behavior, detention facilities act as a form of control.

As the control accumulates, conformity also increases. The social control theory explains that when an individual is more committed and involved in their social values and belief systems, they are less likely to adopt delinquent behaviors (García-Carrión et al., 2018). This theory posits that certain goals and means are needed to eliminate certain constraining elements of the social bond. Criminalization within a social setting, such as a detention center, can also be explained in terms of a lack of social controls within such environments. Criminalization can also be explained as a process of developing extremist beliefs, emotions, and behaviors and later transforming such behaviors into crime (Barnert et al., 2016).

In this current study, the extremist beliefs were described as profound convictions opposing the fundamental values of society, democracy, and universal human rights while advocating for the supremacy of one group. These extremist emotions and behaviors could be expressed in violent and nonviolent pressure, such as coercion.

Actions that deviate from society's norms and show contempt for the value of life, freedom, and human rights are adopted. Negatively influenced individuals tend to have weaker social controls and strong social learning of violence. UNODC (2017) supported the role of control and learning processes in predicting violent and nonviolent extremism. The social control theory explains how an individual's behavior can be influenced by their society and the beliefs and culture they have, which shape their morals. I used this theory as a framework for the study because it provided guidance on how juvenile delinquents commit acts that lead to violence and criminalization. The theory helped me explain how juvenile detention facilities may influence the behavior of youths.

The narrative theory explains how an individual illustrates their life experiences through anecdotes, stories, and other forms of media and how an interviewer or a researcher analyzes these stories to have a deeper understanding of the causes and motivating factors of their behavior (Goodson, 2013). The theory is concerned with the storied nature of human conduct. For instance, narrative theorists argue that experiences from observing stories or listening to stories of others play a significant role in shaping an individual's behavior. Narratives and stories from the detention center can play a vital role in the criminalization of young offenders (Henry & Lanier, 2018). The researcher can use the narrative approach in data collection to analyze participants' responses to determine the effect of detention facilities on the well-being of youths in detention centers. Individuals who reject society's values but respect the rule of law often try to bring change through political processes. On the other hand, extremists view violence as the most appropriate means to address societal issues (Crone, 2016). When juveniles are

negatively influenced in a setting, they become more tolerant of violence as a legitimate means of achieving political goals.

Juvenile delinquents can develop an entrenched sense of us-versus-them thinking when exposed to extremist ideologues. This scenario is often fueled by juveniles being in dense and closed-off settings with ideologues. The statement that criminalization is a context-bound phenomenon supports the argument that detention facilities could be breeding grounds for criminalization (Petersen, 2020). Causes of criminalization are not only individual psychological factors but also global, political, and sociological drivers. Structural factors that instill a sense of injustice, such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, and polarized settings, are the main facilitators of criminalization. Criminalization can also be promoted by political messages and trigger events. Differential opportunity theorists argue that a person must first understand the different forms of delinquency and criminal behavior before considering different opportunities that may lead to them. Bhatta et al. (2014) highlighted those different types of community settings lead to varying subcultural responses among individuals.

Lane (2015) suggested that at least three types of responses predominate and lead to distinct subcultures: (a) stable criminal, (b) conflict, and (c) retreats. A stable criminal subculture is defined as the type of subculture that offers the best opportunities for the individual's economic mobility. According to Blair (2013), this subculture emerges when there is some coordination between legitimate and illegitimate roles within society. For example, criminal gangs often work together with police and politicians to realize their goals. In these cases, the legitimate systems ensure that a stable pattern is established, which can allow opportunities to advance from adolescent to adult levels while staying in

the criminal underworld. Legitimate and illegitimate opportunity structures are, in a way, connected, making it safer for individuals to become criminals and providing a reliable route for upward mobility of aspiring criminals to emerge (Schaefer & Erickson, 2016). Violence and conflict are some of the features associated with young men who operate within both legitimate and illegitimate enterprises. Though studies indicated that violence is restrained when the two enterprises coexist, in disorganized settings where spheres of activities are not linked, violence can still reign uncontrolled (Smit & Bijleveld, 2015). On the other hand, conflict subculture results from the disorganization of community settings, leading to street gangs who participate in violent activities, making streets unsafe but more profitable for crime.

In the Western context, prisons and detention facilities provide disorganized settings that make it easier for extremist recruitment. In these settings, an individual can be persuaded to adopt rigid religious beliefs, which can make them turn away from crime, drugs, and alcohol and start a new life (Capano & Molenkamp, 2018). However, this new life could involve the use of violence and other criminal activities in the name of fighting for social justice or the rights of a particular social or cultural group. Detained extremists are often motivated and charismatic individuals, considering promoting behavioral change as their religious duty and a means to fight back against corrupt sociopolitical systems of the world (Smit & Bijleveld, 2015). However, many individuals who adopt these extremist positions in detention centers often discard the beliefs when reintegrated back into society out of conviction or for more pragmatic reasons. Lane (2015) indicated that those who proceed with extremist ideas suffer from mental health problems in most cases. The retreatism subculture consists of adolescents who fail in their efforts to

associate with both legitimate and illegitimate opportunity structures (Corner & Gill, 2015). These adolescents consider themselves failures and indulge in drug abuse and other forms of escape. The three theories were used to examine how the experiences and settings within the detention facility can make them environments for criminalization and violent extremism.

Prisons are the leading recruitment centers for terrorist activities, especially in Europe and the United States (McGregor et al., 2015). According to McGregor et al. (2015), extremists can take advantage of the lax rules and practices in Western prisons and detention centers to recruit new members. These findings suggest that detention facilities may have a similar effect on juveniles. Studies indicated that no matter how different the extremist causes were, detention or imprisonment can traumatize any individual, making them more susceptible to dangerous ideologies. In general, detention facility environments are unsettling, and children are more likely to explore new beliefs and associations (Blair, 2013). When these young people are confronted with existential questions and are deprived of their established social networks, they become involved in politically motivated violence, increasing their vulnerability to criminalization and recruitment into terrorism. Detention facilities and related settings should be viewed as places of vulnerability in which criminalization occurs (Marshall & Mason, 1968). In all three theories, values and beliefs within a particular social setting play a vital role in developing delinquency. The theories reveal that the existence of success, goals, and values without the means to attain them could lead to deviant behavior similar to when these goals and values are absent. In the current study, I examined these values and the role of detention facilities in transmitting them.

Although several sociological theories on delinquency and the emergence of a sense of convergence among major theoretical traditions exist, knowledge on the causes of juvenile delinquency was incomplete. On their own, these theories are incapable of explaining and addressing contemporary problems such as why youths come out of the detention center extremist and violent. Most of these theories fail to explain why delinquents drop some of their aggressive and violent behavior when they become adults. I integrated sociological theories to understand the relationship between juvenile detention experiences and criminalization. These theories provided important insights into the increase in the number of young individuals taking part in criminal activities, such as robbery and terrorism. The theories helped me to contribute to the public policies concerning juvenile delinquents in the detention centers. Through improved understanding of how detention centers impact the health of youths, policies regarding juvenile delinquency and rehabilitation may be developed to improve the health of the detainees. This study may contribute to the policies concerning national security to prevent criminalization among youths in detention centers.

### **Nature of the Study**

I applied quantitative methodology to examine the relationship between juveniles' experience of detention facilities and exposure to criminalization. I evaluated the direction and nature of the relationship between the variables. I performed a correlation analysis between the independent variable (experiences in the detention facility) and dependent variable (exposure to criminalization) to achieve the objective of this study. Many studies have been conducted to assess the factors leading juveniles to end up in detention centers, but few researchers examined how youths in detention are exposed to

extremism and how this constitutes a serious security threat to the United States (Verbeeck, 2017). Findings regarding the relationship between experiences in juvenile detention centers and exposure to criminalization may play an important role in reducing the security threats to the United States.

I used a juvenile detention center coordinator as a gatekeeper for access. The gatekeeper helped me access the juveniles in the detention centers and those who were no longer at the center. I used a survey instrument to collect data from the juvenile officers in the detention centers.

### **Definition of Terms**

In the study, I used various operational phrases and terms. The terms are defined as follows:

*Criminalization*: A process in which an individual's past behaviors are transformed into crime (Juárez et al., 2018). Criminalization is the punitive action exercised on specific individuals. Criminalization occurs when state bodies detect an individual, who is attributed the practice of a primarily criminalized act, and criminal prosecution falls on that person. Criminalization has two characteristics, selectivity and vulnerability, because there is a strong tendency for punitive power to be exercised on individuals previously chosen because of their weaknesses, such as individuals experiencing homelessness, prostitutes, and drug users.

*Extremist ideology*: Views considered far outside society's mainstream attitudes politically or religiously (Borum & Patterson, 2019; Capano & Molenkamp, 2018).

*Juvenile*: An individual who has not reached their 18th birthday. In many jurisdictions, including the United States, a juvenile is an individual between the ages of 10 and 17 years. Though juveniles can commit similar crimes as adults, they cannot be convicted in a similar manner (Capano & Molenkamp, 2018).

*Juvenile delinquency*: Also known as juvenile offending, this refers to the act of participating in an activity or behavior that is illegal before attaining the age of 18 years (Bao et al., 2014).

*Juvenile detention facilities*: Centers or facilities whose primary purpose is to detain juveniles who have committed crimes or are considered dangerous to the public (Bhatta et al., 2014).

*Juvenile justice system*: The structure of the criminal legal system that deals with crimes committed by minors between the ages of 10 and 18 years. The juvenile justice system is founded on the argument that children should be tried in a similar way as adults. This system is designed to develop skills, maintain public safety, rehabilitate offenders, address treatment needs, and reintegrate youths into the community (Braverman et al., 2011).

### **Assumptions**

When an individual's bond with society causes them to lose social control, the individual will develop delinquent behavior (Bao et al., 2014; Henry & Lanier, 2018). The first assumption in the current study was that juvenile delinquents would more likely be negatively influenced in detention centers when such settings lack social control. The second assumption was based on the work of Goodson (2013), who noted that based on the narrative theory, the stories and anecdotes of life experiences could act as motivators

for the criminalization of the individual. I adopted the assumption that juvenile delinquents' life experiences of poverty, discrimination, inequality, and polarized settings can lead to a higher risk of criminalization.

The third assumption was that all the participants would respond to the survey based on the sample size selected. Another assumption was that the survey instrument would be valid and reliable and would aid in the attainment of valid and reliable data from the participants. Understanding that there may be stigma associated with juvenile delinquency, the juvenile officers may have been apprehensive in identifying extremist juvenile delinquents. However, based on the narrative theory by Goodson (2013), I assumed that understanding the stories and anecdotes could aid in identifying juveniles who are at risk of criminalization. I assumed the juvenile detention officers would be able to identify the juvenile delinquent youths at risk of criminalization using the stories and anecdotes shared by the group. I developed a survey instrument based on panel data from juvenile officers who worked in detention centers to enhance the content validity of the constructs and the instrument. Because the sample size was small, I assumed that the gatekeeper would aid in gaining a high response rate.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The study's scope was in a single county in the Midwest United States with a population of at least 500,000 individuals. The participants in the study were juvenile officers in juvenile detention centers. I used a juvenile detention center administrator as the gatekeeper to establish formal contact with the facility and to aid in requesting access to participants. I used the gatekeeper to provide access to contact information and the study site. The gatekeeper did not exercise the authority to persuade the potential

participants to participate or not participate in the study. Moreover, the gatekeeper did not have access to the data collected to maintain participants' confidentiality and privacy.

The gatekeeper served as a recruiter for participants.

I used a convenience sampling strategy. All members of the study population were invited to participate. This sample consisted of subjects included in the study because they were at the right place (i.e., a detention facility) at the right time. I informed the gatekeeper about the requirements of the participants. The gatekeeper selected the participants after I asked them about their basic data. This sampling strategy was also cost-effective. However, I was cognizant of some of the weaknesses of convenience sampling, such as selection biases, high levels of sampling errors, and a potential lack of credibility (see Zikmund et al., 2013). The study results are generalizable to the county used in the study. Because of convenience sampling, the results may not be generalizable to the general population of juvenile delinquents in the United States.

There are several delimitations of the study. The first delimitation was that I used a single county in recruiting the participants. The other delimitation was that there have been sensitive or negative attitudes regarding juvenile delinquency that could have significantly impacted the recruitment of participants in the study.

### **Limitations**

There were several potential limitations in the study. I relied on the perceptions and views of juvenile probation officers regarding the effects of detention facilities on juvenile delinquents and their perceived exposure to criminalization. These variables were subjective and could have influenced the findings due to the small sample used. I aimed to obtain high response rates for the questionnaire.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study was improved understanding of the relationship. In previous studies, researchers focused on the factors that drove children into juvenile delinquency and detention facilities. In the current study, I focused on the relationship between juveniles' experiences in detention centers and criminalization. I investigated how events and experiences inside the detention center may lead to criminalization among juveniles. The findings of this study may initiate debates among researchers, parents, and teachers regarding the role that socializing agents, such as peers and detention officials, play in shaping the worldview of detainees. The findings may help to facilitate an understanding of whether these socializing agents should be blamed for the criminalization of children at the centers. Additionally, the findings may help stakeholders in the juvenile justice system find common ground in developing intervention strategies that address the problem and may provide an empirical foundation for further research on juvenile delinquency and exposure to criminalization in detention centers.

The study's findings could also have policy implications, especially regarding health care. Currently, the health care and well-being of juvenile delinquents are catered to under the Social Security Act of 1965. The findings of this study may add to the identified issues regarding the Social Security Act's weaknesses. For instance, many scholars criticized the act for excluding juvenile delinquents and inmates from the Medicaid and Children Health Insurance Program, thereby minimizing their opportunities to receive proper health care. Understanding the situation of juvenile delinquents and their behavior may provoke government officials to revisit the act. Determining

juveniles' development and rehabilitation and knowing their basic needs, including health care, may help government officials decide which steps can be taken to provide adequate health care to juvenile delinquents. The study findings may also contribute to the development of programs on preventing criminalization and determining its possible causes. Findings may also help the Department of Homeland Security to provide programs in educating youths, including those in detention facilities, regarding how criminalization affect them and the society at large.

### **Summary**

Chapter 1 focused on the background, research problem, and justification of the research methodology adopted. Detention facility settings present opportunities and risks in relation to violent extremism. Detention facilities have the twofold mission of protecting society through the confinement of offenders in safe, humane, and secure facilities and ensuring that offenders participate in programs assisting law-abiding citizens upon returning to their communities. Juvenile criminalization constitutes a threat to global security with the increasing number of disconnected juveniles between 14 and 17 years of age who are not in school and are likely to end up in juvenile detention centers for several reasons. The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the relationship between conditions and treatment that juveniles are exposed to in their detention centers and their exposure to criminalization. The study's scope was a single county in the Midwest United States with a population of at least 500,000 individuals. Chapter 2 provides a literature review addressing juvenile detention centers, juvenile delinquency, and juvenile criminalization.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

I examined the relationship between detention facility experiences of juvenile delinquents and their exposure to criminalization. Researchers showed that detention has different impacts on adults and children mentally and behaviorally. In this chapter, I review studies conducted on this topic and related areas as well as theories used to guide the study. The research question and hypotheses that guided this study were the following:

RQ: What is the relationship between the experiences of juveniles in juvenile detention centers and exposure to criminalization?

$H_0$ : There is no statistically significant relationship between the detention experiences of juveniles and their exposure to criminalization.

$H_a$ : There is a statistically significant relationship between the detention experiences of juveniles and their exposure to criminalization.

The theoretical framework included theories that suggest that detention could lead to mental health problems and the criminalization of juvenile delinquents. In this chapter, I evaluate studies conducted on juvenile justice systems, the process of criminalization and vulnerability of juvenile delinquents, the effect of detention on the mental health of youth offenders, and the rehabilitation of youth offenders. Evaluation of these areas helped me to identify the study gap and suggested appropriate methodology to answer the research question.

In this chapter, I focus on the literature search strategy, theoretical framework, and literature review. The chapter also offers a description of the peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed articles that were linked to the variables in the study. Finally, the chapter

provides a review of the literature, which supported the research methodology and design.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

In conducting the search for literature, I used several approaches. I used online databases and Google Scholar to locate peer-reviewed scholarly articles. The search strategy involved various keywords and phrases, such as *juvenile delinquency*, *juvenile detention*, *juvenile detention centers*, *criminalized*, *criminalization*, and *juvenile criminalization*. The most recent literature on the variables and the topic were selected. Apart from the peer-reviewed articles and journals, I also conducted a literature search of these and other forms of papers to gain a deeper understanding of the topic.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The current study was guided by three major sociological theories: (a) social control theory, (b) narrative theory, and (c) differential opportunity theory. Social control theory describes an individual's behavior, which is dependent on their relationships with individuals and their traditions and beliefs, which prevent them from breaking the law, thereby providing social order (Bao et al., 2014). When the bond between an individual and society and its beliefs breaks, individuals have the propensity to break the law. An individual who has no goals or means implies that the individual is uncommitted and uncontrolled.

The narrative theory explains how an individual illustrates their life experiences through anecdotes, stories, and other forms of media and how an interviewer or a researcher analyzes these stories to have a deeper understanding of the causes and motivating factors of their behavior (Goodson, 2013). The theory is concerned with the

storied nature of human conduct. For instance, narrative theorists argue that experiences from observing stories or listening to stories of others play a significant role in shaping an individual's behavior. In this regard, narratives and stories from the detention center may play a vital role in the criminalization of young offenders (Henry & Lanier, 2018). The researcher can use the narrative approach in data collection to analyze participants' responses to determine the extent of detention facilities' effect on the well-being of youths in detention centers. Individuals who reject the values of society but respect the rule of law often try to bring change through political processes. Differential opportunity theorists argue that a person must first understand the different forms of delinquency and criminal behavior before considering different opportunities that may lead to them (Bhatta et al., 2014).

### **Review of Theoretical Literature**

Proponents of the social control theory argue that in the absence of control, an individual is likely to develop delinquent behavior (Henry & Lanier, 2018). Some forms of control adopted to prevent delinquency include involvement in schools and other activities, attachment to family and friends, and belief in certain values and principles. In the cases in which the child is exhibiting delinquent behavior, detention facilities act as forms of control. As the control accumulates, conformity also increases. The social control theory explains that when an individual is more committed and involved in their social values and belief systems, they are less likely to adopt delinquent behavior (García-Carrión et al., 2018). This theory posits that certain goals and means are needed to eliminate certain constraining elements of the social bond.

Criminalization within a social setting (i.e., a detention center) can also be explained in terms of a lack of social controls within such settings. Criminalization can be explained as a process of developing extremist beliefs, emotions, and behaviors (Barnert et al., 2016). In this current study, the extremist beliefs were described as profound convictions opposing the fundamental values of society, democracy, and universal human rights while advocating for the supremacy of one group. These extremist emotions and behaviors could be expressed in violent and nonviolent pressure, such as coercion. Actions that deviate from society's norms and show contempt for the value of life, freedom, and human rights are adopted. In this regard, criminalized individuals tend to have weaker social controls and strong social learning of violence. UNODC (2017) supported the role of control and learning processes in predicting violent and nonviolent extremism. The social control theory explains how an individual's behavior can be influenced by their society and the beliefs and culture they have, which shapes their morals. This theory served as a framework for the current study because it helped me understand how juvenile delinquents commit acts that may lead to violence and criminalization. The theory helped me explain how juvenile detention facilities may influence the behavior of youths.

According to the narrative theory, extremism and violence are viewed as the most appropriate means to address societal issues (Crone, 2016). When juveniles are criminalized in whatever setting, they become more tolerant of violence as a legitimate means of achieving political goals. Juvenile delinquents can develop an entrenched sense of us-versus-them thinking when exposed to extremist ideologues. This scenario is often facilitated by juveniles being in dense and closed-off settings with ideologues. The

statement that criminalization is a context-bound phenomenon supports the argument that detention facilities could be breeding grounds for criminalization (Bhatta et al., 2014). Causes of criminalization are not only individual psychological factors but also global, political, and sociological drivers. Most commonly, structural factors that instill a sense of injustice, such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, and polarized settings, are the main facilitators of criminalization. However, criminalization can also be promoted by political messages and trigger events.

Bhatta et al. (2014) noted that different types of community settings lead to varying subcultural responses among the individuals. Lane (2015) suggested that at least three types of responses predominate and lead to distinct subcultures: (a) stable criminal, (b) conflict subculture, and (c) retreats. A stable criminal subculture is defined as the type of subculture that offers the best opportunities for individuals' economic mobility. According to Blair (2013), this subculture emerges when there is some coordination between legitimate and illegitimate roles within society. For example, criminal gangs often work together with police and politicians to realize their goals. In these cases, the legitimate systems ensure that a stable pattern is established, which can allow opportunities to advance from adolescent to adult levels while staying in the criminal underworld. Legitimate and illegitimate opportunity structures are, in a way, connected, making it safer for individuals to become criminals and providing a reliable route for upward mobility of aspiring criminals to emerge (Schaefer & Erickson, 2016). Violence and conflict are some of the features associated with young men who operate within legitimate and illegitimate enterprises. Though studies noted that violence is restrained when the two enterprises coexist, in disorganized settings where spheres of activities are

not linked, violence can still reign uncontrolled (Smit & Bijleveld, 2015). On the other hand, conflict subculture results from the disorganization of community settings, leading to street gangs who participate in violent activities, making streets unsafe but more profitable for crime.

In the Western context, prisons and detention facilities provide disorganized settings that make it easier for extremist recruitment. In these settings, an individual can be persuaded to adopt rigid religious beliefs, which can either make them turn away from crime, drugs, and alcohol and start a new life (Capano & Molenkamp, 2018). However, this new life could involve the use of violence and other criminal activities in the name of fighting for social justice or the rights of a particular social or cultural group. Besides, detained extremists are often motivated and charismatic and consider criminalization of others as their religious duty and a means to fight back against corrupt sociopolitical systems of the world (Smit & Bijleveld, 2015). However, many individuals who adopt extremist positions in detention centers often discard beliefs when reintegrated back into society out of conviction or for more pragmatic reasons. Lane (2015) indicated that those who proceed with extremist ideas in most cases suffer from some mental health problems. The retreatist subculture consists of adolescents who fail in their efforts to associate with legitimate and illegitimate opportunity structures (Corner & Gill, 2015). These adolescents consider themselves failures and begin to indulge in drug abuse and other forms of escape. According to these three theories, the experiences and settings within detention facilities can provide opportunities for criminalization and violent extremism.

Prisons are the main recruitment groups for terrorist activities, especially in Europe and the United States (McGregor et al., 2015). According to McGregor et al. (2015), extremists can take advantage of the lax rules and practices in Western prisons and detention centers to recruit new members. These findings provide important insights into the effect of detention facilities on juveniles and the potential criminalization activities that may go on in these centers. Study findings indicated that no matter how different the extremist causes were, detention or imprisonment has the potential to traumatize any individual, making them more susceptible to dangerous ideologies. Detention facility environments are unsettling, and children become more likely to explore new beliefs and associations (Blair, 2013). When these young people are confronted with existential questions and are deprived of their established social networks, juvenile delinquents become involved in politically motivated violence, increasing their vulnerability to criminalization and recruitment into terrorism. Detention facilities and related settings should be viewed as places of vulnerability where criminalization is taking place (Marshall & Mason, 1968). According to the three theories used in the current study, values and beliefs within a particular social setting play a vital role in the development of delinquency. The theories suggest that the existence of success, goals, and values without the means to attain them could lead to deviant behavior similar to when these goals and values are absent. In this study, I emphasized these values and the role of detention facilities in transmitting them.

### **Literature Review**

The literature review addressed the juvenile justice system, vulnerability, and criminalization of juvenile offenders, especially criminalization from extremist

ideologies. The theories are adopted to ground the study in a strong theoretical background.

### **Juvenile Detention Centers**

Juvenile detention centers are important components in the juvenile justice system. Juvenile detention centers can be defined as a prison for individuals who are underage or who are sentenced for a period of time or as part of a long-term care program (Welty et al., 2016). Once a child has been processed in the juvenile court system, they can be released to undergo community-based rehabilitative programs, while juveniles who pose a greater threat to society are sent to a supervised juvenile detention center. Juvenile detention centers are classified into two categories: (a) secure detention and (b) secure confinement. Secure detention refers to centers where juveniles are held for short periods of time as they await trial or further placement decisions to ensure that they appear in court and keep the community safe from the juvenile. Secure confinement is a secure correctional facility where juveniles are sentenced to undertake a program for a short period or many years depending on the seriousness of the action. Unlike adult prisons, juvenile detention centers are not designed to be punitive but to provide education, recreation, health, counseling, and other intervention services to maintain the well-being of youths in line with the doctrine of *parens patriae*, which is the state as parent (Crone, 2016).

Juvenile detention has raised concerns in the last two decades, including its impact on juvenile delinquents' behavior, health, and well-being. Schaefer and Erickson (2016) found a significant connection between youths who commit crimes and mental health concerns. Schaefer and Erickson found a disproportionately high percentage of

juveniles in juvenile detention centers suffering from mental health illnesses. As a result of these findings, more investment should be directed toward mental health programs in detention centers to facilitate the rehabilitation of youths. Elsewhere, researchers found that juvenile detention centers were disproportionately hard on children from racial minority groups. Crone (2015) indicated that in Connecticut, Black children were 5 times more likely to be arrested and twice as likely to be sentenced to a correctional facility compared to their White counterparts. In the United States, ethnic minority children account for only one third of the adolescent population but two thirds of the adolescent population in juvenile detention. Due to these significant variations, some researchers suspect that detention centers are responsible for the well-documented health gaps that exist between White and non-White adults in the United States. McGregor et al. (2015) indicated that individuals involved in the juvenile justice system are more likely to go long stretches without health insurance. The juvenile justice system is also a contributing factor to socioeconomic gaps in society, leading to poverty, low food, housing security, and low access to higher education.

The effectiveness and operations of the juvenile justice system have been significantly affected by the changes in the social and cultural landscape since it was established in the early 1900s. Crone (2016) indicated that the ease of accessing drugs, complex gang networks, and availability of guns increased the number of juveniles who are committing serious offenses, such as murder. In this regard, the juvenile justice system is no longer adequate in addressing problems attributed to violent and amoral young individuals. Critics insist that the leniency of the juvenile justice system is to blame for the rehabilitation failure of young individuals (McGregor et al., 2015). The

rehabilitation process relies heavily on communication; thus, youth offenders can avoid serious consequences for their criminal actions. To critics of the system, it only sends the message of non-accountability for wrong behavior. From a justice perspective, critics argued that it is unfair for juvenile offenders who commit violent crimes to be released by juvenile courts at 18 or 21 years old, while if adults committed similar crimes, they would stay more than 10 years in prison. Schaefer and Erickson (2016) argued that punishment for crimes should be the same across the board. Due to these deficiencies, critics argued that juveniles should be granted full due process rights, including the right to trial by jury like adults, and they must be held accountable for their criminal actions.

Proponents of the juvenile justice system argue that the alleged weaknesses of juvenile courts can be attributed to external factors such as poor funding and the environment in which young individuals are forced to live. Crone (2016) attributed violent criminal behaviors and juvenile delinquency to violent subcultures and early childhood traumas linked to abuse, neglect, and exposure to violence. Schaefer and Erickson (2016) suggested that if the system is adequately funded, the probation officers and court support personnel would closely supervise the children and improve the rehabilitation initiatives. In this case, federal and local governments should put more effort into attempting to change the socio-economic situation of communities and fund more rehabilitation efforts. Proponents of this system also insist that criminal convictions of youth offenders could make it difficult for them to obtain employment and negotiate other aspects of life in their later lives (Kobayter, 2019). It is morally wrong to label a child a criminal for the actions they may have committed impulsively or due to peer

pressure. Preservation of the juvenile justice system allows young individuals to learn from their mistakes and develop into better adults.

### **Criminalization and Extremist Ideologies**

Political extremism has grown alarmingly in Brazil. Passionate and incoherent positions are mixed with inflammatory and violent speeches, loaded with extreme reactions. Those who position themselves in this way do not usually just present simple solutions to complex and deep problems, they do not accept the contradictory. This is, unfortunately, a worldwide trend that has already been seen in other historical periods of humanity.

It is believed that the strong crisis of political representation, which reached its peak in recent years, is one of the causes of the growth of these groups. Extremism is not related to a specific ideological position; it can exist on the right or on the left. Bobbio (1996) stated that opposing ideologies find points of convergence in their radical wings, since these movements have much in common, not within the scope of ideological programs, but by the fact that they belong to the wing extremist opposed to the moderate wing. Bobbio stated that the “extremes touch.” I agree with this; the extremes have many points in common.

The problem is that the action of such groups is not restricted to the field of ideas, they often take a violent stance on digital platforms and even on the streets, including the use of terror against individuals who are ideologically opposed to them. The hate speech propagated by these groups is profoundly harmful to the construction of a democratic society, in fact, left and right have anti-democracy in common. Extremist ideologies have

been responsible for most human tragedies in recent centuries, whether left-wing (communism) or right-wing (fascism).

The division of the political universe into right and left has been common for more than two centuries and is very democratic, but, unlike the moderate wing that balanced opposing positions, extremists prejudge and belittle those they consider their opponents. Every society that has a mature democracy should tolerate the existence of different ideological groups, as it is this diversity that improves the level of public and political debate. Dissenting voices cannot be treated as enemies, as they are part of constructive dialogue and balance the political discussion.

By ignoring opposing opinions, individuals can dangerously approach political fanaticism, blindly adhering to a political position or system. What is seen currently, unfortunately, are multitudes that only seek to deconstruct the discourse and authority of their enemy, when they should be debating in a civilized way ways to build a more just, democratic and developed nation. The politicians who make up the city councils and legislative assemblies, the National Congress, and the executives should not use these spaces to foment true ideological wars, but to dialogue about the future of our nation.

Criminalization as a process may be facilitated by individuals' and groups' actions of increasingly adopting extreme political, social, and religious ideologies and aspirations that reject the status quo or contemporary ideas within the society.

Criminalization is often influenced by ideas of the general society, such as standing against progressive changes in society. Academic literature shows that the criminalization process can either be violent or nonviolent. Criminalization occurs across numerous pathways that increase the resilience and lethality of the group. Based on this perspective,

criminalization may lead to individuals embracing extremist ideas. The criminalization of a young individual may take a gradual step-by-step process that begins with the young individual getting imbued with religious ideas and becoming more and more influenced until they reach the tipping point where they decide to move from talking about religious ideas to violent actions (IJJO, n.d.). In this regard, criminalization is a precondition for violence and engagement with extremist ideology. Corner and Gill (2015) indicated that previous experience with violence could motivate an individual to engage with extremist ideology and eventually perpetrate terrorist attacks.

In this monographic study, I aimed to analyze the correlation between social class and penal repression (i.e., the reflexes in the application of resocialization). In this sense, it primarily discusses the functions of punishment in Brazilian criminal law and penal schools, to justify the objects and foundations of criminal law, the ends of the penalty and the author in the criminal offense. Thus, the resulting problematization moves in the fallacy of the isonomic discourse in the penal system, since criminal law, as a means of the discourse of power production, constitutes an essential predisposition to privilege the interests of the dominant classes, in which it guards against their intervention, behaviors and aspects of its members, thus leading the criminalization process to typical behaviors of subaltern social classes, in addition to reflecting on the failure of the effective application of resocialization. It emphasizes that crime is a product of social reaction and criminality a selective and unequal construction.

Initially, criminalization was perceived to be an individual process where a single individual transforms from a normal citizen into a budding terrorist. As a result, multiple past studies focused on individual pathways (IJJO, n.d.). In this regard, criminalization

was considered to encompass several phases, beginning from a cognitive opening, meeting an extremist ideology, internalizing extremist ideas, and ending with the perpetration of terrorist attacks. However, studies showed that the individualist perspective has several consequences. For instance, emphasis on the individual significantly obscures the social dimensions of criminalization. Several sociologists argued that criminalization is a process that involves the relationship between the individual and society (IJJO, n.d.). The individual engages with extremist ideologies that are conveyed through an extremist influencer or social media. The social dimension to criminalization highlights that it is conceived as a top-down process that encompasses the transmission of ideas from one individual to another. Usually, the process involves extremist subcultures and the role of an ambient society.

Criminalization is a complex issue with no universal process. For instance, studies noted that violent extremism and criminalization were disparate ideas that operated differently on different individuals (The International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law, 2017). In many cases, study findings showed that perpetrators of violent extremism and violent actions were young individuals troubled by social background or with a background in a criminal environment. In some cases, young individuals convert their violent skills or behavior to commit an extremist cause. Most of these young men tend to be acquainted with violence even before they embrace the extremist ideology. These young individuals engage in violence as some of them are involved in drug dealing, gang violence, and weapon use. The involvement of young individuals in criminal environments exposes them to legitimate state violence as they frequently get into contact with the police and intelligence services. Bhatta et al. (2014) reiterated that

criminalization is a complex process that cannot be understood through a series of fixed phrases. For ease of understanding, various scholars and policymakers have developed simplified models that describe criminalization as an orderly series of stages that end with a terrorist attack.

Criminalization describes how an ordinary individual's behavior becomes progressively transformed into crime. Either intrinsic or extrinsic motivations facilitate extremist ideologies. Intrinsic motivations include personal trauma, experiences of discrimination, individual frustrations, and dissatisfaction with the current religious faith, while extrinsic motivations encompass economic, ethnic, racial, religious, political, and social deprivations that can adversely affect an individual's attitude and beliefs towards other individuals (Crone, 2015). These motivations result in changes in faith and answers perceptions of deprivation that they may be facing.

The self-identification stage refers to when the individual exposed to extremist ideas identifies them with those extremist causes and essentially changes their religious beliefs and behaviors (Clifford, 2018). At this point, the individual begins to create a new character based on religion and support for radicalized ideologies. The individual is also encouraged to socialize with other like-minded individuals, thus reinforcing their new sense of identity and commitment. Most importantly, the individual replaces their individual needs with those of the collective. Indoctrination refers to a stage where the individual is inculcated with ideas, attitudes, and cognitive strategies. This stage is characterized by the individual becoming an active participant in the reforming movement. The individual's confidence in the course increases significantly as their thoughts become saturated with radical ideologies. It is essential to note that not all

extremists follow a similar process as others have been found to become violent much quicker (Bhatta et al., 2014). Though the described process refers to the criminalization of terrorists, other studies have found that all forms of criminalization follow almost similar ideas. In this regard, criminalization in juvenile detention centers is assumed to follow the same model.

On the issue of youth involvement in terrorism, multiple theories were proposed to explain why youths were particularly vulnerable to extremist narratives. These theories include neurological aspects that focus on the identity formation process and determination of youth vulnerability during identification, the social context of juveniles, which highlight the role of family ties in the youths' receptiveness to extremist ideas, and the social milieu influencing juveniles (IJJO, n.d.). Social milieu generally refers to an individual's social environment. The social milieu includes factors such as religion, nationality, gender, profession, age, socioeconomic class, etc. These are not only social factors but also factors that make up an individual's identity. Based on different interfaces and institutions, these factors also significantly influence an individual's social networks. Due to this, the social milieu may pose considerable challenges for many children. According to Welty et al. (2016), up to a third of children with learning disorders also have poor social skills. On the other hand, children and teens from conflict areas have a social environment with a strong group culture that has been socialized into terrorism as they are subjected to ISIS indoctrination.

In a study to establish the relationship between delinquency, attitudes, and behavior from a developmental perspective, researchers found that the attitudes of children towards the use of violence and violent behavior were a determining factor of

their vulnerability to extremist ideology (Clifford, 2018). Youths who were more tolerant of violence were more likely to become deviant or engage in criminal behavior compared to their counterparts who engaged in violence. This finding was found to be more relevant to the case of youths returning from the war in Syria and Iraq. Even though the Clifford (2018) not focus on the Islamic religion, the findings showed the relevance of the study to the American population. Due to socialization into the caliphate of IS, the researcher found that the attitudes of these youths were more tolerant or even positive towards the use of violence. This finding strongly indicates that the experience of violence enhances the likelihood of an individual becoming a violent extremist (Götsch, 2017). From a more pragmatic viewpoint, it was noted that the difficulty of determining behavior and providing more insights into the mindset of youth returning from violent areas.

### **Vulnerability and Criminalization in Juvenile Detention Centers**

Criminalization is a process through which an individual's convictions and willingness to implement serious societal changes considerably increase (The International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law, 2017). From an individualist perspective, criminalization is the willingness of the individual to undergo serious changes, while psychologists define it as a process when the individual's views gravitate towards extremism. Götsch (2017) indicated that young individuals were more vulnerable to criminalization. In this case, it is important to understand the factors that would make juveniles vulnerable to criminalization in detention centers. Some of the most common causes of vulnerability among juveniles include struggles with the sense of identity, exposure to new cultures and religions, questioning of their place in society, traumatic

experiences, racism and discrimination experiences, and low self-esteem, among others. Extremists often claim that they would provide answers to these problems. In addition, external factors also play a crucial role in the vulnerability of children to criminalization (Barnert et al., 2016). Some of these external factors may include community tension, political events affecting the country, and having friends who are members of extremist groups. By nature, prisons are hostile environments characterized by cultural dissatisfaction and predisposition to violent tendencies and isolation. Due to this, prisons and juvenile detention centers are considerably susceptible to criminalization extremists.

Incarceration of an individual can lead to various physical and emotional traumas, which may make them vulnerable to recruitment into extremist organizations. Clifford (2018) indicated that incarceration could make an individual adopt a more extremist ideology. In this case, when young individuals are sentenced to detention centers, they become more vulnerable to criminalization and the adoption of extremist ideologies. When an individual is placed in a detention center, they may develop emotional stress issues that may result in physical problems (i.e., sleep disorders and loss of appetite). At this point, the individual is highly vulnerable, thus opening the opportunity for the evaluator to make contact and assess their vulnerability and their likelihood of joining an extremist group. Besides, it is common for incarcerated individuals to suffer from an unbalanced emotional state, making it easier for recruiters to infiltrate their minds. The vulnerability of the incarcerated individuals is also high as they are at a greater risk of losing their individual identity. Prisons provide an environment with the right conditions for terrorists and other extremists to thrive. In a prison environment, extremists can identify, assess, and encourage potential recruits to join their causes unhindered; thus,

they are able to constantly regenerate a pool of candidates (Bao et al., 2014). Extremist organizations can operate effectively in the deep underground of the inmate subculture that is often defined by prison gangs and extremist religions that cultivate and nurture intolerance, hatred, and violence among inmates. These features allow terrorist organizations and extremists' recruitment to flourish while remaining virtually undetected.

Horgan et al. (2016) showed that the rate of extremist activities and criminalization in prisons and juvenile detention centers is higher than the rest of the society. These high rates are also attributed to the complex challenges associated with violent extremism in prison and probation settings. Often these challenges are multifaceted in nature; thus, different interventions will be required at different stages of criminalization. The conventional criminal justice system, in many cases, lacks resources and capacity to identify and respond to all extremist activities within their environments. One of the main challenges of dealing with criminalization in probation or prison settings is differentiating effectively between regular offenders and those who can be considered extremist offenders. For example, when offenders are convicted of terrorist crimes, authorities tend to assume that all of them are violent extremists even though the boundary can be very narrow. Violent extremists who are convicted of other crimes would be very difficult to prove. The process of violent criminalization, in many cases, has little to do with religion (Barnert et al., 2016). In these cases, terrorism acts are not inspired by religion but rather by sharing other factors (i.e., dissent, political dissatisfaction, or obsession with suicidal violence). Due to the difficulty of explaining

extremism and criminalization in prisons or detention centers, various theories have been proposed towards these goals.

Some researchers used transformative learning theory (TLT) to explain criminalization in prisons (Bao et al., 2014; Capano & Molenkamp, 2018; Van der Heide & Geenen, 2017). Jack Mezirow developed TLT in the 1990s to provide a theoretical framework that can assist in understanding how individuals change, learn and adapt to new environments (Capano & Molenkamp, 2018). TLT states that there are three dimensions to the transformation of perspectives, including: (a) psychological (changes in the understanding of self), (b) behavioral (lifestyle changes), and (c) convictional (changes on the belief systems). Transformative learning refers to expanding an individual's consciousness by shaping their worldviews and specific individual capacities. According to Van der Heide and Geenen (2017), transformative learning depends on the access and reception of symbolic contents of the unconscious and critical analysis of the associated premises. Mezirow (2014) argued that a life crisis or transition triggers a disorienting dilemma that can change the meaning schemes of an individual within a time period. Disorienting dilemmas were described as experiences, which do not fit into the individual's existing beliefs about the world or society. As a result, an individual may be forced to reconsider their beliefs and develop new experiences in the world.

Based on TLT, one may argue that prisoners transform when they engage with extremists when they are vulnerable. Incarceration acts as a transformation trigger. When an individual is exposed to such a trigger, they begin to make sense of the world based on pre-existing habits. Since the individual may not be able to make sense of the situation

due to their incarceration, they suffer from failure to manage events in their lives. This failure is considered as a distortion (Horgan et al., 2016). As a result, the individual is forced to explore new experiences or turn to religion to offer them guidance. Religion or new perspectives are supposed to help the individual to create new behavioral roles and relations. This transformation will allow the individual to manage their environment more appropriately, adapt to new daily routines, and help them overcome the crisis they are going through. When an individual is going through a crisis in prison, they become easier to persuade, thus giving way to prison criminalization. Nevertheless, individual criminalization is associated with socio-political contexts (i.e., prison, individual characteristics, reflection, knowledge acquisition, and reassessment of identity; Capano & Molenkamp, 2018). When individuals develop self-doubt or become confused over their identity, intense personal debate commences, leading them to realize that their old identity is no longer tenable; thus, a new identity must be established. As like-minded, criminalized individuals socialize, they validate and strengthen their new identity.

Criminalization can also be understood using the social movement theory (SMT), an interdisciplinary study that intends to explain the occurrence of social mobilization and how they manifest and the political, social, and cultural influences on social mobilization. Borum and Patterson (2019) defined the social movement as a set of opinions or beliefs within the population, representing the preferences for changing some elements of the social structure or reward distribution within the society. SMT is based on the idea that social movements originate from irrational processes of collective behavior that occurs within a strained environmental context, such as a prison environment leading to the production of the mass sentiment of discontent. Individuals

become members of social movements after they passively succumb to overwhelming social forces. Social movement theories distinguish various forms of social movements by violence, target, duration, tactics, and audience. As a result, there are three main forms of movements, which include: (a) territorial sovereignty movements are aimed at demanding regional autonomy, secession, or separatism; (b) protests to demand expansion of individuals' civil and economic rights or demand protection against all forms of discrimination; and (c) collective attacks, such as genocide, mob violence, and ethnic cleansing, as well as symbolic threats (Capano & Molenkamp, 2018).

All these forms of social movements follow four stages of development, which include: (a) emergence, (b) coalescence, (c) bureaucratization, and (d) decline. The decline stage, for instance, is characterized by repression, co-optation, success, failure, and mainstream. SMT was first used in studies intended to understand the criminalization of terrorists', especially Italian and German militants (Van der Heide & Geenen, 2017). Van der Heide and Geenen (2017) found that militant extremists had strong personal ties and shared activist experiences; thus, participating extremists acted as self-reinforcing mechanisms making all members even more radical. SMT suggests that individuals are recruited into the movement on a rational basis where recruiters first identify vulnerable individuals. A vulnerable individual is considered to likely participate and further their group's cause (Götsch, 2017). Once the vulnerable individual has been identified, the recruiter applies the rational prospecting process. This process involves a comprehensive strategy of identifying individual prospects and demonstrating that the selected individual has the greatest participation potential. This process is conceptualized into two main stages: (a) using the information to find prospects and (b) getting a positive answer.

During the first stage of recruitment, the recruiter will gather information about the targeted individual, including their history. The recruiter also evaluates whether the targeted individual has characteristics, such as political interests and concerns about politics that may predispose them to extremist activities (UNODC, 2017). During the second stage, the recruiter aims at getting positive feedback from the targeted individual. To attain this objective, the recruiter entices the individual with various incentives and rewards that will increase the likelihood of the individual joining the cause. These incentives would strengthen the relationship and bond between the recruiter and the recruit. Focusing on SMT, one can also argue that prison criminalization operates similarly to street gangs, where the prison gangs are mostly drawn along ethnic and racial lines (Borum & Patterson, 2019). Prisoners who belonged to a particular gang before incarceration will gravitate toward the same gang even in prison. Most of the prison gangs use violence and intimidation to control their prison environments.

### **Effects of Detention Centers on the Mental Health of Juvenile Offenders**

Crone (2015, 2016) found that certain types of mental health disorders were common among youth offenders. Crone (2016) indicated that youths within the justice system were more vulnerable to engage in aggressive behaviors. The risk of aggression is higher for many specific disorders and comorbid disorders due to emotional stress among juveniles. It must be noted that in some cases, the disorder's experiences were just temporary, and only emergency services were needed. It is estimated that only 10% of disorders identified in the system can be chronic and have a high chance of progressing into adulthood (Barnert et al., 2017).

Some youths were also found to function well despite meeting a mental health disorder criterion. According to a study conducted in juvenile detention centers with the aim of assessing psychiatric disorders among youths in detention using the available psychiatric assessments, the prevalence of psychiatric or substance use disorder among males and females was 66.3 and 73.8%, respectively (Horgan et al., 2016). When behavioral disorders, such as conduct disorder, were removed, the prevalence rates fell to 60.9 and 70%, respectively (Horgan et al., 2016). The most prevalent disorders in this juvenile detention facility were substance-use disorder (47–50%), conduct disorder (38–41%), anxiety disorders (21–31%), and affective disorders (19–28%; Horgan et al., 2016). The researchers also found that there was a high prevalence rate of post-traumatic stress disorder (11–14%; Horgan et al., 2016). The researchers also found significant differences in the rates of prevalence of disorder across gender, race, and age. Despite the study being conducted in only one center, the findings followed a common trend from past studies, suggesting that most juveniles who end up in detention centers are expected to suffer from some form of psychiatric or substance abuse disorder. The findings also highlighted another major problem in juvenile detention centers as 75% of young individuals who suffered from one disorder were also found to meet the criteria for one or two more disorders (Corner & Gill, 2015). In this regard, comorbidity can be said to pose a major problem as it increases the likelihood of disorders exacerbating each other, which can lead to complications of treatment.

In a meta-analysis study to predict youth violence, Welty et al. (2016) found that psychological factors (i.e., aggression, restlessness, hyperactivity, concentration problems, and risk-taking) were consistently linked to youth violence. The researchers

also found that internalizing factors (i.e., anxiety, nervousness, and worrying) were not related to later violence or the likelihood of engaging in late violence (Welty et al., 2016). In another meta-analysis study aimed at examining the link between mental disorders (i.e., externalizing and comorbid disorders) and juvenile recidivism, a significant relationship was detected (Barnert et al., 2017). However, internalizing disorders were found to be unrelated to recidivism, with some of the internalizing behaviors acting as a buffer to recidivism. The relationship between mental health problems, delinquency, and the juvenile justice system's involvement was also found to be significant among youth. In another study, it was found that disruptive behavior, history of aggressive behaviors, and substance use were predictors of the juvenile justice system's involvement among adolescents. Clifford (2018) found that trauma and violence exposure enhanced the probability of involvement in the juvenile justice system. Other factors that were linked to the juvenile justice system involvement included gang membership, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, exposure to childhood violence, and antisocial behavior.

There are several reasons why entry into the juvenile court justice system could exacerbate juvenile delinquency and mental health problems. Juvenile delinquency basically refers to rebellious or unlawful activities of kids during their teens or pre-teens. Horgan et al. (2016) showed there are four primary risk factors for juvenile delinquency, including: (a) personality, (b) background, (c) state of mind, and (d) drugs. These factors also increase the rate of illiteracy among children and lead to a low intelligence quotient. Some juvenile detention centers lack adequate mental health screening, assessment, and treatment for mental health conditions (Welty et al., 2016). Difficulties within juvenile detention centers also increase the odds of recidivating once youths are involved with the

juvenile justice system. Juvenile detention and correctional facilities impact the mental health of the involved youths as a result of overcrowding, inaccessibility of quality of mental health treatment services, and separation from support systems, such as family and friends.

In some cases, the ineffectiveness of juvenile detention centers to address mental health problems has led to litigation. There have been litigations to respond to the poor conditions of confinement. As a result, judicial judgments were made to require juvenile detention facilities to offer adequate and quality mental health services. In the 1997 case of *Emily J. v. Weicker*, the plaintiff claimed that overcrowding and inadequate medical, recreation, staffing, and programming services were worsening their mental health conditions (Bhatta et al., 2014). The court ordered corrective action in the facility. Some of these actions included mental health screening at admission, further evaluation, and treatment. In litigation by plaintiffs in states such as New Jersey, Washington, New York, and Pennsylvania, the plaintiffs called for improved mental health services. In all of these cases, the juvenile detention centers were found to be failing to provide basic levels of several different types of services, such as adequate health care to detainees with psychiatric disorders (Clifford, 2018). Apart from those advocating for different approaches for mental health care in juvenile detention centers, proponents of therapeutic detention argued that it has several benefits, including several behavioral control strategies, steering mental health problems in a positive direction, allowing for more personalized attention and promotion of continuity of care.

## **Rehabilitation of Youth Offenders in Detention Centers**

Overall, studies on the treatment of juvenile violent extremist offenders are few. Researchers noted that the process of identity formation made youths vulnerable to indoctrination from extremist groups; thus, this stage should form the first part of treatment (McGregor et al., 2015). Capano and Molenkamp (2018) indicated that the individual's social environment played a crucial role in juvenile delinquency compared to adult criminal behavior. In this case, treatment should aim at turning the social setting into a protective environment while also addressing the level of internalizing behaviors and assessing youths toward violence (McGregor et al., 2015). Rehabilitation programs targeting youth offenders should also consist of components that focus on psychological interventions (i.e., anger management and cognitive behavioral therapy) among others. These programs should also include offering education courses, such as high school and university diplomas as well as specific certificates for individual courses (Barnert et al., 2016). Similarly, juvenile detention centers should also have vocational program elements focusing on job skill training, such as tailoring, agriculture, and recreational facilities, which will encourage sports and arts participation.

Since poverty is considered one of the factors contributing to violent extremism, researchers suggested that fighting poverty is an important element of rehabilitative efforts (Ajello et al., 2018). Several countries invest financially in specific youth affected by mental disorders and their support systems. In some countries, such as Saudi Arabia and the Philippines, families of the detainees are given financial support as part of the rehabilitation program as an incentive to stop youths from joining extremist networks when released from prison (Kobayter, 2019). In addition, financial support is also

provided to families of convicted extremists so that they do not depend on terrorist networks or resort to mass violence as a way of venting their frustrations. In Indonesia, the cost incurred by family members to see an inmate in prison is reimbursed. These socio-economic and empowerment incentives are implemented based on the understanding that most rehabilitation and reintegration programs are only effective when they include families and community networks in such programs (Capano & Molenkamp, 2018). Rehabilitation and reintegration programs should also prepare the communities to be more receptive to returning detainees and ex-terrorists. This can be done through the building of social cohesion and focusing on resettling the released criminals in environments free from extremism.

The United Nations suggested that the design and implementation of rehabilitation and reintegration programs should encompass risk assessment tools. Conducting risk assessment helps identify individuals' needs and the risks they pose to the rest of society (Borum & Patterson, 2019). The programs should be developed both inside and outside the correctional facility to help in bridging the gap that can result from complications in the prosecution of delinquents and difficulties in collecting evidence regarding the conditions. In this regard, juvenile detention centers should also be able to serve as aftercare organizations or transitional homes where youth offenders are kept for a period of time before being reintegrated into society (van de Weert & Eijkman, 2019). These facilities should offer vocational training, therapeutic training to improve psychological behavior, continuing education, consensus about social values, economic ability to support themselves, and physical and mental fitness activities. When juveniles finally leave, detention centers should be able to lead honest and industrious lives. In

these centers, children should also be provided with access to legal, social, and medical services and sufficient financial support (Van der Heide & Geenen, 2017). Regular educational and vocational training opportunities should be available to be financially independent when they leave the detention centers.

The juvenile justice system has been criticized for lacking follow-up programs to ensure that rehabilitation programs are more effective. Studies, therefore, suggest that juvenile justice rehabilitation programs should include follow-up and support programs for children and juveniles before they are reintegrated into society (van de Weert & Eijkman, 2019). Government bodies should work with other juvenile justice stakeholders so that juveniles can be reintegrated into the mainstream society and enable them to be psychologically and economically stable and provide enough support with constant monitoring tools. The government should also put in place institutional and non-institutional measures to facilitate proper care and child development. Some of these measures include sponsorship, foster care, and adoption, and so on. Sponsorship applies in the case of children without any other support system (UNODC, 2017). Through sponsorship, they can be able to get financial help and meet the expenses needed for their rehabilitation. The government should also provide financial aid and kinds of support to these children once they leave detention centers.

Juvenile judges can also recommend that the child be sent to foster care instead of a juvenile detention center or after completing their stay at the detention center (Borum & Patterson, 2019). A child can also be placed in foster care when their parents are sentenced, suffering from chronic diseases, or incapacitated by other means. Like foster care, adoption offers the child an opportunity to grow within a family with parents.

### **Review of Methodological Literature**

The cross-sectional design emerged in studies in various ways by other researchers. A cross-sectional study undertaken by Corner and Gill (2015) found a direct link between juvenile detention with engagement in problem behavior, recidivism, and substance use disorders.

Welty et al. (2016) indicated that there was a significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and substance use disorders. However, studies indicated that the prevalence of mental disorders depended on the stage in the juvenile justice system where the youths are assessed. Welty et al. indicated that the prevalence of diagnosable disorders increased the further the individual was in the juvenile justice system. Wiley et al. could not disentangle the causal relationship between juvenile detention and youth mental disorders. Though the high prevalence of mental health disorders in the juvenile justice system does not necessarily translate into a need for treatment, it suggests that juvenile detention centers should incorporate different levels of approach to mental health care and varying treatment options.

The source of conceptions about art in words resides almost in the immemorial. As for the mouth, so proclaims the present state of literary theory, it inhabits an indefinite future. Unfortunately, not. In fact, a certain tone of inaccessibility, of fluidity, of uncertainty always resonates in the universe in which the notion of literature is entangled. It is not by chance that, from classical antiquity to contemporary times, many – illustrious or anonymous – have attempted to compose a definitive answer to the question “What is literature?” without succeeding. A slippery word, with different meanings throughout history, “literature” has Latin DNA. Its origin is in the word *litteratura*, which means

“writing, grammar, science”, “forged from littera (letter)” (JOUVE, 2012, p. 30). From the cradle, the term literature is linked to literate culture, to a complex type of knowledge endowed with great distinction, such as, for example, the mastery of classical languages or even grammatical knowledge. It was only in the middle of the 18th century that the word began to take on the contours attributed to it. In this period, the conception of literature as an “art of language” takes its first steps, but still without being restricted to the universe of artistic creation, since it “perfectly encompassed both works with an intellectual vocation and texts with an aesthetic dimension.” The 19th century would, in fact, demarcate the literary universe as the space for the artistic use of written language, a sense that was reiterated and contested throughout the following century.

In the western world, reflections on literature begin in classical antiquity with Plato and, mainly, Aristotle. It must be said that neither of them used the concept of “literature,” since this notion would only be constituted from the 18th century onwards. For the world of that time, the word that named literary art was “poetry.” According to Asensi, in griego *poiesis* means “to make” in the technical sense, and encompasses both the artisanal work of the farmer, the carpenter, the alfarero, etc., as well as the propios of painting, sculpture, music, poetry properly speaking. The common denominator of these classes of activities is the fact that something that did not exist before comes to be after. As a result, the term “poetry” applies to all creative activities in general and to creative art that uses language as an instrument. In its “literary” meaning, poetry was conceived as an “imitation or representation (*mimesis*) of human actions through language” (Compagnon, 2010, p. 37). It is necessary to clarify that each of them understands *mimesis* and, consequently, poetic art in a different way. In the Platonic work, more

specifically in *Book X of the Republic*, artistic mimesis does not enjoy much prestige, it does not receive any praise. The tone adopted is, in fact, derogatory. For the philosopher, the mimesis operated by the poet appears to be of the third degree, since they would imitate things and facts that, in turn, would already be mere copies of a supercelestial world. Regarding the categories of imitation, Plato defended a distinction between “the faithful copy of the artisan (made by a man or a demiurge) and the phantasmagorical copy (proper of the poet or the sophist)” (Asensi, 1998, p. 41) . The first would be a reproduction that, in some way, participates in the model universe from which it comes. The second, on the contrary, would not participate, in any way, on the plane of ideas, hence the expression “phantasmagorical imitation” (mimetixé fantastixé). Through the first, it would be possible to reach the essential truth provided, of course, the appropriate method was used: dialectics. The second would be an obstacle to the truth. In this way, Plato wove a vision of poetry (literature) that will be resumed in different periods, sometimes with the same implications, sometimes under other approaches. In the Platonic perspective, poetic art is an activity that “has no epistemological content, which does not hold any truth, which is false (it is mere doxa, opinion, eikasia, conjecture).” Plato’s most famous and brilliant disciple had the task of subverting his aesthetic thinking, of sending him a forceful and profound reply (a word that would sound too provocative to the master’s ears), which would become the founding stone of literary studies. Aristotle, in fact, reinvented mimesis and the poetic phenomenon.

### **Summary**

The literature review revealed that the juvenile justice system puts juvenile delinquents at an increased risk of criminalization and the adoption of extremist

ideologies. Proponents of this system indicate that it provides a perfect environment for the child or juvenile offender to be rehabilitated and reintegrated effectively into society. Critics argued that the current model does not work due to the considerable number of adult criminals who were initially in the juvenile justice system. In addition, critics argued that the juvenile justice system is not fair in terms of justice provision. Juvenile detention centers were linked to disproportionately high levels of mental health problems compared to the rest of the population. The literature review could not establish the causal relationship between juvenile delinquency and mental health problems. In the meantime, recent literature reviews and empirical studies on the topic focused largely on the scope of mental health problems of individuals at risk and justice-involved risks. Researchers evaluated the impact of mental health on justice involvement as well as the impact of justice involvement on mental health disparities in mental health treatment in the juvenile justice system and evidence-based programs that have been shown to improve outcomes for youths with mental health issues.

From this review, the available information is insufficient in explaining the actual impact of juvenile detention centers on delinquency and criminalization. Criminalization was found to be a complex issue that cannot be defined or explained in a single dimension. The existing theories did not provide empirical evidence to support their suggestions. Due to this significant knowledge gap, this warranted my quantitative cross-sectional study.

### Chapter 3: Research Methods

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between detention facility experiences of juvenile delinquents and the exposure to criminalization in a county in a Midwest U.S. state. The literature gap indicated that there was a need to investigate the impacts of detention of delinquents on the criminalization of juveniles. In this chapter, I describe my role as the researcher and explain the research design. The chapter includes a discussion of the data analysis plan, threats to validity and reliability, and ethical procedures I adopted.

#### **Research Design and Rationale**

The design for this study was cross-sectional, also known as a correlational design, which aligns with the philosophical worldview of positivism. Research methodology consists of principles regarding how data should be collected, evaluated, used, and reported. Research approaches are based on known truths and what individuals believe to be true (de Souza Minayo, 2017). Scientists transform what they believe into known truths. There are two primary research philosophies: (a) positivism and (b) interpretivism. Positivism includes philosophical assumptions that social realities are stable, and that objective means can be used to observe and describe them. Positivists also assume the phenomenon under investigation is isolated and can be repeated. Contrarily, interpretivist philosophers argue that every individual has their own interpretation of social realities (Zikmund et al., 2013). Interpretivists argue that scientists must acknowledge their multiple interpretations of reality, which are a part of the scientific knowledge that they pursue. Although no research methodology is intrinsically

better than the other, the research question that a study intends to answer is used to determine the most appropriate approach for the study.

The use of quantitative methodology enabled me to examine relationships among variables and test the hypothesis. The primary assumption for this study was that the experiences in detention facilities could play a significant role in increasing or reducing the level of a child's delinquency that may lead to criminalization. In the study, I used a quantitative approach to test the null hypothesis: There is no statistically significant relationship between the detention experiences of juveniles and their exposure to criminalization.

This hypothesis indicated that the study was cross-sectional. A cross-sectional study means that the data for the study are collected at a particular point in time (Bilgin, 2017). A cross-sectional study has advantages that make it one of the most appropriate designs. Cross-sectional studies are commonly used in social sciences and psychology, including criminology. These kinds of studies are observational in nature and cannot determine the cause of something. The gathered information represents what is going on in the population; the study can be used to make inferences regarding potential relationships within the population or can act as preliminary data supporting further experimentation (Zikmund et al., 2013). This type of study is inexpensive and takes less time to conduct because the data can be gathered at the same time.

I adopted a survey research design for the participants because it was the most effective in answering the research question and achieving the goal of the study. The survey design is appropriate for descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory research (de Souza Minayo, 2017). Descriptive research can be used when the goal of the study is to

determine population characteristics, frequencies, trends, and correlations. Descriptive research is also useful when not much knowledge is available about the research problem. Based on the literature review, I found that there were few studies done in the areas of juvenile detention facilities, juvenile delinquency, and exposure to criminalization. There were no conclusive studies on the relationships between the variables.

A survey design can be used to establish whether a relationship exists among the variables. A survey design encompasses the collection of raw data describing a particular population that is too large to be directly observed. Only a section of the population is studied in surveys, and the findings are generalized to the entire population. Zikmund et al. (2013) described surveys as the assessment of public opinion or individual characteristics using questionnaires and other sampling methods. When using a survey, researchers collect information from a sample of participants using the means of self-reporting. In a survey design, participants are asked to respond to a series of research questions posed by the researcher. Self-administered questionnaires are used by the researcher to collect data from the subjects. In the current study, the descriptive survey design was justified because it ensured accurate portrayal of the population characteristics, including their behavior, beliefs, and differences among individuals (see de Souza Minayo, 2017). I selected the design to meet the study's objective, which was examining the relationship between the experiences at detention facilities of juvenile delinquents and their exposure to criminalization.

Because I could not observe the criminalization of the youths, the study's cross-sectional design was appropriate to test the hypotheses. I selected the cross-sectional design because it was inexpensive and less time-consuming compared to other designs

and aligned with the use of surveys. I performed a correlation analysis between the independent variable (experiences in the detention facility) and dependent variable (exposure to criminalization) to achieve the objective of this study. I made use of the cross-sectional design because the goal was to examine the effects of detention centers on the criminalization of juveniles. I made use of the survey as the main data collection tool because it aligned with the instrumentation and the design.

### **Methodology**

There are three primary research approaches: (a) quantitative, (b) qualitative, and (c) mixed methods. The quantitative approach is defined as a systematic and objective process of describing and testing relationships and examining the cause-and-effect links among different variables (Bilgin, 2017). The data used in this type of study are usually available in numerical form and can be assessed using mathematical and statistical means. There are cases in which the data are not available in numerical form but can still be analyzed using quantitative means. The relationship between subjective variables (i.e., a person's experience in a detention facility and exposure to criminalization) can be analyzed by developing measurement scales, such as Likert scales, which enable statistical evaluation. Unlike the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach does not involve numerical data. In this approach, data are usually in word or text form. This approach aims to provide in-depth insights into a particular phenomenon. The qualitative approach is used to explore how and why things happen (Bilgin, 2017). The mixed-methods approach includes both quantitative and qualitative approaches to achieve study objectives.

A quantitative approach was recommended for the current study. This approach was appropriate because I aimed to test the existence and significance of the relationship between juvenile detention experiences and exposure to criminalization. This type of study requires a measurement tool for variables, and the researcher tests the measurements to obtain a concise conclusion. The quantitative approach enables the researcher to compile data into graphs and charts and conduct a large-scale study involving large samples, thereby improving generalizability (Bilgin, 2017). The quantitative method selected for the current study enabled me to generalize the findings to a specific population. This method had been effectively applied in similar studies on juvenile delinquency and other criminological studies (Bao et al., 2014; Capano & Molenkamp, 2018; Marshall & Mason, 1968; Schaefer & Erickson, 2016; Smit & Bijleveld, 2015). Even though the most appropriate method to use in a cross-sectional design is quantitative, there were other methodologies that could have been applied in the current study.

Narrative methodology based on the interviews to explore the lived experiences of the individuals was considered but not selected because the focus of the study was not on the lived experiences of the juveniles with juvenile detention and criminalization (see Creswell, 2013). Phenomenology was considered as the second possible alternative, but I did not select it because the study did not focus on the in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of the juveniles (see Creswell, 2013). I also considered the case study methodology, but I did not select it due to the time as well as the need to use several data sources, which would not be practical, especially given the COVID-19 pandemic. The methods not selected have common use of interviews that allow for understanding other

individuals' motives, opinions, and experiences. Interviews were not needed for the study because a lot was known about the variables; however, the direction of the relationship between variables was not well known. The main instrument applied in the study was the self-administered survey.

### **Population**

The target population for the study was juvenile detention officers who knew about criminalization through research done on the participants in the detention centers and the policies, regulations, and programs that had been put in place for juvenile offenders who were awaiting trial for their crimes. The target population entailed the entire population of juvenile detention officers in a detention center in a Midwest U.S. state. Only a single detention center was selected to be used in the study. This center encompassed a large metropolitan area where there was a high incidence of juvenile offenders, which allowed for significant control from unwanted variables, such as the region affecting the study results.

### **Sampling**

Given the nature of the population, I selected a convenience sample of 15 subjects. The sample size of 15 allowed for the normal distribution assumptions so the findings could be generalized for the entire population. A sample is defined as the segment of the population selected with the goal of finding out information about their population (Zikmund et al., 2013). I used the convenience sampling technique in this study.

Convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling in which data are gathered from population members who are available to participate in the study

(Zikmund et al., 2013). Convenience sampling means recruiting participants wherever they can be found if they meet the sampling criteria. All members of the study population were invited to participate. A convenience sample consists of subjects included in the study because they happen to be at the right place at the right time. Convenience sampling is also cost-effective. I had to be cognizant of some of the weaknesses of convenience sampling (i.e., selection biases, high levels of sampling errors, and a potential lack of credibility; see Zikmund et al., 2013).

Convenience sampling was the most appropriate approach during the COVID-19 pandemic because face-to-face communication was restricted. Subjects included in this study met specific criteria. They must have been working at the detention facility for at least 3–6 months. Participants had to accept informed consent and could be of any sex or race. The participants must have been a high school graduate or completed a General Educational Development so that they could answer questions independently. The sampling frame included juvenile detentions centers within the study county. The gatekeeper provided the contacts for the correct individuals who were included in the study.

### **Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection Procedures**

The gatekeeper helped with the identification of the potential participants as well as their contact details (i.e., telephone numbers and email addresses). I sent an email to each of the potential participants to invite them to participate in the study. Because the gatekeeper was someone with significant rapport with the juvenile detention officers, I anticipated a high response rate. The background information about the participants was collected to determine their eligibility to participate in the study.

I emailed an introductory message to each potential participant. I used SurveyMonkey to administer the survey. The survey began with a summary of the purpose of the study, the consent form, and an opportunity for the participants to provide their informed consent to participate in the study. Clicking and agreeing at the bottom of the consent form on SurveyMonkey was an indication that the participant had given informed consent to participate in the study. The data collection was undertaken using the survey instrument (see Appendix).

After the completion of the survey, a debrief for participants was undertaken. The debrief included a short statement, and participants were thanked for agreeing to participate in the study. The debrief reminded the participants about the study's purpose as well as the confidentiality agreement. My contact information was provided as well as the reiteration that if the participant so wishes, they could receive an executive summary of the findings. Through the SurveyMonkey questionnaire, I tracked the number of participants who completed the survey.

### **Instrumentation**

The profiles of individual criminalization in the United States included data about the various types of criminalization and other elements. One instrument that was considered was created by Smith (2016) who focused on the risk factors associated with violent extremism. The instrument encompassed several existing assessment tools, such as HCR-20, VERA 2, Extreme Risk Guidance Factors, and others. Smith consolidated the findings of other studies into a series of tables, which indicated the potential risks of criminalization and attempts to engage in extremist violence. Because the focus of the current study was not on the risks of extremism but on the relationship between the

effects of juvenile detention centers on criminalization, the instrument applied in the study was based on the work of Ozer and Bertelsen (2018) who developed and validated a criminalization scale.

I applied the scale Ozer and Bertelsen (2018) developed when examining criminalization as a variable in the current study (see Appendix). I included the collection of background information (i.e., gender, age, race, and other) in the first part of the survey instrument. The second part of the survey instrument focused on the juvenile detention experiences based on the risk factors identified in the study and the University of Arkansas. The survey addressed various elements, such as having a criminal history, having extremist friends, being a member of a clique of likeminded individuals, and others (RTI International, 2017). Each question had responses on a 7-point Likert scale. I used a 7-point scale rather than a 5-point scale to provide the participants with more response options, thereby preventing the tendency to use mid-point selections (see Joshi et al., 2015; Willits et al., 2016). The detention center officers received the survey through an email with a link to the SurveyMonkey questionnaire. I only sent the survey link to those who met the inclusion criteria.

### **Operationalization**

The independent and dependent variables were based on the nominal level of measurement except the background data that was on an ordinal scale.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

Raw data collected from the field are useless if they are not subjected to the rigorous analysis process. After data collection, the online survey site automatically organizes the data and conducts descriptive statistics. The site automatically calculates

means, median, and develops frequency tables. The online site is also able to display frequencies and percentage distributions, thus specifying the percentage of the observations that exist for every data point. These frequencies express the relative frequency of the responses from the subjects (Sarantakos, 2012). These findings are presented in pie charts and bar graphs. I conducted the rest of the analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS is a software product used to analyze statistical data and is capable of handling large volumes of data. I selected SPSS because it is user-friendly and compatible with other software packages, such as Microsoft Excel. In answering the questions, I used a statistically weighted mean response. For analysis purposes, the responses to every statement were weighted as absolutely agree (7) to absolutely disagree (1).

The second in this analysis was the exploratory factor analysis (EFA). In multivariate statistics, EFA is important in uncovering the underlying structure of the large set of items influencing specific variables. EFA also helps to determine whether the developed scale can effectively assist in determining the relationships among variables (Sarantakos, 2012). Using SPSS, I only selected items whose correlation with the variable measured above .3. This means that the correlation was sufficient to enable a reasonable basis for factor analysis. Finally, I conducted a *t*-test to determine the significance of differences between the two variables. The *t*-test is usually appropriate in cases where the sample size is relatively small. Therefore, in this study, I adopted a *t*-test to test the null hypothesis. In deciding, when the computed *t*-value is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected and vice versa (Sarantakos, 2012). When the computed *t*-value is less than the critical *t*-value, it denoted a significant relationship

between experiences in detention facilities and exposure to criminalization among juveniles. I tested the null hypothesis in this study at a 5% level of significance.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Reliability is defined as the degree of consistency with which the research instrument can measure the attribute it is designed to measure. One attribute of reliability is homogeneity (internal consistency) can be assessed using Cronbach's alpha, split-half reliability, and Kuder-Richardson coefficient (Schaefer & Erickson, 2016). In this test, Cronbach's alpha is used in testing the internal consistency of the instrument. This measure was determined using SPSS. The instrument is acceptable if the reliability score is above .7. The stability of the research instrument is tested using test-retest reliability. Test-retest reliability is determined when the same participants are used under similar circumstances more than once and similar results are achieved (Bashir & Marudhar, 2018). This means that two samples from the same population should yield similar results for the instrument to be considered reliable.

Validity refers to the extent of accuracy of the measure in a quantitative study. This means that a survey designed to measure the experiences of juveniles in a detention facility is invalid if it ends up measuring their experiences in a different setting, such as school (Smit & Bijleveld, 2015). Content validity is achieved when the instrument captures all aspects of the variable under study. In this case, questionnaires include several items on the variables under study. The questionnaire items are developed from the data collected from the literature review to ensure that they represent what the participants should already know. The consistency of the questionnaire administration also enhances content validity. I ensured that all questionnaires were administered using

the online platform. Clear instructions also accompanied the questionnaires on how they should be completed.

External validity encompasses how the research findings effectively generalize the population characteristics. Generalization of the findings is justified when the sample is large, and all the members answer the questionnaires (Marshall & Mason, 1968). When a high number of potential participants declined to participate, then the findings may not be a true representation of the population. Construct validity is attained when the inferences drawn from the test scores are consistent with the phenomenon under study. Criterion validity is achieved when the instrument measures the same variable (Bashir & Marudhar, 2018). Criterion validity is assessed using correlation analysis of the extent to which different instruments measure the same variable.

### **Ethical Procedures**

To successfully complete a research project, a researcher needs expertise, diligence, honesty, and integrity (Humphreys, 2016). This means that when conducting the research, the researcher must prioritize the human rights of all the participants. For instance, privacy and data protection are important for this kind of research. I acknowledged the subjects' rights to self-determination, confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent (see Humphreys, 2016). Before the subjects completed the questionnaire's, informed consent was required. Informed consent is defined as the prospective agreement of subjects to voluntarily participate in the study (Bao et al., 2014). The subjects were informed of their rights and reminded that they could withdraw from participation at any time. The subjects were also informed of the purpose of the

study. They were assured that the study did not involve any risks or costs. The Walden University Institutional Review Board guidelines of were also followed.

The entire process of the study also adhered to the research principles of anonymity and confidentiality. Anonymity means that the participants cannot be linked to any information provided by the researcher (Humphreys, 2016). In this study, anonymity was achieved by ensuring that the participants' identities and personal details were not disclosed in the questionnaires. The written consent was detached from the questionnaires in the final report. On the other hand, confidentiality implies that the information provided would not be reported or presented in a manner that identifies the source of information (Humphreys, 2016). In the study, confidentiality was maintained by ensuring that all the gathered data remained confidential, and the identity of the subjects was not revealed in the report. I treated the participants as autonomous agents, informing them that the study allowed them to decide whether to participate or not. Honesty was also applied in implementing the research design (see Capano & Molenkamp, 2018).

### **Summary**

The focus of this chapter was on the explanation, choices, and justification of the research design and the methodology. Criminalization is a major challenge for various law enforcement agencies all over the United States, and the challenge is growing in prevalence among juvenile offenders. The research questions and the topic helped to offer insights into the relationship between juvenile detention centers' experience and criminalization. This chapter encompassed the survey instrument, the participant selection, the data collection, and the methods of data analysis. The chapter also delved into the threats to reliability and validity as well as the ethical procedures adopted in the

study. The next chapter includes details about the data collection and analysis. The results are included in the statistical tests. The next chapter also provides details for the answers and findings to the research questions.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this quantitative cross-sectional study was to examine the relationship between juvenile detention experience and criminalization. A total of 15 participants responded to the questionnaire. The responses were not prompt, and several respondents failed to indicate their answers for some questions, which was especially the case in the demographic questions. Each section of the analysis reported the number of valid responses to clarify the response rate. Missing data were automatically purged from the data when conducting *t* tests, regression analysis, and analysis of variance by marking them as missing in SPSS.

### **Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

#### **Gender**

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondent gender in a sample of 15 participants. The results of the respondent's gender statistics showed that there were 15 participants in the study. Of these participants, 13 (86.7%) identified as male and two (13.3%) identified as female. The valid percentage column shows the percentage of each category within the total sample, while the cumulative percentage column shows the percentage of each category and all categories that came before it. The results indicated that most of the participants in the study were male, while a small minority identified as female. Figure 1 gives a depiction of the distribution of participants.

**Table 1***Distribution of Participants by Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Male	13	86.7	86.7	86.7
Female	2	13.3	13.3	13.3

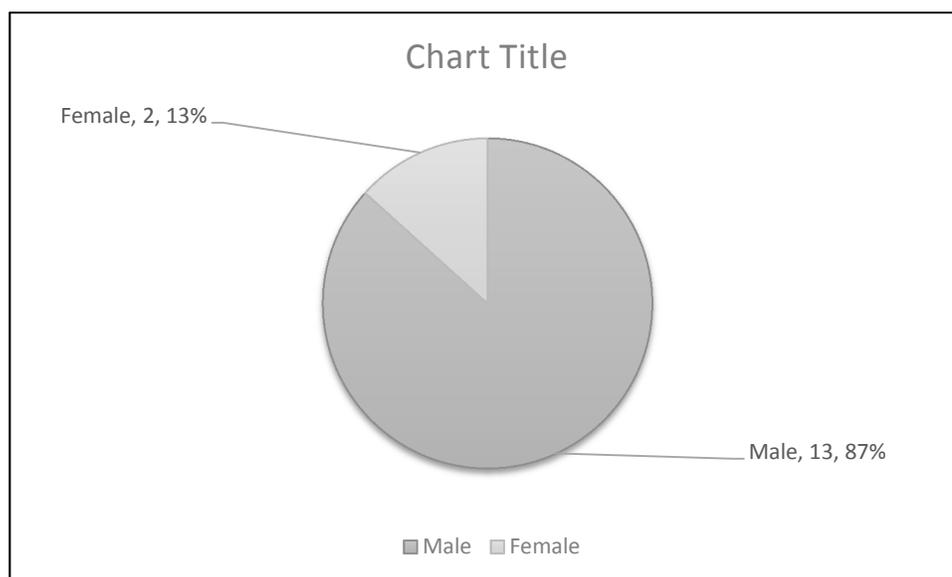
**Figure 1***Distribution of Participants by Gender***Income Group**

Table 2 presents the distribution of respondent income in a sample of 15 participants. Two participants did not provide information about their income. Of the 13 participants who did provide information, the most common income range was \$50,000–\$74,999, with 38.5% of participants falling into this category. Less than 8% of participants had an income in the range of \$10,000–\$24,999, \$25,000–\$49,999,

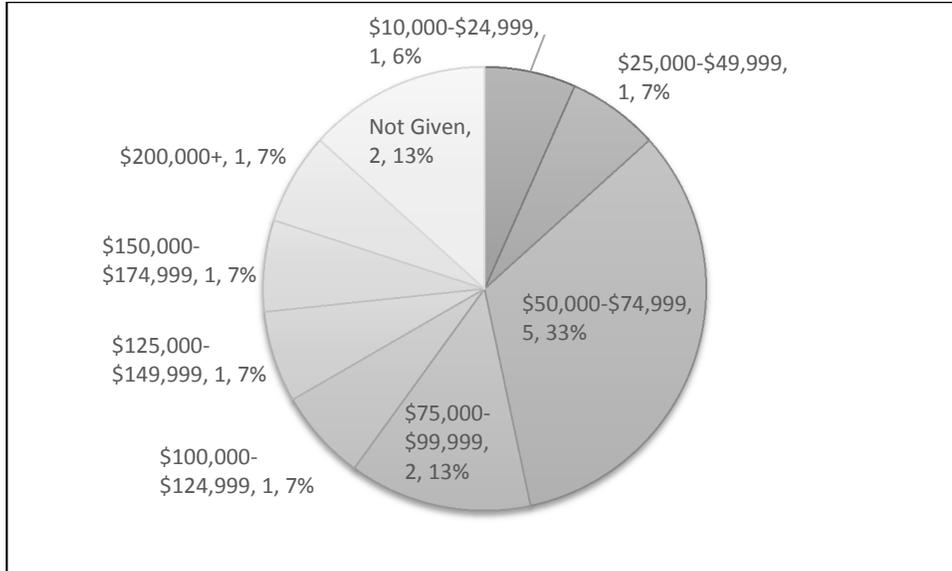
\$100,000–\$124,999, \$125,000–\$149,999, \$150,000–\$174,999, or \$200,000 or more.

Less than 16% of participants had an income in the range of \$75,000–\$99,999. The valid percentage column shows the percentage of each category within the total sample, while the cumulative percentage column shows the percentage of each category and all categories that came before it. Results indicated that most participants who provided information about their income reported a range of \$50,000–\$74,999, while a smaller percentage of participants reported an income in either a higher or lower range. The results also showed that a significant portion of the sample (13.3%) did not provide information about their income. Figure 2 shows the distribution of respondents by income group.

**Table 2**

*Distribution of Respondents by Income Group*

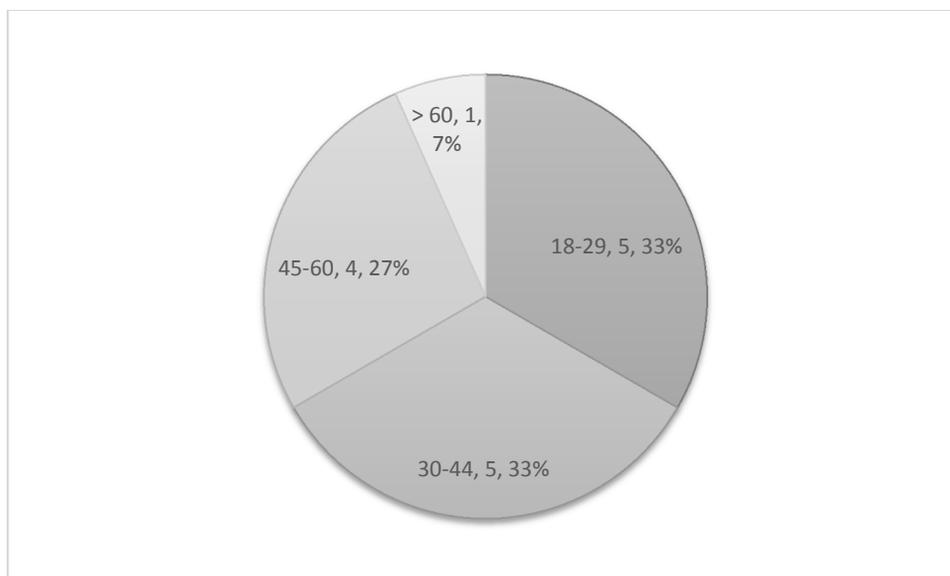
Income	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	\$10,000–\$24,999	1	6.7	7.7
	\$25,000–\$49,999	1	6.7	15.4
	\$50,000–\$74,999	5	33.3	53.8
	\$75,000–\$99,999	2	13.3	69.2
	\$100,000–\$124,999	1	6.7	77.9
	\$125,000–\$149,999	1	6.7	84.6
	\$150,000–\$174,999	1	6.7	92.3
	\$200,000+	1	6.7	100.0
Total	13	86.7	100.0	
Missing	Not Given	2	13.3	
	Total	15	100.0	

**Figure 2***Distribution of Respondents by Income Group***Age**

The results of the respondents' age statistics showed that of the 15 participants, five (33.3%) were age 18–29, five (33.3%) were age 30–44, four (26.7%) were age 45–60, and one (6.7%) was age over 60. The valid percentage column shows the percentage of each category within the total sample, while the cumulative percentage column shows the percentage of each category and all categories that came before it. Results indicated that most participants were age 18–29 or 30–44, while a smaller percentage of participants were age 45–60 or over 60. Figure 3 shows the distribution of respondents by age group.

**Table 3***Distribution of Respondents by Age Group*

Age group	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid 18–29	5	33.3	33.3	33.3
30–44	5	33.3	33.3	66.7
45–60	4	26.7	26.7	93.3
> 60	1	6.7	6.7	100
Total	15	100	100	

**Figure 3***Distribution of Respondents by Age Group***Device**

The results of the respondent's device statistics showed that of the 15 participants, eight (53.3%) used an iPhone or iPad, six (40.0%) used an Android phone or tablet, and one (6.7%) used another device. The valid percentage column shows the percentage of each category within the total sample, while the cumulative percentage column shows the

percentage of each category and all categories that came before it. Results indicated that most participants used either an Apple or Android device, with a small percentage using another type of device (see Table 4 and Figure 4).

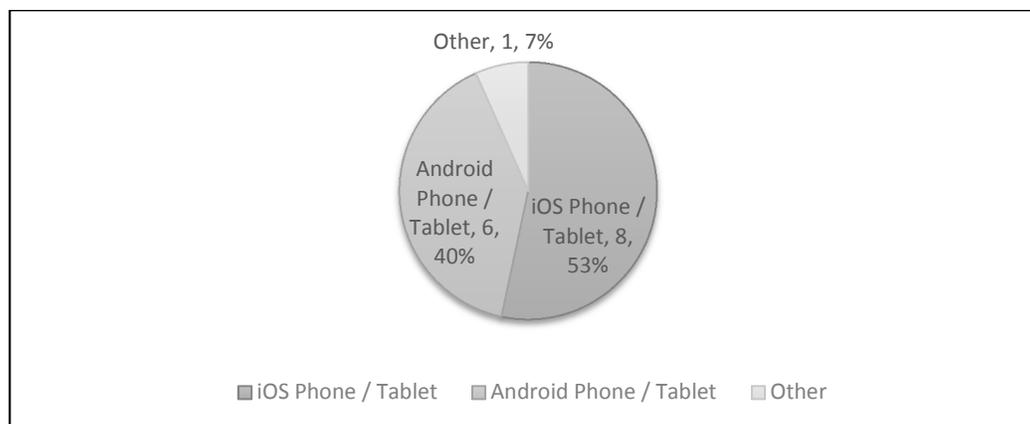
**Table 4**

*Distribution of Respondents by Device Type*

Device type	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid iOS Phone / Tablet	8	53.3	53.3	53.3
Android Phone / Tablet	6	40	40	93.3
Other	1	6.7	6.7	100
Total	15	100	100	

**Figure 4**

*Distribution of Respondents by Device Type*



**Region**

The results of the respondent's region statistics show that of the 15 participants, one (6.7%) was from the Middle Atlantic region, five (33.3%) were from the South Atlantic region, two (13.3%) were from the Mountain region, three (20%) were from the Pacific region, three (20%) were from the East North Central region, and one (6.7%) was

from the West South-Central region. The valid percentage column shows the percentage of each category within the total sample, while the cumulative percentage column shows the percentage of each category and all categories that came before it. Results indicated that participants were distributed fairly evenly across the different regions, with no single region having a significantly larger representation than the others. Figure 5 shows the distribution of respondents by region.

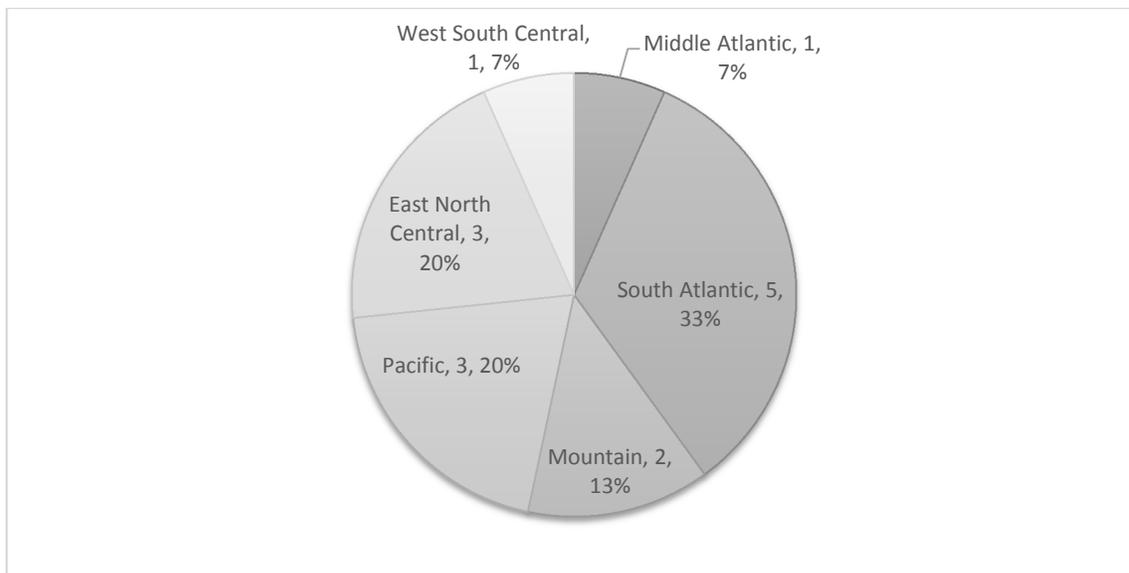
**Table 5**

*Distribution of Respondents by Region*

Region		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Middle Atlantic	1	6.7	6.7	6.7
	South Atlantic	5	33.3	33.3	40.0
	Mountain	2	13.3	13.3	53.3
	Pacific	3	20	20	73.3
	East North Central	3	20	20	93.3
	West South Central	1	6.7	6.7	100
	Total	15	100	100	

**Figure 5**

*Distribution of Respondents by Region*



### **Validity and Reliability Statistics**

This section presents and analyzes the validity and reliability results.

#### **Validity**

In determining the instrument's validity, I employed the content validity index. Table 6 shows a comparison of relevant items to the total number of questions in computing the content validity index. Table 6 also provides a summary of the results from this analysis. Because the content validity index of .864 was greater than the required .7, the questionnaire was found to meet the validity test.

**Table 6***Validity Test Results*

Construct variable	Number of items	Number of relevant items	Content validity index
Detention experience	10	9	.9
Exposure to criminalization	12	10	.833
Total/average	22	19	.864

**Reliability**

I used the Cronbach's alpha to determine the instrument's reliability. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of the internal consistency or reliability of a set of items or questions on a scale or test. Cronbach's alpha is commonly used to assess the reliability of a test or survey by measuring the extent to which the items on the test are correlated with one another. A higher Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicates a higher degree of internal consistency and reliability, while a lower coefficient indicates lower reliability.

***Detention Experience***

A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .864 for a set of 10 items indicated that the items were highly correlated and likely measured the same underlying construct or concept. Cronbach's alpha was greater than the .7 threshold, which further affirmed the variable's internal consistency.

***Criminalization Exposure***

A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .879 for a set of 12 items indicated that the items were highly correlated and measured the same underlying construct or concept.

### Tests for Normality

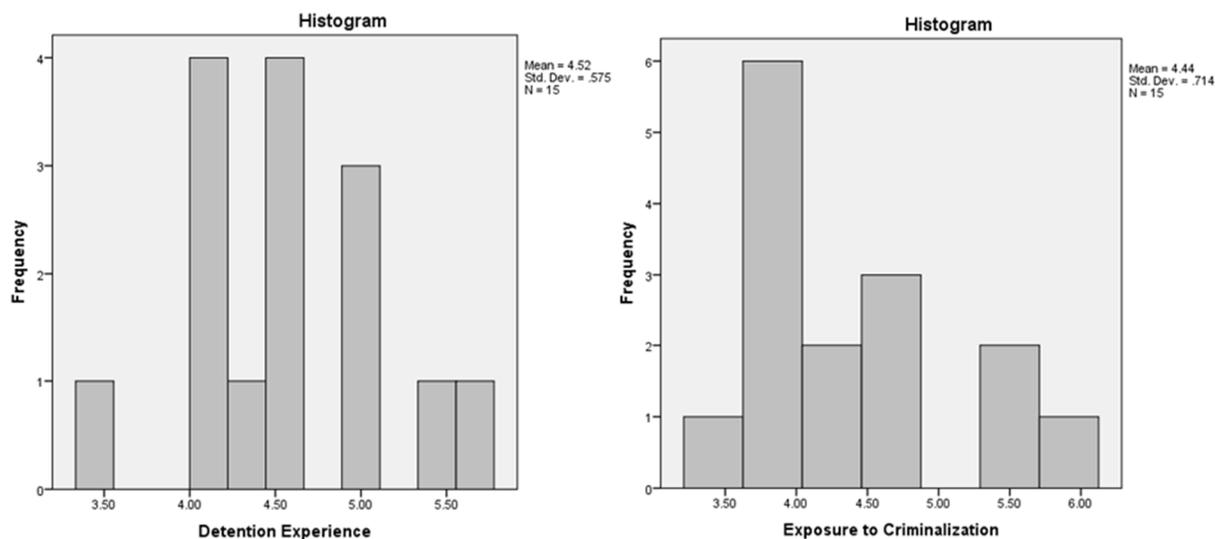
The results of the statistics show that there were two variables measured in the study: (a) detention experience and (b) exposure to criminalization. The skewness value for detention experience was .256, while the kurtosis value was .051. The skewness value for exposure to criminalization was .893, while the kurtosis value was .165. The skewness value for detention experience was lower than the skewness value for exposure to criminalization, while the kurtosis value for detention experience was lower than the kurtosis value for exposure to criminalization. This suggested that the distribution of scores for exposure to criminalization was more strongly skewed to the right and has a higher peak than the distribution of scores for detention experience (see Table 9).

**Table 7**

*Normality Tests for Study Variables*

Study variable	Test	Statistic	Std. error
Detention experience	Skewness	.256	.58
	Kurtosis	.051	1.121
Exposure to criminalization	Skewness	.893	.58
	Kurtosis	.165	1.121

Figure 6 depicts the normality test results in a graphical format.

**Figure 6***Histograms for Normality Tests***Descriptive Analysis of Data**

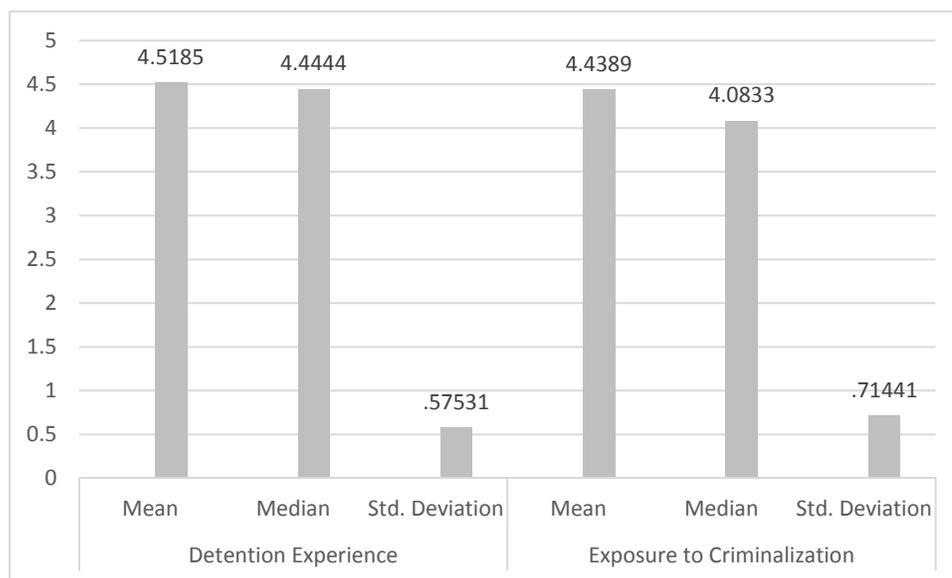
The results of the statistics show that there were two variables measured in the study: (a) detention experience and (b) exposure to criminalization. The mean value for detention experience was 4.5185, with a median value of 4.4444 and a standard deviation of 0.57531. The mean value for exposure to criminalization was 4.4389, with a median value of 4.0833 and a standard deviation of .71441.

Overall, these results suggest that the mean and median values for detention experience and exposure to criminalization were relatively close to each other, with detention experience having a slightly higher mean value. However, the standard deviation value for exposure to criminalization was significantly higher than the standard deviation value for detention experience, which suggests that there may be a greater degree of variation in the scores for exposure to criminalization.

Additionally, the median value for exposure to criminalization was lower than the median value for detention experience, which suggests that there may be more scores at the lower end of the scale for exposure to criminalization (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7**

*Summary Descriptive Statistics*



***t*-test Analysis**

To test whether there was a significant difference between detention experience and exposure to criminalization, I conducted a paired-sample *t*-test. The results of the paired samples statistics showed that the mean for the first pair (detention experience) is 4.5185, with a standard deviation of .57531 and a standard error mean of .14854. The mean for the second pair (exposure to criminalization) was 4.4389, with a standard deviation of .71441 and a standard error mean of .18446. The paired samples correlations showed that there was a strong positive correlation ( $R=.8$ ) between the two variables in the first pair. The sig. value of  $p < .001$  indicates that this correlation was statistically

significant. The paired samples test shows that the mean difference between the two variables in the first pair was .07963, with a standard deviation of .42839 and a standard error mean of .11061. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranges from -.1576 to .31686. The  $t$  value of .72 and  $p$  value of 0.483 indicated that the difference between the two variables was not statistically significant. This means that there was no significant difference between the two variables (see Tables 10, 11, and 12).

**Table 8**

*Paired Samples Statistics*

		Mean	$N$	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Pair 1	Detention experience	4.5185	15	.57531	.14854
	Exposure to criminalization	4.4389	15	.71441	.18446

**Table 9**

*Paired Samples Correlations*

		$N$	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Detention experience & exposure to criminalization	15	.8	<.001

**Table 10***Paired Differences*

Pair	Mean	Paired Std. dev	Std. erro mean	95% CI of the difference		<i>t</i>	dr	Sig (2- tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
1 Detention experience - exposure to criminalization	.07963	.42839	.11061	-.1576	.31686	.72	14	.483

**Regressing Criminalization Exposure on Detention Experience**

Table 13 shows the results of a regression analysis. The model has an *R* value of .8, which indicates a strong positive relationship between the predictor variable (detention experience) and the dependent variable. The *R* square value of .64 indicated that the predictor variable explained 64% of the variance in the dependent variable. The Adjusted *R* Square value of .613 indicated that the predictor variable explains 61.3% of the variance in the dependent variable, considering the number of predictor variables in the model. The Std. error of the estimate was .44454, which was a measure of the average difference between the predicted values and the actual values.

**Table 11***Model Summary*

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> Square	Adjusted <i>R</i> square	Std. error of the estimate
1	.800 <sup>a</sup>	.64	.613	.44454

<sup>a</sup> Predictors: (constant), detention experience

Table 14 shows the results of a statistical significance for the model. The *F* value of 23.157 and the Sig. value of <.001 indicated that the model was statistically

significant. This means that the predictor variable had a significant effect on the dependent variable. The Sum of Squares values for the regression and residual rows show the total variance explained by the model and the variance are not explained by the model, respectively. The df values show the degrees of freedom for each row, which is a measure of the number of independent observations in the data. The Mean Square value was calculated by dividing the Sum of Squares value by the df.

**Table 12**

*Analysis of Variance*

Model 1	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	4.576	1	4.576	23.157	<.001 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	2.569	13	.198		
Total	7.145	14			

**Summary**

The findings suggest that there is a significant relationship between detention experience and exposure to criminalization among juveniles. Specifically, the analysis revealed that detention experience is significantly associated with increased exposure to criminalization. In Chapter 5, I discuss the findings, suggests recommendations, and concludes the study.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, I summarize the findings, discuss them based on literature sources, give implications, suggest recommendations, and conclude the study.

### **Summary of Findings**

In this study, the sample consisted of 15 detention center officers, with most of the participants being male. The respondents had a range of income levels, with most falling in the \$50,000–\$74,999 range. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to over 60, with most falling in the 18–29 and 30–44 ranges. Most of the participants used either Apple or Android phones or tablets. Most of the participants were from the South Atlantic and East North Central regions of the United States. The results of the validity and reliability tests indicated that both the detention experience and exposure to criminalization variables had high levels of validity and reliability.

The normality tests revealed that both variables were normally distributed. The descriptive analysis of the variables showed that the mean and median values for detention experience and exposure to criminalization were relatively close to each other, but the standard deviation for exposure to criminalization was higher than that for detention experience. The *t*-test results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between detention experience and exposure to criminalization. Finally, the regression analysis indicated that detention experience was a significant predictor of exposure to criminalization. Overall, these results suggest that there is a strong relationship between detention experience and exposure to criminalization among juveniles in detention centers. I succeeded in answering the research question of whether

there is a significant relationship between detention experience and exposure to criminalization.

### **Discussion of Key Findings**

According to the results of this research, there appears to be a strong and statistically significant relationship between time spent in detention and opportunities to interact with the criminal justice system. This indicates that individuals who have spent time in a juvenile detention center are at a greater risk of being exposed to criminalization than individuals who have not spent time in a juvenile detention center. These findings are in line with the findings of the literature review, which suggest that incarceration, particularly in detention centers, can make individuals more susceptible to criminalization and the adoption of extremist ideologies. This phenomenon is more likely to occur among male inmates (Bao et al., 2014; Horgan et al., 2016). This vulnerability may be the result of the physical and emotional trauma that can result from detention, as well as the high levels of emotional stress and loss of individual identity that can occur in an environment such as a detention center (Clifford, 2018).

These findings are also consistent with the social control theory and the differential opportunity theory, both of which postulate that individuals may be more likely to engage in criminal behavior if they have weak ties to society or if they have limited access to legitimate opportunities. Both hypotheses are supported by the findings presented by Hirschi (1969). When an individual is incarcerated, particularly in detention centers, their social connections may be severed, and their access to lawful opportunities may be restricted; as a result, they may become more susceptible to becoming involved in criminal activity. The results of the current study lend credence to the theory that having

a history of incarceration may be a risk factor for being exposed to criminalization. This is because having a history of incarceration may weaken an individual's ties to society and limit their access to opportunities that are legal.

However, the findings of this study do not completely coincide with narrative theory, which postulates that individuals' lives can be shaped by the stories and narratives that they hear and see around them (Horgan et al., 2016; Van der Heide & Geenen, 2017). This revelation emerged because the findings of the current study did not reveal a statistically significant difference between detention experience and exposure to criminalization. The literature review suggests that extremist organizations may be able to operate effectively in the underground inmate subculture of detention centers and use narratives to recruit new members (Bao et al., 2014). However, the findings of the current study did not reveal a difference between detention experience and exposure to criminalization. This suggests that the relationship between these variables may be influenced by additional factors.

It is possible that the small number of participants in this study is to blame for the lack of a significant difference between previous time spent in jail and the likelihood of encountering the criminal justice system. It is also possible that more reliable findings could have been obtained with a larger sample size. In addition, I employed a cross-sectional and correlational research design, which means that I only measured the relationship between prior detention experience and prior exposure to criminalization at a single point in time. This is because I assumed there was a linear relationship between the two factors. It is possible that a more in-depth understanding of the relationship between

these variables could be attained using a longitudinal design, which would follow the same individuals over the course of multiple studies.

According to the results of the current study, having prior experience in juvenile detention may be a risk factor for being exposed to criminalization among juveniles. These findings are consistent with the theories of social control and differential opportunity; however, the narrative theory does not fully align with the findings in this study. It is essential to conduct additional research on the relationship between time spent in detention and the risk of involvement in criminal activity to gain a deeper comprehension of the factors that play a role in the involvement of juveniles in criminal activity within detention facilities.

In the interest of conducting a more in-depth investigation into the nature of the connection that exists between these factors, it is recommended that future studies make use of both a larger sample size and a longitudinal approach. In addition, it would be beneficial to investigate other potential risk factors for exposure to criminalization in detention centers, such as the characteristics of the inmates as well as the factors of the surrounding environment. It may be possible to develop interventions to prevent or reduce criminalization among juveniles housed in detention centers if a researcher gains an understanding of the factors that contribute to criminalization in detention centers and how those factors contribute to criminalization. The findings of the current study, taken as a whole, not only contribute to my understanding of the relationship between time spent in detention and exposure to criminalization among juveniles, but they also highlight the importance of conducting additional research in this field.

### **Implications for Positive Social Change**

One key implication of the findings of this study is that detention experience may be a risk factor for exposure to criminalization among juveniles. This suggests that detention centers may not be effective in preventing or reducing criminal behavior among the juveniles they serve. Instead, detention may increase the risk of criminalization by exposing juveniles to negative influences and potentially harmful experiences. These findings have important implications for policymakers and practitioners working in the juvenile justice system. Rather than relying on detention as the primary response to juvenile delinquency, alternative approaches such as community-based programs and restorative justice practices may be more effective in preventing criminal behavior and promoting positive youth development.

Another key implication of the findings is that the relationship between detention experience and exposure to criminalization may be influenced by a variety of factors, including individual characteristics and environmental factors. For example, juveniles who have preexisting mental health or substance abuse issues may be more vulnerable to negative influences in detention and may be at greater risk of exposure to criminalization. Additionally, the social and cultural context in which juveniles are detained may also play a role in their risk of exposure to criminalization. For example, juveniles who are detained in facilities with high levels of gang activity or other forms of criminal behavior may be more likely to be exposed to criminalization. Understanding these contextual factors may be crucial in developing interventions to prevent or reduce criminalization among juveniles in detention centers.

A third key implication of the findings is that it may be important to consider the role of narrative and storytelling in understanding the relationship between detention experience and exposure to criminalization. Although narrative theory was not fully supported by the findings of this study, it is still possible that the stories and narratives that juveniles encounter in detention centers may influence their attitudes and behaviors. For example, juveniles who are exposed to stories of resistance or rebellion may be more likely to engage in criminal behavior, while those who encounter stories of hope and redemption may be more likely to adopt positive coping strategies. Further research is needed to better understand the role of narrative in shaping the experiences of juveniles in detention centers.

Fourth, the findings of this study highlight the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of detention centers in preventing or reducing criminal behavior among juveniles. Although detention may be necessary in some cases to protect public safety, it is important to ensure that these facilities are not contributing to the criminalization of juveniles. One way to do this is by regularly collecting and analyzing data on the experiences and outcomes of juveniles in detention centers. This information may be used to inform the development and implementation of evidence-based practices that are designed to prevent criminalization and promote positive youth development. By taking a more proactive and evidence-based approach to juvenile justice, it may be possible to reduce the risk of criminalization among juveniles in detention centers and promote more positive outcomes for these young individuals.

A fifth key implication of the findings is that interventions aimed at preventing or reducing criminalization among juveniles in detention centers may need to be tailored to

the specific needs of these young individuals. For example, interventions that address mental health issues or substance abuse may be important for juveniles who are at high risk of exposure to criminalization. Similarly, interventions that focus on building social skills, promoting pro-social values, or providing education and vocational training may be helpful in promoting positive youth development and reducing the risk of criminalization. By targeting interventions to the specific needs and characteristics of juveniles in detention centers, it may be possible to more effectively prevent or reduce criminalization and promote positive outcomes.

The findings of this study highlight the complex relationship between detention experience and exposure to criminalization among juveniles. Although detention centers may be necessary in some cases to protect public safety, they also present risks and challenges that may contribute to the criminalization of these young individuals. By examining the experiences and outcomes of juveniles in detention centers and developing targeted and evidence-based interventions, it may be possible to reduce the risk of criminalization and promote more positive outcomes for these young individuals.

### **Recommendations for Research**

There are several recommendations for further research that could help to deepen the understanding of the relationship between detention experience and exposure to criminalization among juveniles. First, it would be valuable to conduct longitudinal research to examine the long-term effects of detention on juveniles. This could involve following a cohort of juveniles over time to understand the potential impacts of detention on outcomes such as recidivism, employment, and mental health. Such research would

provide valuable insights into the long-term effects of detention and inform the development of more effective interventions.

Second, research should be conducted to examine the potential mediating and moderating factors that may influence the relationship between detention experience and exposure to criminalization. This could involve examining whether certain individual characteristics (i.e., age, gender, or mental health status) or environmental factors (i.e., the quality of detention facilities or the presence of supportive adults) influence the risk of criminalization among juveniles in detention centers. Understanding these factors could inform the development of targeted interventions that are more likely to be effective in reducing the risk of criminalization among juveniles.

Third, research should be conducted to examine the effectiveness of different interventions in preventing or reducing criminalization among juveniles in detention centers. This could involve evaluating the impact of different types of programs or interventions (i.e., mental health treatment, vocational training, or social skills training) on outcomes such as recidivism, employment, and mental health. Such research may help to inform the development of more effective interventions and help policymakers and practitioners make informed decisions about how best to support juveniles in detention centers.

### **Conclusion**

In this study, I aimed to examine the relationship between the experiences of juveniles in juvenile detention centers and exposure to criminalization. To answer the research question, I conducted a cross-sectional and correlational study on officers serving in juvenile detention centers in a Midwest U.S. state. My research design

involved collecting data on both detention experience and exposure to criminalization and regressing the latter on the former. These findings indicated that there is a significant relationship between detention experience and exposure to criminalization among juveniles. My analysis revealed that detention experience is significantly associated with increased exposure to criminalization. These findings are consistent with previous research that addressed the potential negative consequences of detention on juveniles.

Although the findings are largely supported by the existing literature on this topic, there is a need for further research to better understand the complex relationship between detention experience and exposure to criminalization. Further research is needed to examine the long-term effects of detention on juveniles, to identify potential mediating and moderating factors that may influence this relationship, and to evaluate the effectiveness of different interventions in preventing or reducing criminalization among juveniles in detention centers. These areas of research are crucial for developing effective interventions to support juveniles in detention centers and reduce the risk of criminalization.

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