

Thesis  
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# **NATURE, EXTENT AND CORRELATES OF BULLYING AND ASSAULT IN PENAL POPULATIONS**

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**By**

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## ABSTRACT

The present thesis is a detailed examination of bullying behaviour in Young Offender Institutions and assaultive behaviour in adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions. An amalgam of methods of enquiry were used throughout, which comprised i) questionnaires, ii) structured interviews, iii) focus groups, iv) standardised measures of personality, intelligence and social background, v) analysis of official discipline report records, vi) analysis of official assault incident report records and vii) analysis of computerised prisoner records. This mixture of methods, known as 'triangulation', was adopted in an attempt to achieve a more reliable and valid representation of bullying and assaultive behaviour occurring within penal establishments. Information was obtained from a variety of subject groups, including convicted young offenders, young offenders on remand, convicted adult prisoners, adult prisoners on remand, prison officers, prisons management and specialist staff working in the prisons. Data were analysed by means of parametric and non-parametric statistical techniques. Seven cross-sectional studies were designed and conducted, the results of which are reported herein. The first five studies examined only Young Offender Institutions. Concerning young offenders, the levels of bullying were comparatively high when compared with studies done on analogous populations. Among young offenders, the most common types of bullying were similar to those shown in previous studies, such as taunting, threats and name calling. More staff in Young Offender Institutions perceived bullying as a problem both nationally and in their own establishment than did young offenders. While staff and young offenders had discordant opinions as to the levels and types of bullying taking place within Young Offender Institutions, they had concordant views as to the characteristics of 'bullies' and 'victims'. The types of bullying (i.e. covert and overt) varied considerably according to type of Young Offender Institution and type of young offender under study. The introduction of an anti-bullying initiative in one Young Offender Institution appeared to change the way bullying was manifested, as noted in the prison records, by reducing overt bullying behaviour and increasing more subversive and covert bullying. The remaining two studies in the thesis examined assault in both adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions. Results revealed that the typology of assaults in adult prisons and young offender establishments were dissimilar in important respects. In Young Offender Institutions the assaults on prisoners were more likely to be 'spontaneous' and result in less severe injury to the victim, whereas in adult prisons the assaults were more likely to be 'planned' and result in more severe injury to the victim. When looking at sub-groups within Scottish prisons and Young Offender Institutions using discriminant function analysis, victims of assaults on prisoners were distinguishable from both perpetrators of assaults on staff and perpetrators of assaults on other prisoners, using a range of social background factors. Victims of assault in adult prisons were more accurately identified (91% correctly identified, compared with 43% at 'chance') than victims in Young Offender Institutions (73% correctly identified, compared with 47% at 'chance'). The introduction of anti-bullying initiatives into young offender establishments, and in particular, how they might effect overt and covert bullying in contrasting ways, is reflected upon. Moreover, the importance of obtaining information from a variety of subject groups and an amalgam of data gathering techniques is highlighted. The utility of using factors relating to an inmate's social background, personality and intelligence to predict involvement in bullying is discussed. Finally, the main findings from the thesis are discussed in relation to the relevant literature, practical implications for intervention and areas where future research may be necessary.

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## PREFACE

### Introduction

As a whole, the present thesis attempts to gather evidence about the nature, extent and correlates of: (i) bullying in Young Offender Institutions and (ii) assaults in adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions.

More specifically, the studies in the thesis were conducted to: (a) obtain the views of a representative sample of young offenders and staff on the aetiology, circumstances surrounding and consequences of bullying in Young Offender Institutions (**Chapters 3 & 4**), (b) assess the potential impact of an anti-bullying strategy on how victimization is manifested (i.e. covert and overt manifestations) within a Young Offenders Institution and evaluate the use of official records for such a purpose (**Chapter 5**), (c) examine the type and quality of information derived from using an in-depth method of data collection (i.e. focus groups) (**Chapter 6**), (d) assess the extent to which it is possible to predict bullying behaviour in Young Offender Institutions using a range of factors shown by previous victimization research to be influential (i.e. social background, demographic factors and personality) (**Chapter 7**), (e) compare and contrast the respective aetiologies, circumstances surrounding and consequences of assaults in Young Offender Institutions and adult prisons (**Chapters 8 & 9**), and (f) assess the extent to which it is possible to predict who becomes involved in assaultive behaviour in adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions using factors shown by previous victimization research to be influential (i.e. social background and demographic factors) (**Chapter 9**).

## **Précis of the thesis**

The thesis contains ten chapters: **Chapter 1** begins with a historical perspective on bullying in school, work and penal environments and analytically discusses how previous studies have defined bullying. A review of the extensive literature on bullying in schools and prisons both world-wide and in the UK, is provided. The various methods of data collection that have been developed in previous research are critically evaluated, e.g. quantitative methodologies, such as official records, structured interviews and self-completion questionnaires; and qualitative methodologies, such as focus groups and open-ended interviews. Research studies suggesting the possible correlates of bullying in schools and prisons are evaluated. Furthermore, the characteristics of 'bullies' and 'victims' identified in previous studies are highlighted. This chapter also reviews research attempting to identify the factors associated with being a bully and a victim.

**Chapter 2** presents an in-depth review of studies investigating assaults among psychiatric and penal populations, which have principally been conducted in North America and the UK. **Chapter 2** begins with a historical perspective of research into assault and goes on to examine the problems associated with previous studies that have used a definition of assault. Furthermore, **Chapter 2** examines previous studies that have used official records and questionnaires, and outlines the problems associated with such data gathering techniques. Particular attention is given to a body of literature investigating differences between young offenders and adult prisoners concerning the ways assaultive behaviour is manifested. Finally, the salient gaps in the literature reviewed in **Chapters 1 & 2** are identified and expounded.

**Chapters 3 to 9** present the research studies embodying the present thesis: **Chapter 3** details results from structured questionnaires distributed to inmates in all Scottish Young Offender Institutions. The questionnaire was designed to ascertain the nature and extent of bullying from a representative sample of inmates. The study attempts to identify characteristics associated with self-reported 'bullies', 'victims' and 'other' inmates (i.e. inmates who were neither 'bullies' nor 'victims').

**Chapter 4** presents the results from structured questionnaires distributed to staff in all Scottish Young Offender Institutions. The primary aim being to find out staff perceptions of the nature and extent of bullying among prisoners. The study then attempts to compare the perceptions of staff with the perceptions of young offenders regarding bullying in Young Offender Institutions.

**Chapter 5** is concerned with results from analysis of official prison discipline reports relevant to bullying. The study aims to investigate whether bullying is manifested in different ways (e.g. covert, overt, etc.) at different types of young offender establishment (e.g. remand, long-term convicted, etc.). Moreover, this chapter investigates whether the introduction of an anti-bullying initiative at one establishment leads to discernible changes in the extent and/or nature of bullying.

**Chapter 6** presents in-depth results from focus groups (i.e. group discussions) with inmates held at all Scottish Young Offender Institutions. The study examines inmates' perceptions and beliefs about bullying in Scottish Young Offender Institutions. This chapter gives particular consideration to the advantages and disadvantages of using focus groups in a prison context and in relation to other methods of data collection.

**Chapter 7** reports the findings from a series of standardised measures and demographic questions delivered to young offenders in an interview format. Groups that were interviewed included: (a) young offenders who had been bullied by other young offenders; (b) young offenders who had bullied other young offenders; and (c) young offenders who were neither bullies nor victims. These three groups were then compared with regard to social background, personality and intelligence characteristics. Specifically, **Chapter 7** explores the extent to which such factors might be inter-related, and the extent to which they might predict young offender status as a 'victim' or a 'bully'.

In an effort to compare adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions regarding the nature and extent of victimization, an in-depth analysis of prison assault records was undertaken (from April 1995 to December, 1996) (**Chapter 8**)<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, **Chapter 9** compares the 'prisoner characteristics' of those involved in incidents of assault (perpetrators of assault on staff, perpetrators of assault on prisoners and victims of assault on prisoners), using a range of background factors taken from the Prisoner Records.

Finally, **Chapter 10** outlines the main findings from the research studies comprising the current thesis, highlights some of the limitations of the research, suggests appropriate directions for future study and proposes practical implications for the work in terms of prison policy.

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 8 for a description of the reasons why assault reports were used.

## **CHAPTER 1**

**BULLYING IN SCHOOLS, THE  
WORKPLACE AND PENAL  
ESTABLISHMENTS:**

**A CRITIQUE OF THE RESEARCH**

# **Chapter 1**

## **Bullying in Schools, the Workplace and Penal Establishments: A Critique of the Research**

### **1.1 Historical perspective**

Systematic research in the area of 'Bullying in Penal Institutions' is still in its infancy. This is perhaps surprising given that bullying is by no means a new phenomenon. The lack of research in this area may be indicative of a number of problems inherent with the study of bullying. The first major stumbling block concerns the question of definition. Currently, there is no widely agreed or accepted definition of bullying. Indeed, at an individual level one individual's definition of bullying may differ markedly from another's (see Section 1.2). Different people have different thresholds for, attitudes toward and tolerance of bullying behaviour. The social and organisational ethos of an institution or a group will also determine the level of acceptability of bullying type behaviour among its members. Furthermore, there are many cultural differences relating to bullying which make international comparisons somewhat problematic.

The popular conception of bullying is as a behaviour associated with school life. Early reports on school bullying can be dated as far back as 1897 when Burk's article on 'Teasing and Bullying' was published in the Pedagogical Seminary. However, more systematic attention to the issue of school bullying did not appear until the 1970s (Heinemann, 1973; Lowenstein, 1978 (a)(b); Olweus 1978). Much of

this work was Scandinavian in origin and it was not until the 1980s that studies were undertaken in UK school settings (Besag, 1995; Tattum & Lane, 1989). As highlighted by Smith (1997), it was as late as 1994 that school intervention programmes were devised for England and Wales (Cowie & Sharp, 1994; Smith, 1994). In Scotland, the Scottish Council for Research in Education has published several documents specifically designed to address bullying in schools (Mellor, 1993, Munn, 1993).

The nature and extent of bullying in schools have been assessed by a number of studies. Rayner & Hoel (1997) reported standardised measures related to bullying 'in the last six months' in order to provide comparative data between school studies. While accepting the numerous problems with international comparison of schools, rates of school bullying across different countries have been cited, for example Sweden at 15% (Olweus, 1989) and the UK at 23% (Stephenson and Smith, 1989). Acts of school bullying in America have been associated with the use of weapons, with 19% of 8th graders reporting having been threatened with the use of a weapon (Johnston, O'Malley, & Backman, 1993). Other studies have examined the links between bullying in school and delinquent behaviour in later life (Farrington, 1994; Kidscape, 1986; Tattum & Lane, 1989). These studies found that school bullies were generally more prone to involvement in delinquent behaviour during adolescence and early adulthood than were the 'victims' of bullying or those children who were not involved in bullying. As Young Offender Institutions, by their very nature, house young adults from society who have exhibited delinquent behaviour, it follows that a disproportionate number of bullies will be among such populations.

Research concerning workplace bullying has lagged behind those studies conducted in school settings. Here again the most comprehensive studies have been

done in Scandinavian countries (Leymann, 1990; Einarsson & Skogstad, 1996). Scandinavian researchers often refer to bullying as 'mobbing' (after the English word 'mob', referring to a group activity). Scandinavia also has some of the most detailed laws specifically designed to combat workplace bullying. Such laws are also matched by heightened public awareness of such issues. Reported rates of bullying at work actually vary quite considerably between studies, although different time frames of enquiry serve to make direct comparison difficult. In an overview of 14 different Norwegian studies involving 7086 subjects, Einarsson and Skogstad (1996) reported that 8.6% of the sample stated they had been bullied at work in the previous six months.

The extent of workplace bullying in the UK has recently been brought to public attention by Rayner (1997), who reported that of 1137 subjects, 53% stated that they had been bullied at some point during their working lives, whereas 77% had witnessed bullying at work. The negative impact of work related bullying is considerable. Some literature suggests that up to one third of UK stress related employment legal cases are primarily the result of workplace bullying (Earnshaw & Cooper, 1996).

The Prison Service in England & Wales took direct steps to tackle bullying on both a national and local prison level. In 1993, a nation-wide anti-bullying campaign was launched in an attempt to inform all institutions about the nature of the problem and to suggest means of combating it. The opening of a new Young Offender Institution in 1993, with the aim of addressing the issue of bullying, revealed a profound commitment to the campaign.

The campaign resulted in part from the Home Office Research and Statistics Department findings in the National Prison Survey. The survey found that almost one fifth of prisoners indicated that they did not feel safe from being injured or bullied by other prisoners. Also, nearly one prisoner in ten stated that they had been assaulted by another prisoner over a six month period (Walmsley, Howard & White, 1992). Evidence from the same study about the extent of the problem revealed that 18% of the prisoners questioned reported that they did not feel safe while in prison. However, a later study by Adler (1994) revealed a larger figure of 51% who stated that they did not feel safe while in prison.

In Scotland this problem has also been highlighted by official data. A nationwide survey of all inmates in Scottish penal establishments was carried out from December 1993 to February 1994 (Wozniak, Gemmell & Machin, 1994), and findings showed that 24% of inmates had been made to fear for their safety by other inmates during their current prison sentence. A more contemporary version of the prison survey was conducted in 1998 (Wozniak, Dyson & Carnie, 1998). This document revealed that over 90% of prisoners residing in Scottish Young Offender Institutions thought that the Scottish Prison Service should implement a strategy to combat bullying. Moreover, in the same survey 16% of inmates indicated that they had feared for their safety at some point during their current sentence. This figure is down 8% from the 24% shown in the previous survey in 1994. The 1998 prison survey also showed that those young offenders having feared for their safety were also more likely to have been anxious, depressed, have had problems coping with prison life and have expressed suicidal ideation.

Many other British studies have also highlighted the problem of bullying as a possible causal factor in self-harm and suicide in prison (Home Office, 1986; Liebling, 1991; Liebling & Krarup, 1992; Lloyd, 1990; Power & Spencer, 1987; S.H.H.D 1985). Liebling and Krarup (1992) found that over one quarter of suicide attempts in an English prison were related to pressures reported from other prisoners. Furthermore, the Scottish Home and Health Department (S.H.H.D.) produced a report on suicide precautions at Glenochil Young Offenders Institution in Scotland in 1985. This report indicated that those inmates vulnerable to suicide were also those under pressure from fellow prisoners within the institution, i.e. inmates who were:

*"physically assaulted or verbally harassed and teased"*, where *"tobacco was extorted"*, and where campaigns of *"whispering, with implied threats"* were carried out. (S.H.H.D., 1985: p 23)

More recently, a Scottish Prison Service Occasional Paper revealed that staff in Scottish Prisons considered bullying to be a major causal factor of suicidal behaviour in prison (Power, 1997).

Aside from the above attempts to clarify the problem, and the few studies designed to establish the nature and extent of bullying in British penal establishments (Beck, 1994; Connell & Farrington, 1996; Ireland & Archer, 1996), bullying among incarcerated populations has not been the subject of extensive research. This may be a consequence of the fact that bullying may be seen as an inevitable part of prison life, that the covert nature of bullying means it defies the vigilance of prison officers, or that officers may be ignoring it in the belief that prisoners deserve all the punishment that they get.

Although, research into the nature and extent of the problem has only begun in recent years, this does not imply that bullying within prisons is a new phenomenon. A considerable body of research has been conducted regarding the related issues of victimization and violence in penal establishments. The vast majority of these studies have been carried out in North American institutions (Bowker, 1979; Cooley, 1993; Mutchnick & Fawcett, 1991; Mutchnick & Fawcett, 1990; Porporino et al., 1987). A number of which have attempted to assess the frequency of victimization and violence, and while some have found victimization and violence to be widespread (Bowker, 1979; Cooley, 1993), others (Mutchnick & Fawcett, 1990) have found the incidence to be lower than generally believed. On the whole, this body of work has attempted to investigate the nature and extent of victimization using self-report measures.

Studies which focus on bullying/victimization are herein reviewed in the present chapter of the thesis. These studies have been mostly descriptive, examining the nature and extent of bullying/victimization in penal establishments. To date, no detailed study of bullying has been undertaken in a Scottish penal context.

In assessing the quality of research to date concerning bullying in the current chapter, whether it is in a school or penal setting, it became apparent that initial studies were primarily anecdotal in nature. Later studies were more descriptive and concentrated on describing the frequency and extent of bullying behaviour. Most of these studies looked at the problem of bullying from the perspective of the victim. More recently, studies focused on the characteristics of the victim and the bully, and attempted to distinguish them in their respective roles. The remainder of this

chapter examines the research on bullying in two environments in detail (schools and prisons) in detail.

## 1.2 Definitional issues: What is Bullying?

### 1.2.1 Definitions from the literature: School studies

Definitions of bullying among school children have been put forward by a number of studies. Smith and Thompson (1991) defined bullying among school children as:

*"A subset of aggressive behaviour" that "intentionally causes hurt to the recipient. This hurt can be both physical or psychological; while some bullying takes the form of hitting, pushing, taking money, it can also involve telling nasty stories, or social exclusion. It can be carried out by one child or a group". (Smith & Thompson, 1991: pg 1)*

In addition, Smith and Thompson indicated that further criteria may distinguish bullying. They advocated that bullying must be:

*"unprovoked", or a "a repeated action",*

(Smith & Thompson, 1991: p 1)

and where the child doing the bullying is:

*"generally thought of as being stronger"*

(Smith & Thompson, 1991: p 1)

Teasing may also be taken as bullying but tends to depend on the context as to whether it is regarded as playful or not (Pawluk, 1989). Therefore, bullying can be a matter of perception on behalf of the individual/s committing the act and the individual/s on the receiving end.

Based on his research in schools, Olweus (1989), put forward the following definition:

*"a person is bullied when he/she is exposed, regularly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons"*

(Olweus, 1989: p45)

Olweus' definition, as well as the definition proposed by Smith & Thompson (1991), incorporate the main elements of bullying behaviour as: i) imbalance of power, with the individuals with power attacking those without power, ii) frequency, occurring on more than one occasion, and iii) nature, being either verbal, physical, or psychological.

Besag (1995) in a comprehensive review of the literature carried out in school settings added to the above three facets of the behaviour and proposed that bullying may be disguised as:

*"socially acceptable behaviour, as in a highly competitive approach to academic, sporting or social success, which, by intent, makes others feel inferior or causes distress"*

Besag (1995: p 5)

Manifold definitions exist throughout the literature related to bullying in school settings and emphasise varying aspects of the behaviour. Where the application of a rigid definition may fall down, as Besag (1995) and Pawluck (1989) both noted, is the failure to account for the differing perceptions of the victims and the bullies. A particular type of behaviour may be interpreted as bullying by one person, but considered innocuous by another.

While numerous definitions of bullying have appeared in the school literature, there have been only a few definitions forthcoming within the literature concerned with penal populations, and in particular young offender populations. Therefore, there is limited information as to whether definitions derived from a school setting can be used apropos other settings, such as the work place or prisons.

To conclude, studies using different definitions may, in effect, be measuring different behaviours, and this reduces the scope for comparison. This has been highlighted consistently within the literature looking at bullying in schools (Arora & Thompson, 1987; Hoover et.al., 1992).

### **1.2.2 Examples from the literature: British penal studies**

To date, studies of bullying among inmates in British penal institutions have used definitions based on bullying research conducted in schools (Beck, 1992; Beck, 1994). Few studies have attempted to develop a definition of bullying that applies directly to penal environments housing young adult inmates. One notable exception was a British study (HM Prison Service, 1993) that chose to use a definition of

bullying derived from working with young offenders in penal settings. The definition that arose was in two parts. The first part mentioned the motivating factors of those perpetrating the bullying:

*"Conduct motivated by the desire to hurt, threaten, or frighten someone"*

(HM Prison Service, 1993: p 1)

The second part of the above definition encompassed a list of recognised bullying behaviours as identified by incarcerated young offenders: assault (including sexual assault); verbal abuse, name calling, teasing, threats, racist language; forcing other prisoners to hand over possessions; lending money, or giving drugs to other inmates and demanding repayment with interest; and using threats to persuade inmates to get drugs into prison. In comparison with definitions from studies of bullying in school and penal settings the above definition is over inclusive in terms of the behaviours it acknowledges to be bullying. As a result, researchers comparing figures of bullying from different studies should be aware of definitional inconsistencies.

A study investigating bullying among populations of young offenders (Beck, 1994) also adopted a wide ranging definition of 'bullying' based on research done in school settings. This definition was adapted only slightly to apply to a penal setting:

*"we say a young person is being bullied, or picked on when another young person or a group of young people say nasty or unpleasant things to him. It is also bullying when a person is hit, kicked, threatened, sent nasty notes and things like that. These things can happen*

*frequently and it is difficult for the young person to defend himself. It is also bullying when a young person is teased repeatedly in a nasty way."*

(Beck, 1994: p 17)

This definition includes several behaviours that may be considered to be bullying by some individuals, but makes no allowance for the differing perceptions or behaviours of the victim. For example, one person may have unpleasant things said to him and shrug it off or ignore it, while another may take it to heart, feel down, or worry incessantly. Including these types of behaviour within a definition may serve to incorporate elements that many prisoners would not include. Furthermore, the phraseology of the definition appears to be more suitable for young children than for a population of young offenders who can be up to 21 years old.

Ireland & Archer (1996) examined adult bullying among male and female prisoners. They included a definition of a general nature while suggesting behaviours occurring within the prison which may encompass such a definition:

*"We say it is bullying when someone deliberately hurts, threatens or frightens someone in order to take things from them or just for the fun of it. It can include what is known as 'baroning' or 'taxing' and can take many forms, such as:*

- a) Assault-both physical and sexual;*
- b) Verbal abuse-name calling etc.;*
- c) Gossiping/spreading rumours;*
- d) Lending money or giving drugs, alcohol or tobacco to other inmates and demanding payment with interest;*
- e) Forcing other inmates to hand over their possessions;*

- f) *Issuing threats to persuade those inmates receiving visits or going to home leave to*
- g) *bring back drugs with them; and*
- h) *Ignoring/ostracising people."*

(Ireland & Archer, 1996: p 44)

The above definition is specific in that it identifies each type of behaviour that might constitute bullying. However, the behaviours cover a wide spectrum from sexual assault to ignoring/ostracising, and each may have collateral causes and consequences. Consequently, examining such distinctive behaviours at an aggregate level may serve to lose effects that would have been conspicuous had they been analysed separately. Furthermore, no recognition is given within the definition to the frequency of the behaviour or indeed the response of the victims or the motivation of the bully. Indeed, it may be inappropriate to include assaults within such a definition, as assaults can be 'one-off' incidents which resolve arguments rather than as part of a long-term 'bullying relationship'.

### 1.2.3 Definitions from the literature: North American studies

In North America the more general term of 'victimization' is used more frequently and applied specifically in penal settings to refer to:

*"a predatory practice where inmates of a superior strength and knowledge of inmate lore prey on weaker and less knowledgeable inmates"*

(Bartollas, Miller & Dinitz, 1976: p 143)

or

*"a transaction in which a relatively more powerful individual or group receives more goods, services, or other advantages from a relatively less powerful individual or group through coercive exercise of superior resources"* (Bowker, 1980: p 110)

Similar to the British definitions of bullying in Section 1.2.2, the above definitions of victimization included the element of perceived power of one individual over another. Moreover, the studies from North America are also similar to British studies in that they were conducted from the perspective of understanding the causes of victimization within prisons, rather than from the perspective of quantifying and understanding the responses to the behaviours and the problems faced by the victimised prisoners.

Again, similar to the British studies mentioned earlier, the definitions of 'victimization' from North American studies were devised to refer to a wide range of behaviours. The definitions were inclusive of both one-off and prolonged episodes of physical and/or psychological aggression directed at the weaker elements of the population. However, the emphasis in the North American studies has been to investigate one-off, non-systematic and often very serious incidents of victimization, such as assault with and without a weapon and rape (Bartollas, Miller & Dinitz, 1974, Bartollas, Miller & Dinitz, 1976; Grascwicz, 1977; Mutchnick & Fawcett, 1990). Definitions from North America have tended to focus on specific behaviours encompassed under the general term 'victimization', for example in relation to assault:

*"perceived and/or actual physical attacks, with or without a weapon"*

(Bohn, 1980: p 54)

In a preliminary study examining bullying among a group of incarcerated young offenders Connell & Farrington (1996) utilised a definition, cited by Farrington (1993):

*"repeated oppression of a less powerful person by a more powerful one"*  
(Farrington, 1993, cited in Connell & Farrington, 1996: p 75)

Connell & Farrington (1996) went on to indicate that the above definition involved three further elements:

*"physical, verbal, or psychological attack, threat or intimidation that is intended to cause fear, harm or distress to the victim";*

*"imbalance of physical or psychological power, with a more powerful person oppressing a less powerful one, or with several people ganging up on the victim"; and*

*"continuous series of incidents between the same people over a prolonged time period"*  
(Connell & Farrington, 1996: p 75).

Connell & Farrington's definition originated from work done on bullying in school settings and has been accepted by most researchers as a comprehensive and valid definition.

On the whole, North American studies have included definitions ranging from the general to the specific. The bulk of studies investigating more specific and

often more serious incidents of victimization, such as assault, may be included within a wider definition of bullying/victimization or investigated in their own right. While the term 'bullying' could encompass one-off incidents the emphasis may lie in the systematic and often prolonged nature of the behaviour that may, or may not, necessarily manifest itself in very serious, aggressive incidents. Evidently there may be problems comparing the incidence level of bullying/victimization both between and within British and North American studies.

#### **1.2.4 Main problems establishing a definition of bullying**

Determining an appropriate and consistent definition of 'bullying' among penal populations is a difficult task. There are a number of different definitions evident within the literature on bullying in schools and victimization in North American prisons. Some of these have been general and some more specific. Therefore, comparing studies using manifestly different definitions of victimization/bullying remains a difficult task. Researchers must take the decision as to the types of behaviours that they wish to include within such a definition. In the earlier stages of research it is perhaps advisable to include as many behaviours as possible so that those responding to research questions might elaborate on the exact nature of the problem as they perceive it. Then as the research, and knowledge about the behaviour, progresses definitions may be posited regarding specific elements of the problem.

Definitions applied by researchers thus far have largely failed to take into account the different perceptions of those individuals involved, and particularly the way in which the victims respond to, or perceive, such behaviour. For example, one

type of individual may be able to cope with a particular type of teasing whereas another finds the same behaviour difficult to cope with. Therefore, some inmates would indicate behaviours to be bullying while others would not. The fact that different groups perceive behaviour differently is further highlighted by the fact that bullies tend to justify their own behaviour (Beck, 1994). This is achieved by the bully intimating that the victim will not defend himself/herself and therefore somehow does not deserve to have any 'possessions' or 'goods', such as a radio, phone cards, or tobacco. If an individual is not prepared to conform to the norms of the subculture and 'fit in' then the bully will see him/her as a target. As a consequence, the bullies consider the victim to be at fault and by logical progression, deserving of being bullied. The victim also may see himself/herself as deserving of being bullied (Roland, 1989) as he/she may have low self-esteem or self-worth. It may be of limited concern to the victim that he/she has slightly less tobacco per week, so long as he/she does not get beaten up.

The perception on the part of the bully that he/she was provoked has also been a contentious issue among researchers in school settings (Stephenson & Smith, 1989) and may warrant further attention within penal settings. This argument infers that a victim may deliberately, and on a regular basis, behave in an unusual or provocative way in order to 'get noticed' by his/her peers. While, the attention from the victim's peers may be negative and deprecatory, the mere fact that they have been recognised reinforces such behaviour in the future. Therefore, due consideration should be given to the perceptions of both the 'bullies' and the 'victims' when developing an appropriate definition in the future.

Few studies have established a definition of bullying behaviour specific to a penal population. Indeed, most have concentrated on adapting definitions from research conducted on school age populations. Therefore, knowledge about the way that prisoners might conceptualise the problem is sparse. The process of adopting a definition of bullying from one type of population and applying it to another may be flawed. This may be particularly apparent when applying definitions from primary school children and applying them to adults. Further work regarding bullying in penal establishments might therefore proceed with the aim of establishing a definition through sampling directly the experiences and attitudes of the population/s under study.

A paucity of studies have attempted to differentiate between the definitions of different groups within penal establishments, such as young offenders, adult offenders, prison staff, male inmates and female inmates. Studies have already indicated that perceptions and experiences of bullying may differ between staff and prisoners (Beck, 1994) and between male and female adult prisoners (Ireland & Archer, 1996). Therefore, the use of a pre-determined definition for manifestly different subject groups may be problematic.

It was for the reasons outlined above that it was considered dubious to provide respondents with a rigid definition of bullying in the present series of studies embodying this thesis. Throughout the present series of studies the terms 'bullying' and 'victimization' were used interchangeably to encompass the multifarious definitions cited above. This was in response to the fact that many studies conducted in North American and British penal institutions used such terms based upon operational definitions that were synonymous.

A more inclusive approach to the investigation of bullying may serve to highlight more specific aspects and the extent to which different groups within Scottish Young Offender Institutions might perceive such behaviours as constituting 'bullying'.

### **1.3 An Overview of Studies of Bullying in School Settings**

The following section of the thesis is a synopsis of the large body of work that has been conducted to examine bullying in school settings. In particular the studies investigating the factors associated with being a 'bully' and a 'victim' are exemplified. Furthermore, two well-cited models that were devised to conceptualise the problem of bullying in schools are evaluated, and the applicability of such models to penal settings is discussed.

Bullying, as a sub-set of violent and victimising behaviour, has been researched within a school environment since the late 1960's, with the pioneering work of Olweus (1978) in Scandinavia. His initial work sparked further interest in Britain, Australia and North America and research became more prevalent in the 1980's (Munthe, 1989; Perry, Kusel & Perry, 1988; Stephenson & Smith, 1989; Tattum & Lane, 1989). The majority of studies attempted to assess the incidence of bullying and concluded that accurate levels were almost impossible to ascertain owing to the covert nature of bullying in a school environment (St. John-Brookes, 1984).

Studies looking at the problem in a school setting have highlighted incidence rates ranging from 4% (Newson & Newson, 1984) to 77% (Hillery & O'Moore, 1988). However, these studies varied considerably with respect to the ages and types of

populations under study, the definitions of bullying adopted and the methods used to collate data.

### **1.3.1 Factors associated with being a 'bully' and a 'victim'**

A large number of studies of bullying in schools attempted to investigate the personality and background characteristics of children who were both 'bullies' and 'victims' (Lowenstein, 1978 (a)(b); Olweus, 1978; Olweus, 1984; O'Moore, 1989; Stephenson & Smith, 1989).

The literature has revealed 'bullies' in schools to have certain personality, family background and social background characteristics:

- i) they are liable to be 'dominating', 'aggressive', 'boastful' and 'attention-seeking' (Byrne, 1987);
- ii) they are likely to have 'good coping skills' and are generally 'assertive' (Olweus, 1984);
- iii) they seek to maintain a 'macho image' in front of their peers (Lowenstein, 1978 [a]);
- iv) on the whole they tend to justify their behaviour and believe the victim 'deserves the punishment' (Bjorkquist, Ekman & Lagerspetz, 1982);
- v) they tend to be 'confident' and 'socially bold' (Bjorkquist, Ekman & Lagerspetz, 1982; Byrne, 1987; Olweus, 1978);
- vi) they have inconsistent discipline from their family (Olweus, 1978); and
- vii) they have more family problems in general than other children (Mitchell & O'Moore, 1987; Stephenson & Smith, 1989).

Whereas the 'victims' within the literature have been shown to have the following personality, family background and social background characteristics:

- i) they tend to be 'insecure in social relations' (O'Moore, 1988);
- ii) they are likely to have 'over close relationships' with their family (Lagerspetz et al., 1982);
- iii) such individuals are liable to be 'shy, withdrawn, passive' and have 'poor communication skills' (Lowenstein, 1978 (b); Olweus, 1978);
- iv) they are prone to having 'feelings of inadequacy' and generally retain 'low self-esteem' (Lagerspetz, Kirsti, Bjorkvist, Berts & King, 1982; Lowenstein, 1978 (b), Olweus, 1978);
- v) they tend to feel that they cannot cope on their own and tend to be incapable of eliciting support from their peers (Lowenstein, 1978 [b]); and
- vi) they have significantly more 'family problems' in general than other children (Stephenson & Smith, 1989; Mitchell & O'Moore, 1987).

Other factors on which 'bullies' and 'victims' were shown to differ from controls (neither 'bullies' nor 'victims') include physical appearance, with victims being:

- a) more likely to be overweight than normal students (Lagerspetz, Kirsti, Bjorkvist, Berts & King 1982);
- b) physically weaker than normal students (Lagerspetz, Kirsti, Bjorkvist, Berts & King. 1982; O'Moore, 1989);
- c) smaller than bullies (Lagerspetz, Kirsti, Bjorkvist, Berts & King, 1982; Kidscape, 1986); and

d) of below average attractiveness (Lowenstein, 1978 [b]).

While the above studies are largely successful in distinguishing the characteristics of 'bullies' and 'victims', in some cases they are alike (e.g. family background problems). This may be a reflection of the group of individuals who may be both bullies and victims. Alternatively, it may indicate that although bullies and victims both manifest family background problems, the specific nature of the problems are different. It may be that studies have failed to examine such problems in sufficient depth to elicit such differences.

The studies identifying the physical factors that may be indicative of bullies and victims have on the whole presented conflicting evidence as to their effects. Some studies have shown that physical strength is important (Gilmartin, 1987; Roland, 1989) while others suggest that it is not (Munthe, 1989; Olweus, 1984). These contrasting results may be indicative of the fact that studies have included manifestly different types of individual (e.g. males versus females; private school pupils versus state school pupils; pupils in Australian schools versus pupils in Scandinavian schools) where different problems exist, or that methods of collecting data have differed between studies (e.g. some used large sample sizes while others used small sample sizes). While there is some dubiety surrounding physical characteristics, certain background and personality factors have been shown consistently to be related to being a 'bully' and a 'victim' within the literature (e.g. low self-esteem for victims, history of bullying behaviour for bullies and family problems for both bullies and victims). It may be fruitful to examine such factors when attempting to differentiate groups (bullies, victims and non-bullies and non-victims) in different settings (e.g. prisons or the work place).

### **1.3.2 Models of bullying behaviour in schools**

Stephenson & Smith (1989) categorised individuals with regard to bullying in a school setting. This taxonomy of groups involved in bullying was based on previous research that had been conducted on the characteristics of 'bullies' and 'victims' in school settings. The categorisation was as follows:

- A) **AVERAGE:** *neither bullies nor victims*
- B) **BULLIES:** *Physically strongest, active, assertive, easily provoked, enjoy situations with aggressive content, a positive attitude toward violence*
- C) **ANXIOUS BULLIES:** *mainly male, lacking in confidence, few likeable qualities, frequent problems at home, poor attainment and/or concentration, insecure and unpopular, educational difficulties, bully to compensate for feelings of inadequacy*
- D) **VICTIMS:** *passive, low self-confidence, unpopular, physically weaker/stronger, do not complain*
- E) **PROVOCATIVE VICTIMS:** *more assertive/confident than other victims, provoke bullying, present many management problems*
- F) **BULLY/VICTIMS:** *both bully and victim, least popular, physically stronger than their victims, more assertive than their victims, easily provoked, frequently provoke others.*  
(Stephenson & Smith, 1989, p17)

The above taxonomy devised by Stephenson & Smith (1989) identifies the different types of school children who may be involved in bullying behaviours. However, such a model does not take into account other factors that may play a role in determining the nature and extent of bullying within the school milieu. These other factors may include the school rules, relationships between inmates and the school sub-culture.

Olweus (1978), on the other hand, did attempt to incorporate a wide range of influential factors in a modular form. He called this a 'theory sketch'. Which he advocated as a useful tool towards determining the presence and degree of bullying problems within any school (see Figure 1.1). Olweus argued that by producing a model at the preliminary stage of his bullying research he could ensure that no essential aspects of the problem were overlooked.

The model itself was fairly rudimentary and consisted of a series of sections (A-F). The final section of the model (Section F) indicates the degree of bullying problems in any school class. The degree of bullying being determined by the severity of types of bullying, the number of children involved as bullies and victims and the frequency of the behaviours.

Olweus recognised that 'Group Climate' (Section E) represented the degree of tensions and conflicts characterising the group as a whole or discrete sub-groups. Section E is the core of the model and is linked with all other sections. The symbols S1, S2, S3, etc. in Section E represent the individuals within the group or sub-groups. These individuals each have their own physical and psychological characteristics

(Sections C and D respectively) that can determine their relative positions within the group or sub-groups as a bully, victim, or neither a bully nor a victim.

Olweus argued that such factors might predict an individuals propensity to bully or be a victim, and may have their origins in their developmental histories (Section A). Olweus also recognised the importance of the school setting as a determinant of the degree and type of bullying in any class (Section B). Section B incorporates elements such as the design of the school, the size of the class, the teachers role, etc.

The model only provides the reader with a framework from which to work and does not provide information as to the exact antecedents, behaviours and consequences of such behaviour. Furthermore, the model does not adequately describe how the 'degree of bullying problems' are to be measured. For example, severity of bullying is not explained and the reader is left unsure as to whether this is severity of injury, psychological harm, use of a weapon, etc.

Furthermore, the 'presence or degree of bullying problems' may be very difficult to ascertain in an accurate way owing to the covert nature of the problem. As such, the levels of bullying may simply reflect changes in attitudes of reporting the problem among pupils and teachers, rather than changes in the behaviours themselves. Therefore, the method of data gathering may determine the reported degree of bullying problems, which the model does not recognise.

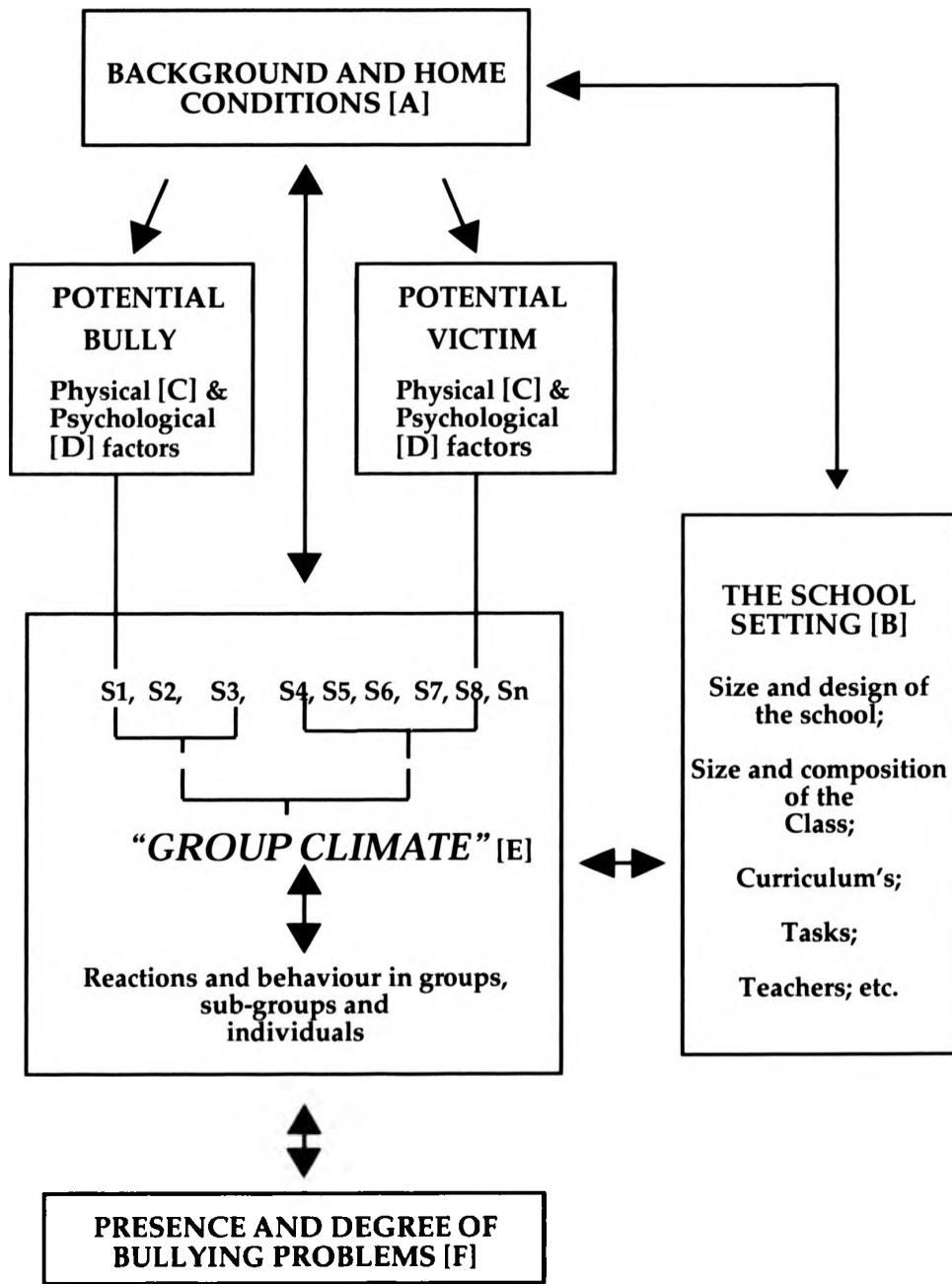


Figure 1.1 Model showing the factors of significance toward determining the presence and extent of bullying problems (Olweus, 1978: pp 12)

While the model may have certain weaknesses as a theoretical tool, Olweus did acknowledge that his aim in devising the 'theory sketch' was simply to provide an overview of the complexity of problems involved in bullying and as a guide for future empirical research and analysis. Therefore, while the present thesis acknowledges the weaknesses of the model, the thesis also welcomes the model as a useful starting point for research within other settings and populations.

Indeed, the model may be easily applied to Young Offender Institutions or adult prisons, as within such settings individuals can live within the same 'Group Climate' for twenty-four hours a day rather than just during prescribed school hours. Moreover, the model can apply to penal settings simply by making minor changes to Section B (School Setting), where the factors could be 'size and design of the penal institution', 'size and composition of the hall/gallery', 'regimes' and 'role of prison officers', etc.

### **1.3.3 Conclusions: Bullying in school settings**

The above studies and exemplifying models have provided a great deal of evidence for the existence of differences in terms of characteristics both between and within groups of 'bullies', 'victims', and 'normal' children. However, it may be unwise to generalise such findings to different populations that reside within diametric environments. Indeed, examining bullying in a setting such as a school, where children come and go each day, may be a completely different scenario from examining the same problem in a completely closed environment, such as a high security prison. Furthermore, the majority of studies within school settings may not be comparable owing to the different definitions and methodologies used. This may

have elicited an inconstancy in terms of findings (e.g. some studies showing physical differences between 'bullies' and 'victims' while others fail to provide evidence for such differences). In addition, as most studies were conducted in schools in Scandinavia and North America the results may not generalise to British schools. For example, different priorities given to addressing bullying on behalf of different national governments may lead to radically differing responses on the part of the school administrators and school teachers and thus to vastly different 'levels' of bullying. The same reasoning may be used to justify separate research on bullying in English and Scottish schools.

To conclude, before undertaking bullying research within a new setting and with a new population it may be first important to conceptualise the salient factors that might influence or predicate bullying within a model or overview. The range of factors incorporated within the model can then be investigated empirically.

#### **1.4 Methods of Assessment in Penal Studies of Bullying/Victimization**

##### **1.4.1 North American studies using self-report**

In this section of the thesis, studies on bullying among young and older adult incarcerated groups are discussed in detail. Particular reference is given to studies from North America examining the nature and extent of victimization in juvenile correctional facilities and group homes using self-report (Bartollas & Sieverdes, 1981; Mutchnick & Fawcett, 1990, 1991). With regard to prevalence, some of the North American studies using self-report found victimization and violence to be widespread (Cooley, 1993). While others, (Bartollas & Sieverdes, 1981; Mutchnick & Fawcett, 1990) found the incidence to be lower than generally believed. Work

conducted to date has been mostly descriptive and looked at the factors relating to being either a victim or a perpetrator of victimization.

Bartollas & Sieverdes (1981) set out to examine the victimization of white inmates in the juvenile correction systems of the southern states of the USA. Subjects came from six training schools and all inmates present at the time of the survey were included ( $n=561$ ). Questionnaires were distributed to both inmates and members of the facilities' staff. Inmates answered questions relating to their background, attitudes, and behaviour concerning aggression in the training schools. No data were forthcoming regarding the response rate or the average age of respondents.

Results revealed that over one third of white inmates reported being victimised frequently, whereas the comparable figure for black inmates was less than 25%. These levels of victimization were identified as being less than those found by previous studies. This was deemed to be attributable to the youthfulness of the population, the mixed gender grouping of males and females, and the similar backgrounds of the white and black inmates.

The above study by Bartollas and Sieverdes was limited in the amount of information given regarding victimization. No information was presented about the definition of victimization, or what behaviours the authors deemed to constitute victimization. Limited analyses were carried out on the differences between black and white inmates while controlling for other factors, such as type of institution. However, the research did explore the race issue within juvenile correctional facilities, which had not previously been examined in detail. The race issue may be important in North American institutions but further research is required in order to

reveal whether it is as important in British institutions where the dichotomy between black and white inmates may be less pronounced.

Mutchnick and Fawcett (1990) studied the individual attributes of juveniles residing in group homes within the US and whether these were related to the probability of becoming a victim. In a separate paper, the authors shifted the focus of their analysis from the level of the individual to a broader systems approach, looking at how the group home environments might lessen the probability of victimization occurring there (Mutchnick & Fawcett, 1991). In both studies, they reviewed the literature concerning victimization with specific reference to variables shown to have an effect on the level of victimization within institutions. Variables linked to the individual and identified as having links with victimization included, type of offence, age and physical size. While environmental and institutional variables included, population size, inmate sub-culture and the structure of institution. Mutchnick and Fawcett also discussed the distinction between importation variables (pre-prison socialisation of inmates that condition responses to violence) and deprivation variables (limitations the institutional structure has on attitudes toward violence) in the prediction of victimising behaviour.

The first study by Mutchnick & Fawcett (1990) set out to examine how much violence there was in juvenile institutional group homes and to assess what might predispose inmates to become victims or perpetrators. The types of victimization were classified according to severity: verbal victimization, minor physical victimization, serious victimization, assault with a weapon, and finally sexual assault. The results of the study were presented in four categories: resident-resident

victimization, resident-staff victimization, respondent attitudes, and geographic location of incidents.

Questionnaires were administered to 90 juveniles, of which the mean age was 15.98 years. The average time spent in the group homes was 5.3 months and first offenders comprised 33% of the sample. Nine group homes were sampled.

The study found that the age and type of offence of respondents played no significant role in determining who will be a victim of inmate-inmate victimization of any type. As the rate of victimization increased the severity of victimization decreased. The level of victimization was perceived to be quite low at 14.3% in comparison with previous studies on similar populations. Just over 90% of inmates believed that violence was not a problem at their establishment. The incidents of victimization took place in areas of the group home where the staff were not normally present. As to whether inmates were or were not victimised, no relationships were observed between age of inmate or type of offence.

However, there were a number of points that were not adequately clarified in the above findings and which may have implications for work being carried out on bullying and/or victimization in other settings in the future. No attempt was made to compare findings from different group homes nor to breakdown the demographic and background factors of inmates according to their institution. Therefore, readers were not informed as to what percentage of the sample were from each home and could not gauge how many homes had low levels of victimization.

In differentiating victimization on the basis of severity no attempt was made by Mutchnick and Fawcett to gauge the motivation behind each incident. The continuum of severity was determined on the basis of the manifestation, as opposed to the impact, of the incident, i.e. verbal, minor physical (push/shove) etc. Although victimization may be verbal the victim may undergo extreme worry and stress if the diction is in the form of a threat against his own life. Whereas, a punch or kick may generate physical pain but be carried out in fun and cause the recipients no undue worry or stress. Therefore, a more thorough assessment of motivation behind each incident may be required before categorisation takes place. This may provide reasons as to why no differences were observed between different age or offence groups according to severity.

The provision of a comparison group from state run juvenile correction institutions may have elicited differences between the two types of penal facilities, with different populations and different management approaches.

The Muchnick and Fawcett (1990) study looked solely at the factors relating to the victims and no attempt was made to identify the factors relating to the victimiser, or indeed the individual who may be neither a victim nor a victimiser. Additionally, the sample for the study was of a young age (mean approximately 16 years). Therefore, it may not be possible to compare results directly with other studies (e.g. studies on young offender groups from Britain whose mean age is likely to be older at approximately 18.5 years).

As an outcome of the first study Mutchnick and Fawcett proposed that organisational structures and management styles may have had a role to play in the

outcome of low victimization rates, particularly regarding staff-inmate ratio and treatment modalities. The authors suggested that these factors may be appropriate avenues for future research.

The second study (Mutchnick & Fawcett, 1991) essentially followed on from the previous study but this time concentrated upon the organisational and managerial structure of the institutions and the levels of victimization within each home. The institutions, and inmate composition of the institutions, were the same as in study one.

Findings showed that where individuals were placed may have determined their likelihood of being victimised. For instance, if an individual was placed in a house where residents witnessed a high frequency of victimization (derived from self-report), he/she would be more likely to be victimised (regardless of their attributes), than an individual who was placed in a home reporting a low frequency. When less severe victimization was the focus, i.e. verbal assault, there was no significant difference between high and low frequency homes regarding individuals' experiences of victimization. However, when researchers looked at residents' experiences of being victimised when more severe victimization, i.e. punch/kicks, was the focus, the distinction between high and low frequency homes became more pronounced. Those homes considered to be "high frequency" were identified as having the following characteristics: extreme closed or open environments, lax enforcement of rules, passive staff, older facilities, low staff visibility, and staff/inmate attitudes of negativism and mistrust. While those institutions identified as "low frequency" were considered to be: open, yet restricted environments, places where strict rule enforcement was maintained, more organised in structure,

employing active and concerned staff, and places with newer facilities. Their findings also revealed that different places were identified in all the group homes as to where victimization occurred most frequently. However, all the areas identified as being associated with victimization were considered to be places where staff were rarely present.

A major problem with these results was the conclusions drawn from evidence that was at best quite tenuous. As the homes were quite small, with most housing approximately ten inmates, one might have expected the presence of one individual to have an effect on the level of victimization, especially if the victimiser was perceived to be a 'strong' character. Furthermore, as the study was cross-sectional there was no way of knowing how the frequency of victimization might change over time in response to new arrivals or an inmate leaving.

Furthermore, a number of the conclusions of this study were based on evidence that was anecdotal or based on over-simplistic frequencies and observations. This procedure may be unwarranted given the absence of any form of sound statistical analysis. Again, information here was derived from victim self-report and the role of the self-confessed bully was overlooked.

The above study implied that certain 'types' of group homes had higher frequencies of victimization. However, there was an accompanying failure to acknowledge that this could easily have been an erroneous conclusion. Instead, the reportedly low levels in some group homes could have been due to a decreased willingness to report such behaviour as a consequence of residents living in an environment where they were exposed to the fear of retribution from other inmates.

One would perhaps expect fewer residents to state that they had been victimised in environments where inmates live in fear of retribution from a dominant inmate or group of inmates. This is especially so when there are a small number of inmates resident in a group home. Furthermore, as some of the homes contained less than ten inmates the environment at any one time may have been particularly sensitive to the arrival or exit of a dominant individual.

The studies by Mutchnick & Fawcett provided researchers with useful hypotheses and ideas that can be tested out on other types of penal environment with larger and more diverse populations. Additionally, the use of multivariate techniques to try and partial out effects of inter-related variables in such research may prove to be exceedingly beneficial in the future.

#### **1.4.2 British studies using self-report**

While considerable research has been initiated in North American penal institutions using official records and self-report to focus on victimization, limited research has been initiated measuring the nature and extent of bullying/victimization in British penal establishments. (Beck, 1994; Ireland and Archer, 1996; McGurk & McDougall, 1991). In the section that follows, studies examining the nature and extent of bullying in Young Offender Institutions using self-report are reviewed (Adler, 1994; Beck, 1994; McGurk & McDougall, 1991). A study from Britain examining the nature and extent of bullying in adult prisons using self-report is also assessed (Ireland & Archer, 1996). Finally, the lack of extensive and thorough research using questionnaires is discussed.

The Beck (1994) study is cross-sectional and took place at two institutions for young offenders in the UK. Beck sampled 313 inmates from the two institutions using a self-report questionnaire. The main aim of the study was to generate information regarding bullying and relate this to information about young offenders' background and feelings about the penal establishments. A response rate of 83.7% was recorded.

The results of the questionnaire revealed that overall, 21% of those surveyed reported having been bullied in their current establishment. In this respect, there was no statistically significant difference between the two institutions under study in terms of the percentage of respondents admitting to being bullied. Eight percent of respondents stated they had bullied other young offenders during their present sentence. Again, in relation to this issue there was no statistically significant difference between the two institutions under study in terms of the percentage of respondents admitting to bullying other inmates. Ten young offenders indicated that they had been both 'victims' and 'bullies' during their current sentence (3.6%). The most common areas for bullying to occur were during association, also known as recreation, reception and after lock up at night when all inmates were in their cells. The most common type of bullying experienced by the victims of bullying was 'threats'. Young offenders reporting to have been in prison for the first time were significantly more likely to report having been bullied than other inmates. There was a significant positive relationship between 'feeling safe' and not being bullied. Furthermore, the age and home area of young offenders did not influence the results. Propensity to bully was found to be associated with a greater length of time spent in penal institutions.

While the results of the Beck (1994) study provides information extracted from a relatively large sample, there remain a number of problems with the study as a whole. Self-report regarding status of bully versus victim needs corroboration with information obtained using other methods, such as interviews and official records, or using information from other groups, such as members of staff. Such corroboration needs to be a consideration in any study of behaviour owing to the inherent bias of using one measure alone (O'Mahoney, 1994).

The definition of bullying applied in the Beck study was identical to that from research done in schools (Smith and Thompson, 1991). It may not be appropriate to apply a definition designed for children in school to an older population in a penal setting. This is something yet to be borne out through research in this field as a whole. In addition, individuals working within the specified prison setting where the research was conducted actually undertook the research. This may have influenced the young offenders' willingness to partake or respond truthfully to the questionnaire. Lastly, the study involved two institutions, both of which had anti-bullying strategies in place when the questionnaire was distributed. Results might have varied had the researchers compared institutions with and without active anti-bullying strategies. Further research is therefore recommended examining the problem at a range of different institutions and taking into account the above suggestions.

McGurk and McDougall examined the nature and extent of victimization in one institution incorporated within the borstal system in England between 1979 and 1981. The institution had a high proportion of dormitory accommodation, with 18 young residents located in each block. Therefore, as prison officials believed

bullying to be endemic under such conditions the following investigative research project was devised.

Twenty three residents selected randomly at three points in time (1979, 1980, and 1981) were interviewed about the nature and extent of the problem. After the first study in 1979 the aim was to put into place a package of measures focused on the situation to combat bullying. Two subsequent studies (1980 & 1981) were carried out to assess the efficacy of such remedial procedures. The findings from the study in 1979 indicated that fourteen out of 23 respondents stated that they had seen bullying over the past week. Bullying was identified as being any form of ritualistic type of punishment, including initiation type ceremonies and receiving a beating when inmates were unable to pay a debt.

Following the study in 1979, and prior to the studies in 1980 and 1981, preventative measures were adopted by the institution to try and combat bullying. These measures included, televisions in each dorm to alleviate boredom, differential allocation on reception if thought unsuitable (i.e. those with a history of bullying were not allocated to dormitory accommodation), variation in the time of night patrol visits, increased body checks, implementation of training sessions for staff on how to deal with victims and bullies, and severe penalties imposed for those involved in bullying.

In 1980 and 1981 reassessments revealed a decrease in those residents seeing bullying, which were 12 out of 23 in 1980, and a further decrease to 3 out of 23 in 1981. It was also reported that there were changes in the techniques of bullying with the 'perverted and dangerous' techniques occurring less frequently.

There were inherent methodological weaknesses in the study by McGurk and McDougall. The weaknesses included, small sample size, unclear method of sampling (i.e. how residents were chosen for interview), no information as to how many residents had been bullied or were bullies, no other institutions with which to provide a comparison group, and the fact that data was collected by individuals identified as part of the penal system albeit from a different institution.

Although the findings of this study were largely of an anecdotal nature the researchers identified one factor as being crucial toward the successful reduction of bullying in any total institution. That factor was the attitude of the staff toward programme implementation. At the beginning of the study the attitude of the staff was one of indifference, with the vast majority rationalising the behaviour. Staff considered bullying to be acceptable as it was:

*"endemic within...other ways of life such as schools and the armed forces"*

(McGurk & McDougall, 1991: p 138).

Importantly, the measures implemented to counter and prevent bullying at the institution involved in the study by McGurk and McDougall were pragmatic and realistic. Indeed, it is notable that such measures did not make strenuous demands on the system either economically or in terms of manpower. It may be important to acknowledge that the McGurk and McDougall study is one of the few attempting to assess the effects of any form of intervention methods, albeit in an arguably methodologically over simplistic way.

Ireland and Archer (1996) conducted a study examining bullying among male and female adult prisoners in an effort to address the absence of research in two key areas: i) looking at adult bullying and ii) looking at bullying among female inmates. The study provided a description of the nature and extent of bullying, and compared the responses of male and female prisoners.

The sample taken by Ireland and Archer came from four prisons, two female and two male, in England. Altogether, 138 prisoners took part of which 48 were female and 90 were male. The mean age of the men was 30.3 years while the mean age for the women was 30.2 years.

The study found that more male prisoners had seen bullying than had female prisoners. Overall, only 5.8% of prisoners admitted to having bullied other prisoners. Nearly 14% of prisoners admitted to being victims and a disproportionate number of females than males did so. Male prisoners were more likely than female prisoners to state that sex offenders and weak prisoners were most vulnerable to being bullied. Female prisoners were more likely to state that introverts, younger prisoners, and first offenders were more likely to be victims of bullying. Male prisoners were more likely than female prisoners to suggest that physical bullying was most prevalent, while female prisoners were more likely to report verbal bullying, gossiping and ostracising than male prisoners. Female prisoners were more likely to report indirect forms of bullying (ostracising, gossiping, rumours) than male prisoners, while male prisoners were more likely to report the direct forms of bullying (threat, physical assault) than female prisoners. Bullying was considered by both males and females to be just as likely to occur in one area of the prison as it

was in another. Finally, nearly 33% of all prisoners stated that 'nothing could be done' about the problem of bullying in prisons.

There were a number of salient methodological weaknesses with the above study. Although male prisoners were compared with female prisoners, other factors were not controlled for (e.g. type of offence, prison experience, etc.). In addition, questionnaires were completed in a group. This may have reduced the respondents' willingness to respond truthfully for fear of another inmate becoming aware of their responses or general fear of another inmate's presence.

While the study by Ireland and Archer attempted to gain an accurate representation of the nature and extent of bullying, the sample was not of sufficient size to be able to generalise to the wider adult population in English penal establishments. Moreover, the sample disproportionately reflected the views of female prisoners as 35% of subjects were female, compared with 6% in the prison service as a whole. The definition of bullying provided in the questionnaire was based on a definition derived from research in schools and may not have been suitable for a prison population composed of both male and female adult prisoners.

Despite the limitations cited above, Ireland & Archer's study is one of only a few studies attempting to compare different inmate groupings (i.e. male and female prisoners) within the prison setting, and one of a few studies to examine bullying within an adult context.

### **1.4.3. Summary of results from self-report studies**

A number of studies examining victimising behaviour within North American penal institutions have used inmate self-report (Bartollas & Sieverdes, 1981; Mutchnick & Fawcett, 1990). In these and other studies attention has been focused on the more serious forms of victimization such as physical assault and sexual assault. However, literature is also available based on self-report in both North America and Britain that has attempted to incorporate less severe forms of bullying, for example, verbal threats (Beck, 1994; Cooley, 1993; Mutchnick & Fawcett, 1991).

Questionnaire and interview based studies have both been acknowledged as having manifold weaknesses regarding the quality and type of data recorded. Cooley (1993) reported that only limited information could be learned about behaviour using questionnaire and interview as relevant yet unforeseen information may be overlooked due to the failure of a researcher asking the correct probing questions. Furthermore, the questionnaire and interview studies have no element of discussion or discourse on behalf of the individuals questioned. Therefore, this may result in a restricted range of responses from those inmates who participate in the research.

Owing to the above weakness, and the fact that there have been many other reported problems in conducting studies involving inmate self report, e.g. access to prisons, honesty of inmates and prison staff, difficulties guaranteeing anonymity, compliance of prisoners, low response rates, memory recall errors of those completing the self-report (Bowker, 1980; Mutchnick & Fawcett, 1990; Skogan, 1975)

many researchers investigated the issues of bullying and victimization using self-report alongside other data sources. The other main data gathering method used in studies alongside self-report has been the assumed more objective method of analysing official prison records (Cooley, 1993; Fuller & Orsagh, 1977).

#### **1.4.4. Studies in North America and Britain using 'triangulation'**

It has been suggested in the literature that understanding bullying/victimising behaviour among populations of incarcerated adolescents may be achieved using several methods (Beck, 1994). Using a variety of different methods of data collection may provide several different perspectives on bullying behaviours.

Indeed, studies have shown that levels of victimization derived from ad hoc questionnaires can differ greatly from those derived from official records (Cooley, 1993; Fuller & Orsagh, 1977). Furthermore, staff identification of inmates involved in victimising behaviour has been shown to differ from inmates own admission of involvement (Beck, 1994; Fuller & Orsagh, 1977). A study of bullying among young offenders in Canada revealed the benefits to be obtained from comparing interviews and questionnaires (Connell and Farrington, 1996).

Dumond (1992) advocated the use of a compendium of methods for research looking at victimization. He suggested that studies might include analysis of two, or a number, of the following: official records, inmate/victim surveys, staff/officer interviews and direct observation. This complementary use of different methods is known as 'triangulation'. Triangulation is a method adopted by research studies wanting to:

*"examine different dimensions of the same underlying concept, thereby arriving at a better understanding than would be possible using either approach alone"*

(Wolff, Knodel & Sittitrai, 1993: p 133).

In order to gain an accurate representation of the nature, extent and characteristics of bullying, methods are required that not only generate such additional information but do so in a consistent and valid way.

Triangulation has been adopted, although infrequently, by previous studies looking at victimization within both North American (Carroll, 1977; Connell and Farrington, 1996; Cooley, 1993; and Fuller & Orsagh, 1977) and British (O'Donnell & Edgar, 1996) prison contexts. Prison records have largely been used in association with other methods to investigate levels of victimization. In an early study, Carroll (1974) used records such as central files, disciplinary records, and court transcripts to supplement self-report. Documentary evidence was used for the specific purpose of constructing hypotheses to be tested as the research went along and as a comparison to self-report. Whereas, Fuller & Orsagh (1977) used three data sources: sample of disciplinary hearings, interviews with prison supervisors, and interviews with inmates.

Fuller and Orsagh (1977) used each data source to answer predetermined questions regarding the nature and extent of victimization in North Carolina prisons. The results showed that each method, while having its particular weaknesses, could be put to better use by exploiting its specific strengths. As a result, broad ranges of the extent of victimising behaviour could be produced. Such results could therefore

be assumed to be more accurate than if researchers had simply relied on one data source.

The primary aim of the extremely thorough study by Cooley (1993) was to provide estimates of a range of victimization incidents occurring in five Federal prisons in Canada using interviews. The results from the interviews were then compared with official security incident data on the same incidents. The sample was selected for interview at random and consisted of 117 prisoners across three security levels. All participants were male and came from the general population of the prisons. Victims were considered not to have been involved in victimization if they were thought to have used force greater than or equal to the aggressor. The types of victimization studied included personal victimization (robbery, sexual assault, assault, threats, and extortion) and property victimization (theft and vandalism). Official security data were divided into a number of categories of which two were relevant to the analysis, major and minor prisoner assault, and major and minor prisoner fights.

First, the results from the interviews showed that 47% of respondents reported 107 victimization incidents and theft was the most frequently reported (39% of total victimizations). Discriminant function analysis (DFA) was used to determine which background and demographic variables best discriminated between victims and non-victims. Compared to those inmates who were non-victims, victims were younger, more likely to be housed in maximum security prisons and more likely to be in the earlier stages of their prison sentence. The most discriminating variable was the security level of the prison. However, the discriminatory power was low, with only 16% of variance being accounted for by the variables.

The study by Cooley used regression analysis to determine the probability of being victimised. He found that the odds of being victimised were lowest for an inmate who was 40 years old, had served approximately ten years in prison and was housed in a prison of minimum security. Conversely, the odds increased if an inmate was 20 years old, had served approximately two years in prison and was housed in a prison of maximum security.

Examination of the official incident data was then undertaken to supplement that from the interviews. Analysis revealed that the rate of prisoner assault was 50.6 per 1000 inmates, while the comparable rate from the interviews was 256.4 per 1000 inmates. Cooley concluded that the level of victimization would be perceived as being considerably lower if the figures were based on official records than if they were based on self-report.

Cooley's findings indicated that any study of victimization must take into account the biases of using different data sources and include as many methods as possible to facilitate an accurate representation of the behaviour under investigation. The study by Cooley was comprehensive and methodologically sound and provided researchers with a useful template from which to develop further research. However, while the victimization types recorded were diverse they still failed to account for the 'less serious' forms of victimization, such as name calling and/or teasing. Further research may benefit from targeting these particular omissions.

Edgar & O'Donnell (1997) conducted an extensive study of penal institutions in England whose policies and practices were geared toward preventing victimization. The study used data collated through a combination of self-report

questionnaire and interview. Two adult male prisons and two Young Offenders Institutions were canvassed. The study explored in more depth the specific perception of those implementing anti-victimization strategies, namely the staff, and combined this with information about the nature and extent of victimization obtained from the inmates. The information was derived from a larger sample than has been the case in previous studies ( $n = 1566$ ). Interviews were conducted with 92 inmates and 111 staff.

The Edgar and O'Donnell study was designed to: a) determine the nature and extent of victimization in prison; b) to explore the nature of victimization and the factors associated with it; c) to explore the views and behaviours of staff in relation to ways of preventing victimization and present ways of dealing with it; and d) to suggest ways of changing policy and practice in order to prevent and cope with victimization. Edgar & O'Donnell (1997) attempted to differentiate between the terminology of bullying and victimization. They stated that previous studies had failed to bring forth the point that:

*"inmates can be victimised without the person doing it being a 'bully' or in a bullying relationship".* (Edgar & O'Donnell, 1997: p 15)

Edgar and O'Donnell further recognised:

*"whether or not an incident is an example of 'bullying' will depend on the individuals own perception of what has happened"*

(Edgar & O'Donnell, 1997: p 15)

It may be concluded from the above quotes that these researchers viewed 'bullying' as a loose concept, one which covered a wide range of behaviours, and for its meaning relied upon the perception of those inmates engaged in a 'bullying' relationship.

Therefore, according to these authors, one might conclude that the imposition of a rigid definition of 'bullying' similar to that employed by previous studies only serves to exclude relevant behaviours. This being so, instead of viewing 'bullying' as a unitary concept and one which should be researched using prescribed definitions, it may be more beneficial for researchers and prison administrators alike to begin with an examination of specific behaviours encompassed within a wider definition.

Edgar & O'Donnell (1997) sub-categorised victimization into six discrete behaviours: assault, threats of violence, verbal abuse, cell theft, robbery, and social exclusion. Questionnaire results revealed that a third of young offenders had been assaulted and almost half had been threatened with violence over the past month. Whereas, the figures for adult prisoners were less when examined over the same period. A fifth of adult prisoners had been assaulted and a quarter had been threatened with violence.

Edgar and O'Donnell also found that 25% of young offenders had been both victims and victimisers over the last month. There were significant differences between the victimisers' motives, background circumstances, and seriousness for each category of victimization. The relationship between victimiser and victim regarding assault, verbal abuse and threats tended to be reciprocal and constant. However, robbery, exclusion and cell theft were deemed hierarchical, in that those

who were victimised tended not to victimise others. Less than 20% of inmates reported that they had mentioned the incident to an officer after its occurrence.

Edgar and O'Donnell also examined the staffs' views on prevention and their own behaviours relating to victimization. There was little consensus among staff as to how to tackle victimization and answers ranged from 'improving surveillance and monitoring' to 'imposing tougher regimes'. Gradual change in inmate culture by challenging the 'prisoner code' and including the rejection of victimization in all its forms, was considered particularly important by staff. Closer contact between staff and inmates was also advocated by staff as a way to address problems relating to victimization.

Staff believed that laying charges against inmates was not the most appropriate response to victimization, but there was no agreed criterion as to when adjudication was required. Eighty five per cent of staff in Young Offenders Institutions and 90% of inmates in adult prisons believed that addressing bullying should be made a higher priority. It became evident that among staff there was no coherent philosophy behind the strategies, i.e. officers had conflicting views about the most appropriate ways of dealing with the problems.

Edgar & O'Donnell (1997) formulated suggestions for tackling victimization based on their research and information gained from staff and inmates. They proposed that full use should be made of existing record systems to pass on information regarding victimization. For example, between the early and late shift, late and night shift, or night and early shift. This requires systematic documentation of suspicious behaviour. They also suggested that the culture needs to be changed

away from an ethos emphasising that "grassing" is anathema, toward a system where staff are seen to deal with situations in a discrete and sympathetic manner. The personal officer scheme was seen to be of primary importance in breaking down the barriers toward better communication between staff and inmates. Changing the environment in order to reduce the opportunity for victimization to take place and areas of high risk targeted, e.g. phone card system and distribution of canteen, was also identified as important. The researchers emphasised that segregation should be pursued with care as miss-classification of victims and victimisers can compromise its effectiveness and management should be more aware of the fact that inmates grouped together in units can continue to victimise one another. Edgar and O'Donnell believed that any philosophy should:

*"promote personal development rather than being punitive in nature"*

(Edgar & O'Donnell, 1997: p 18).

Edgar and O'Donnell further suggested that staff should be aware of those inmates vulnerable to victimization and take account of victims' concerns. The main concern being not wanting to be labelled as a 'grass' by peers. The researchers also suggested that counselling should be available to victims where required and staff should give victims some say in the way the situation is handled.

The above recommendations came about as a result of a thorough study of the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, of staff and inmates regarding victimization. Delineation carried out on the basis of type of victimization (i.e. personal and property) may have been beneficial in distinguishing exactly where specific problems might lie. What is more, adopting several different methods of data collection served

to generate a wider range and improved quality of information. However, further research is still required examining the motivation behind, and the circumstances leading up to, the events themselves.

The study by Edgar & O'Donnell, was an improvement on previous studies of bullying in UK prisons owing to the larger sample size, the use of different data sources and methodologies, the specificity of types of victimization, and the variety of remedial measures propounded. A strong plus to this study was the application of results to the implementation of an institutional strategy geared towards combating victimization. However, further study necessitates an evaluation of the ways in which the different types of victimization are manifested, and the degree to which changes occur among these types in response to intervention. Furthermore, such research should be conducted in a more methodical way and attempts made to control for spurious factors that might lead to anomalous results.

Connell and Farrington (1996) based their research on previous studies about bullying and victimization conducted with schoolchildren. Results were derived from interviews with twenty incarcerated young offenders in Ontario, Canada. As the study was a preliminary one, many of the conclusions were in the form of recommendations for future research.

Connell & Farrington provided an important rationale for carrying out further research among inmate groups in incarcerated settings. Suggestions for future research included those for: security and control, the management of perpetrators, the safety of potential victims, and the assessment and classification of offenders on the basis of risk/need. The authors highlighted a lack of empirical

research in this area regarding the reliability of different methodologies and of the nature and extent of the problem. Furthermore, they identified a main problem within the literature to date, that bullying has essentially been subsumed under definitions of aggression and violence and further work is necessary to develop a definition solely applicable to young offenders.

The results from this study came from two pilot studies in 1992 and 1993 at an open-custody facility for young offenders. The first study used a questionnaire as the primary data source, which was then followed by an interview designed to provide feedback about the subjects' responses to the questionnaire. The second study incorporated a revised interview schedule based on the findings of the interviews from the first study. Only ten inmates were sampled in each study.

Based on the two studies combined, the findings revealed that seventy per cent of young offenders were involved in bullying, (45% as bullies and 25% as victims). There was no overlap between bullies and victims. Six out of nine of those bullies having a previous custodial sentence had been bullies during their previous incarceration. None of the victims had previously been in custody.

The initial questionnaire was regarded as a 'weak method' of collecting detailed information about bullying in Young Offenders Institutions and suggestions were made so that more valid and complete data could be obtained using individual interviews.

The findings from this research were considered by the researchers themselves to be of limited value for a number of reasons. The researcher was a staff

member at the institution and therefore was familiar to all the residents. This may have led to a different response than if the researcher was unknown to the sample, or was identified as having a role outwith the prison service. The sample size was small and data came from one institution with an open regime therefore it may have been unwise to generalise from such data to the wider prison population. The data was aggregated over the two periods. In addition, the researchers used different methodologies for each period and therefore results should not have been summated as they may have been measuring different aspects of behaviour.

In the light of such methodological weaknesses, and in response to gaps identified in the research as a whole, the Connell and Farrington study made a number of recommendations for future research. Connell and Farrington stressed that larger scale research is required using a sample that is generalisable to the population as a whole. The researchers also recognised that interview schedules should be the preferred methodology, owing to the quality and depth of information that can be gleaned, when attempting to obtain detailed information about victimising behaviour. It was stressed that the nature and extent of bullying should be established before any intervention is undertaken. The importance of using an appropriate and clearly defined definition of bullying was highlighted. It was posited that the definition should be distinguishable from other types of behaviour, such as aggression. It was mentioned that different types of bullying should be measured, e.g. verbal, teasing, threats, physical, etc., along with the seriousness, frequency and duration of the behaviour. Furthermore, the onset, duration and termination of an inmate's bullying career should be investigated in more depth than was the case in the Connell and Farrington study and in other studies of victimization and bullying in penal settings. Moreover, it was suggested that data be

collected from large samples regarding the circumstances of bullying, correlates of bullying, and characteristics of bullies and victims. It was implied that the effects of bullying on the victims should also be investigated in more depth and measured with greater clarity. The reliability and validity of different methods of data collection in the investigation of bullying should be investigated further, including comparisons between self-report, institutional records, and staff report. Further examination should be concerned with the different types of institution and the prevalence and nature of bullying. Additionally, changes in bullying trends in response to methods in place to address bullying at institutions should be evaluated. In addition, the extent to which the level and nature of bullying may be attributable to the type of inmate housed or to the features of the institutions themselves requires additional study.

The suggestions listed in detail above are comprehensive and it is important to recognise their relevance to future study on bullying in penal settings. It is important also to learn from the weaknesses of research in this area outlined in previous studies (Connell and Farrington, 1996; Edgar and O'Donnell, 1997). Indeed, many of the weaknesses highlighted in these studies are similar to those of other studies of bullying/victimization to date.

It is imperative that future work takes appropriate steps to amend such limitations. Consequently, most of the suggestions have been acknowledged, and/or considered, throughout the design and implementation of studies incorporated within the present thesis.

#### **1.4.5. Summary of results for studies using 'triangulation'**

Overall, the aforementioned studies using a 'triangulation' of methods only generated information about the nature and manifestation of the incidents themselves, and about those involved in the incidents. Limited information is still available regarding how all these factors might operate together toward the prediction of the extent of victimization, or the type of individual who might be involved.

Previous studies of victimization in penal establishments using more than one data base have tended to use individual self-report and official records (Cooley, 1993; Fuller & Orsagh, 1977). There are few studies that have considered comparing a more in-depth measure, such as group interview or focus group, with other methods in such a context.

#### **1.4.6. Focus groups**

During the last ten years social scientists have used focus groups more frequently as a data gathering medium (Kreuger, 1993; Patton, 1990). The focus group is a research technique that brings together a group of persons who respond to questions on a topic of particular interest (Greenbaum, 1987). The sessions are led by a moderator who keeps the discussion focused around the particular topic.

The focus group method has been particularly beneficial to market researchers requiring speedy insight into consumer attitudes (Szybillo & Berger, 1979). Focus groups have already been used extensively in the area of health

psychology (Gregory et. al., 1990; Grey-Vickery, 1993; Hoppe et al., 1994; Kingry et al., 1990; Murphree, 1994; Pallett, 1990; & Pierce, Ader & Peter, 1989).

Studies have also been conducted that look at the costs and benefits of using focus groups in relation to other methodologies. In a paper examining physician needs in psychiatry, focus groups and clinical recall interviews were compared and contrasted in order to establish their suitability for providing data about establishing continuing medical education (Johnston & Lockyer, 1994). Both methods were deemed to provide similar data, however, the researchers concluded that the interviews produced quantifiable data and allowed easier recruitment of subjects while the focus groups identified previously unsolicited information about problems physicians were having and were relatively less expensive to facilitate.

Flores & Alonso (1995) in an evaluative paper on the suitability of using focus group methodology in educational research discuss their use of group discussion in comparison with quantitative techniques of data collection, such as questionnaires or structured interviews. Their paper emphasised how focus groups can help to determine interactions occurring within a group setting and uncover previously unconsidered information through discussion and agreement.

Harari & Beaty (1990) contrasted focus group and questionnaire methodology, but did so in relation to cross-cultural research. Their results showed the folly of relying solely on questionnaire methodology to create theories and models as the questionnaires failed to accurately reflect the views expressed in the groups. The authors argued that using focus groups prior to questionnaire construction may improve the final design of studies, although a full understanding

of the data is only achieved through qualitative follow up. They advised researchers to adopt a 'multi-dimensional approach' towards making valid theories or conclusions about any topic under study.

Ward, Bertrand & Brown, (1991) compared the findings of focus groups with surveys on the same topic in three studies. This was carried out in order to determine what extent the two methods generated similar results. In all cases the focus groups were conducted prior to questionnaire distribution. The data was broken down into separate variables that were then classified according to the similarity of the results. This method allowed more accurate comparison of data without inhibiting the qualitative nature of the results. Their study found that in 88% of cases the two methods generated similar results. However, in approximately half of those cases the focus groups provided additional detail to that provided by the questionnaires.

A Scottish Prison Service paper (SPS, 1994[b]) examining the role of small units in the Scottish Prison Service used focus groups to find out a representative sample of opinions from staff and prisoners from all the small units in Scottish Prison System. The study used focus groups in conjunction with a number of other methods (e.g. visits to establishments, information on prisoners residing in the units from prison records, individual interviews with prison governors and consultation with criminologists whose area of expertise covered small units). There was a strict time limit on the study of six months, and therefore researchers chose methods that would provide them with a wealth of representative information in a short period. In total, nine groups were conducted with staff from all prisons under consideration and group sizes ranged from two to nineteen. Staff from all designations were

represented (i.e. basic grade officers, senior officers, principal officers, etc.). Six focus groups were conducted for the prisoners and group sizes ranged from four to eight. Different individuals, who were either prison researchers, prison governors or external researchers, facilitated both the staff and prisoner groups.

The above study used the information gained from focus groups to devise recommendations for the future of the small units. Care was taken to ensure that the sample represented those prisoners who would be eligible for a place, or held a place, in the small units. However, the above study of small units had a number of methodological problems. Using different facilitators may have led to inconsistencies in terms of the content of group discussions. Therefore, the resulting information derived from the groups may be incomparable. Also, the quality of information obtained from staff groups of greater than ten participants may be limited as within large groups there may be a lack of desire on behalf of participants to put forward a view as they may feel intimidated. Furthermore, the opinions and suggestions of individuals within groups of staff containing only two participants were overrepresented, as they were given equal weight in the overall results to individuals within groups containing nineteen participants. Moreover, most of the facilitators of staff and prisoner groups were either previous or current prison governors. This may have influenced prisoners and staff. For example, a staff member wishing to seek future promotion may modify his/her opinions in order to present what he/she believes to be socially acceptable to the Governor in Charge.

Focus group methodology may be especially advantageous for an inmate population of the age 16-21 as written expression may be difficult for a number of individuals. As focus groups require oral expression of opinions and experiences

this may lead to illiterate or semi-literate individuals being able to express themselves more clearly, particularly in a more social atmosphere. Furthermore, informal discussion may be more likely to result in the young offenders revealing elements of how they actually act toward one another than other methods of data collection. However, one problem using the method in Young Offender Institutions might be a difficulty recruiting individuals owing to the sensitive nature of the topic under discussion. Also, a group of young offenders may not be able to concentrate on the topic under discussion and disruption may be likely to occur.

At the time of writing, no published literature was available using focus groups to investigate issues surrounding bullying/victimization in penal settings.

#### **1.4.7. Summary of previous studies using focus groups**

The comparability of qualitative and quantitative techniques is difficult as the type of information gained from each differs. This may serve to explain the scarcity of empirical research comparing the two methods. This is particularly apparent when evaluating a variety of studies. In studies comparing quantitative and qualitative techniques the objectives and methods of the researcher may be unknown or not entirely clear (Ward, Bertrand & Brown, 1991). Studies that have been published comparing qualitative and quantitative techniques have largely provided results with regard to how well the different methods complement, or fail to complement one another, and most have found a mutual enhancement of the analysis and understanding of each method by the other (Denzin, 1970, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1984).

As yet, there is a dearth of studies using questionnaire and focus group together in an effort to evaluate the benefits or weaknesses associated with them. Furthermore, there is a paucity of research in prison settings that adopts focus group methodology to obtain and quantify data relevant to bullying.

#### **1.4.8. Studies Examining factors related to being a 'perpetrator' or 'victim' of bullying/victimization**

A great deal of research has been conducted in school settings attempting to identify factors that might distinguish between groups of children involved in bullying, (Bjorkqvist, Ekman & Lagerspetz, 1982; Gilmartin, 1987; Kaufman, 1985; Munthe, 1989; Olweus, 1978; Perry, Kusel & Perry, 1988; Slee, 1993; Slee & Rigby, 1993[a][b]).

Regarding penal populations, a considerable body of research exists highlighting the factors associated with being an intransigent or misbehaving inmate (Adams, 1977; Myers & Levy, 1978; Panton, 1973; Porporino, 1986). Evidence suggests that these inmates are more likely to be young (Goetting & Howsen, 1986; Myers & Levy, 1978); have psychological problems (Myers & Levy, 1978; Panton, 1973); and have extensive criminal histories (Goetting & Howsen, 1986). Concerning intelligence, there is conflicting evidence whether a relationship exists or not (Panton, 1973; Sutker & Moan, 1973). However, as Shields and Simourd (1991) noted, the intransigent inmate who misbehaves within the prison environment may not necessarily be any more or less likely to engage in bullying type behaviours.

While research on the factors associated with being an intractable inmate have been researched in depth, a paucity of research is available regarding the

factors that might distinguish 'bullies', 'victims' and 'other' inmates (neither bullies nor victims) in Young Offender Institutions or adult prisons. A number of previous studies from North America and Britain have attempted to identify characteristics of those inmates involved in victimising incidents, both as a victimiser and a victim. However, few of these studies have looked at a wide range of factors in a systematic way to predict the behaviour of perpetrators or victims.

Previous studies from North America indicated that victims were more likely to be: young (Bartollas & Sieverdes, 1981; Fuller & Orsagh, 1977); small in physique (Tennenbaum, 1978), first offenders (Wenk, Robinson & Smith, 1972); and incarcerated for minor offences (Bartollas & Sieverdes, 1981; Tennenbaum, 1978). While victimisers were more likely to be: old (Bartollas & Sieverdes, 1981); physically strong (Bartollas & Sieverdes, 1981); and incarcerated for a major offence (Tennenbaum, 1978). Mutchnick & Fawcett (1991) (1990) examined differences between victims and non-victims with regard to age, type of offence and type of institution. With the exception of type of institution, where institutions with higher frequencies of victimization were those with a passive attitude toward discipline and minimal effectuation of rules, no significant differences were found between victims and non-victims. In addition, bullying by members of staff was shown to occur frequently in the institutions with higher levels of inmate victimization (Mutchnick & Fawcett, 1990).

Some British studies have also touched upon the salient characteristics of those involved in victimising incidents. For example, Beck (1994) showed that bullies were incarcerated for longer than other inmates and that victims were more likely to be first offenders.

The ensuing section of the thesis is a synopsis of a study by Shields and Simourd (1991) comparing the risk/need factors of such groups. This latter study is part of a large body of research into risk/need assessment of young offender groups conducted in North American institutions (see Andrews & Bonta, 1994 for a detailed review). Finally, the section concludes with a summary of the weaknesses of the studies from Britain and North America and indicates areas where future research may be beneficial.

Shields and Simourd (1991) studied predatory relationships among incarcerated young offenders. They defined predatory relationships as being characterised by violence or the threat of violence and implied that such relationships counter the successful running of a prison.

Shields and Simourd noted that previous studies investigating prediction of inmate groups within prison settings were derived from information on adults appearing in general discipline reports. Shields & Simourd indicated from their review of the literature that the misbehaving inmate may be more likely to be younger, have more psychological problems, have alcohol problems, and educational problems. They posited that findings have largely been inconsistent, some studies having identified relationships while others have not.

In an attempt to try and understand the types of inmates who become predators and the type who are preyed upon Shields & Simourd sampled 251 admissions to a young offender unit of a regional detention centre in Canada. The mean age was 17.3 years. Twenty four subjects were female, and the group was of mixed race but predominately white (89%).

Classification of the predators took place on a post-hoc basis once the inmates had established a pattern of violent behaviour. Twenty eight individuals were classified as predatory and 200 classified as non-predatory in this manner. All inmates, both those classified as predatory and non-predatory, were administered the YO-LSI (Young Offender-Level of Service Inventory). A score on the measure revealed an inmate's levels of risk and his/her needs on entering an institution. Scores were also obtained on a number of sub-categories (substance abuse, criminal history, education/employment, family, peer relations, accommodations, and psychological variables,) and on the CSS (Criminal Sentiments Scale) measuring antisocial attitudes. Both measures were utilised in an attempt to assess their ability to distinguish between predator and non-predator.

The findings of the study revealed that the YO-LSI appeared to be a reliable measure as it had high inter-observer reliability and its results were internally consistent. The measure reliably distinguished between the two groups of predatory and non-predatory inmates. Two factors were important towards predicting group membership (predator and non-predator), these were a criminal sub-culture factor and a family and home environment factor. Predators had consistently higher scores on the total YO-LSI, all sub-components of the YO-LSI with the exception of type of accommodation, and the CSS score. No significant differences were observed between the groups in terms of height, weight, gender and race.

Prediction of the two groups was attempted by taking the mean scores on the CSS and YO-LSI as cut off scores and placing those scoring above the mean on both measures in a 'predator' group and those below the mean in a 'non-predator' group. Using this method 88% of actual predators fell within the 'predator' group, while

82% of actual non-predators fell within the predicted 'non-predator' group. There was a 2% false negative and 62% false positive rate. A measure of predictive efficiency was calculated called the relative improvement over chance (Loeber & Dishion, 1983) and when computed for the groups gave a score of .84. Therefore, there was a 84% improvement over chance in the identification of predators and non-predators using the CSS and YO-LSI.

Based on the results of this paper, Shields and Simourd proposed that risk/needs measures be used to identify inmates entering the institution as possible predators. However, isolation of offenders on the basis of such measures alone may be inappropriate owing to the high false positive rate found in this study. The study by Shields and Simourd, while acknowledging the importance of individual factors in the prediction equation, may fail to provide more accurate prediction owing to certain factors. The study did not acknowledge the role of situational and environmental factors in a prediction equation. Inmates may have been more or less at risk owing to the dynamics of the institution or the composition of the inmate population. Indeed, risk measured by inmates' behaviour outside prison may not be an accurate representation of behaviour inside. The sample of predators was relatively small ( $n = 28$ ) and came from one type of institution, therefore may not be similar to the scores of predators in other types of prison. Identification was not facilitated by self-report but by the institution's staff and the sample therefore may have only contained predators likely to come to the attention of staff. Predators who were skilled at maintaining violent and threatening behaviour in a covert way may therefore not have been represented in this study.

Indeed, the inmates classified as predators were isolated and put forward for increased supervision on the basis of observed behaviour. The sample was a heterogeneous one with respect to race, gender and type of offence, and therefore differences regarding these groups may have indirectly influenced the results of the study. Moreover, young offenders were categorised as predatory or non-predatory, and no attempt was made to examine the victims of predatory behaviour in order to assess whether they have similar or different scores on the same measures. This may require attention in future research.

Further research with other measures is required in order to enhance the predictive validity of the YO-LSI. The inmates were classified as predatory (behaving violently either physically or verbally), which may preclude a great deal of behaviours that inmates may class as 'bullying', such as name-calling and psychological teasing. Therefore, it may be unwise to expect similar results comparing groups regarding bullying behaviour.

Despite the above limitations, the study by Shields and Simourd brought to the fore the study of risk/need among young offender groups relating to victimising behaviour. Clearly, the pursuit of such methods may be of considerable benefit to prison administrators in understanding predatory relationships. Furthermore, such research may provide the prison administration with invaluable information about 'at risk' individuals to use in combination with other measures and other data to encourage more informed decisions regarding inmate management. However, the high false positive rates of 62% in this study gives cause for concern and suggests that such approaches to classification should be adopted with extreme caution.

#### **1.4.9. Summary of results from studies examining the factors distinguishing 'bullies', 'victims' and 'other' inmates**

Victimization studies examining the factors that might distinguish perpetrators and victims within penal establishments have largely concentrated upon readily identifiable characteristics of individuals, such as age, length of sentence and physique. Unfortunately, more complex factors, such as personality, intelligence, family background and social background factors, relating to bullying have not been the subject of extensive investigation, and this is especially the case among prisoners. This is perhaps surprising given that previous studies on bullying in schools, with children of an age similar to that of juvenile offenders, have shown children with: low self-esteem, poor coping and communication skills, (Besag, 1995), and high external locus of control (Seligman and Peterson, 1986) to be archetypal victims. Moreover, children with low educational attainment, a high desire for control and dominance (Besag, 1995) and poor problem solving skills (D'Zurilla and Goldfreid, 1971), have been shown to be archetypal bullies.

Both bullies and victims have been identified in school studies as having considerable, yet manifestly different, family problems (Stephenson and Smith, 1989). Of the research that has been done with young offenders, only a few papers have compared different inmate groupings. These papers have focused upon the background factors of 'predators' (bullies), in comparison with 'normal' young offenders (Shields and Simourd, 1991) and 'normal' adults (Megargee and Bohn, 1979).

In addition, most research within prison settings has concentrated on the salient factors associated with being an aggressor or a recalcitrant inmate while less

has been done on the factors associated with being a victim. No previous work has used both personality, intelligence and background factors in an attempt to predict membership of groups involved in bullying behaviour within penal institutions for young offenders.

### 1.5 Overall Conclusions

The present chapter of the thesis examined the research literature on bullying in schools, the workplace and penal establishments from a historical perspective, and attempted to evaluate existing definitions of bullying and victimization. The chapter also included an appraisal of previous work investigating the nature and extent of the problem in British and North American penal establishments.

The literature was deemed deficient in several areas. Few studies examined behaviours related to inmate bullying in detail and definitions of bullying provided were often inappropriate as they were based on non-incarcerated populations. Therefore, knowledge about the way inmates might conceptualise the problem of bullying is sparse. Studies largely concentrated on the more severe forms of victimization among older adult and juvenile populations in North American penal institutions. Moreover, there is a paucity of work looking at less severe types of bullying among young offender populations in British penal establishments. There has been no comprehensive work to date on bullying in Scottish penal institutions. No study to date has attempted to sample an entire young offender population. Assessments of the level and nature of bullying have usually been restricted to using one method of data collection and most studies have adopted analysis of official records or questionnaire as their primary data source. Research is required that

incorporates a number of methods in an attempt to gain information that is both reliable and valid. The comparability of studies examining the extent of bullying is reduced owing to differences between studies regarding terminology and methodology.

Research to date has only succeeded in highlighting that a problem exists within penal establishments in Britain. Limited information exists regarding the correlates of bullying, possible predictors of bullying behaviour and ways of coping with bullying at the level of both the individual and the institution.

On the whole, the present review of the available literature concerning bullying/victimization among young offenders revealed that there are several areas that require further detailed study. In particular, a more theoretical grounding is needed in the understanding of the problem as it exists in Scottish penal establishments and, in particular, Young Offender Institutions where the problem may be particularly apparent.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **ASSAULT IN PSYCHIATRIC AND PENAL ESTABLISHMENTS: A CRITIQUE OF THE RESEARCH**

## **Chapter 2**

### **Assault in Psychiatric and Penal Establishments: A Critique of the Research**

#### **2.1 Historical Perspective**

Assaultive and violent behaviour within prisons has been recognised as a recurrent problem throughout history. Indeed, concern about such behaviour has been expressed in a litany of historical writings. The HM Government Inspector of Prisons in 1838 wrote to the Lord Provost of Glasgow City concerning the state of Glasgow gaol at that time:

*"many prisoners are subjected to various kinds of tyranny on the part of their associates.....there is much quarrelling, fighting, swearing, obscene language, and gambling"*  
(cited in Coyle, 1991, p25)

The prison reformer John Howard in the late 18th Century suggested that manifold improvements could be made to prisons by ensuring that the culture governing the lives of men in the criminal classes outside, one of machismo, violence, and anarchy, was not brought with them into prison.

Irwin (1980) in a contemporary writing in reference to North American prisons, identified the same problem, and went on to propose that violent behaviour

in prison arises because of the kinds of people who are sent there. Specifically, he suggested that the probability of violence occurring in prison is high because prisoners are largely drawn from:

*"a social layer that shares extremely reduced life options"* and because the majority of prisoners have:

*"limited experience with formal, polite, and complex urban social organisations, and traditional suspicions and hostilities toward people different from their own kind"*

(Irwin, 1980, p212)

However, while research acknowledges an increased propensity for violence and assault behaviour in penal settings, it should also be understood that manifestations of aggression inside prison frequently become exaggerated and dramatised within newspaper reports, books, films, and on television as:

*"in such telling violence is romanticised and requires spurious dignity"*

(Toch, 1994, cited in Stanko, p93)

However, Toch (1994) also emphasised the plain reality of exaggerated stories of violence in prison:

*"The point about prison-violence experience that matters is its unrepresentativeness. Prison life is not continuously suffused with imminent violence. This fact is hard to accept because it is drab and unexciting.....most incidents of violence in prisons are irrational, grubby and pedestrian, and lack panache and drama"* (Toch, 1994, cited in Stanko, p93)

Therefore, while the public perception may be such that penal environments are considered to be hot-beds of violence, the research literature conversely informs us that violent incidents are statistically quite rare in prison (Toch, 1994). This view is also held by many of the prisoners themselves, as exemplified below:

*"most prisoners do their time without being victimised physically"*

(Quote from an anonymous prisoner, Howard League, 1995, p236)

Furthermore, research has also shown the assault rate in British penal establishments to be far lower than that shown in comparable establishments in North America (Fitzgerald & Simm, 1982; McCorkle, 1993). This difference may not be explained with one simple reason. However, the racial heterogeneity of the population in North America, where rival gangs operate along racial lines and individuals who are different are preyed upon, may be an important contributory factor. Also, the prisons in North America are larger and overcrowding is perceived to be more of a problem than in Britain (Toch, 1997)

However, while the general public may have an inflated perception as regards the extent of prison violence, assault behaviour directed against prisoners and staff is still recognised as a major management problem facing penal establishments today. Indeed, researchers, practitioners, and prison administrators are acutely aware of the problems associated with such behaviours (Vaughn & Del Carmen, 1995). Potential deleterious consequences of this type of behaviour include:

- a) *erosion of the public's confidence in the way prisons are being run;*
- b) *the disruption of correctional programs;*

- c) *the delay in release of disruptive inmates; and*
- d) *the costs incurred through the consequences of the incidents (i.e. property destruction, and inmate and staff injuries)* (Porporino, 1986, pp213-214).

In recent years, official figures for Scottish penal establishments have indicated that assaults are on the increase<sup>1</sup> (Cooke, 1991; H.M. Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland, 1996). This increase has occurred in spite of various attempts made by administrators and practitioners alike to address the problem. In 1971 a Scottish Home and Health Department working party was set up in order to investigate and develop a strategy to combat the problem of violent behaviour among long-term prisoners in the Scottish Prison Service (S.H.H.D., 1971). Recommendations from the report led to the opening of the Barlinnie Special Unit in 1973 for long term violent and disruptive prisoners. Moreover, in 1988 a Scottish Prison Service discussion paper set out a two fold strategy for dealing with dangerous and violent prisoners (Home Office, 1988). The two main tenets of the strategy were assessment and control. 'Assessment', referring to the early identification of those prisoners who may be prone to violent and disruptive behaviour and ensuring that appropriate resources are directed towards resolving actual and potential problems. 'Control', referring to the fact that adequate procedures and facilities must be in place to minimise the effect of such behaviour when it does occur, whether it is directed at either prisoners or staff.

However, it is important to recognise that not all indicators suggest that assaults are increasing in Scottish prisons. In the most recent Scottish Prison Survey

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<sup>1</sup> These figures may be an unreliable gauge of inmate behaviour as they only take into account reported incidents of assault and as such may be more sensitive to staff reporting bias and prison management policy.

(Wozniak, Dyson & Carnie, 1998) 11% of the respondents stated that they had been assaulted over a recent six month period in a Scottish prison. This result compares favourably with the proportion responding to the same question in the previous survey in 1994 (14%). However, rates must be collated and compared successively over a number of years in order to monitor trends appropriately. Reliance solely on cross-sectional data collated at two points using one method of data collection, in this case questionnaire self-report, may not give sufficient indication as to how assault behaviour is changing over time.

At present available indicators of assault in Scottish penal institutions provide somewhat conflicting information as to whether assaults are increasing or decreasing. This may be of little surprise given that policy makers have to hand a paucity of relevant and in depth research information from which to develop effective and serviceable initiatives.

## **2.2 Definitional issues: What is Assault?**

Previous studies investigating assaults within both penal and psychiatric institutions have often used contrasting definitions. A proportion of these definitions only included assaults that were more 'serious' in nature, requiring physical contact or injury on the part of the participants (Tardiff, 1983; Depp, 1983). Other definitions went so far as to include murder and attempted murder (Porporino, Doherty & Sawatsky, 1987). Conversely, other definitions incorporated assaults that were less serious in nature and included threats or unsuccessful attempts at physical assault (Dietz & Rada, 1983). In addition there are numerous researchers who have not incorporated any definition of assaultive behaviour within

their research protocol (Ionno, 1983; Myers & Levy, 1978). Therefore, no consistency exists between studies as to what constitutes an appropriate definition of assaultive behaviour. As a result, this may preclude comparison of results between studies.

A significant number of studies have examined inmate on inmate and inmate on staff assault rates within prisons. Data for which has largely been derived from prison archives. As a result, these studies used definitions already established within the protocol of institutional record collection (Cooke, 1991; Farrington & Nuttall, 1980; Gaes & McGuire, 1985). The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) currently defines 'serious assault' occurring in prison as:

*".....when the victim has sustained an injury resulting in detention in hospital as an inpatient, or any of the following injuries whether or not detained in hospital:- fractures, concussion, internal injuries, crushings, severe cuts or lacerations, severe bruising, scalds or burns, or severe general shock requiring medical treatment. Murders or culpable homicides are excluded as within the definition of significant incidents"*

(SPS, 1996: p.10)

The above definition is wide ranging and covers a variety of injuries. However, in so doing the above definition also covers a range of severity of injury. For example, under the above definition the term 'serious assault' might be taken to include those incidents where there was physical injury to the victim for which he/she did not require treatment and the injury presented no threat to the individuals life (e.g. bruising). The definition could also be taken to include those incidences where a victim sustained an injury requiring some form of medical treatment but presented no threat to the victims life (e.g. fractured arm, stab or slash

wound with limited loss of blood). Furthermore, the same definition might be taken to encompass those incidents where there is physical injury to the victim, that requires medical treatment and presents a threat to his/her life (e.g. deep stab wounds). Therefore, the SPS definition of 'serious assault' might include a large proportion of injuries that in themselves are not life threatening. In addition, the SPS definition of 'serious assault' fails to take into account the intent of the assailant. Indeed, a victim may end up with only a minor injury despite the assailant intending to inflict severe injury. Alternatively, a victim may end up with a life threatening injury when the assailant did not intend to cause damage to the victim. Given the problems with the SPS definition of 'serious assault' it is intended that the more generic and representative term of 'assault' be used throughout the remainder of this thesis.

### 2.3 Previous Studies in Psychiatric Institutions

A number of studies have been carried out in a variety of different types of institution examining events of physical assaultiveness. A significant body of research has been carried out in psychiatric institutions (Quinsey & Varney, 1977; Deitz & Rada, 1983; Conn & Lion, 1983; Jacobson & Richardson, 1987; Rasmussen & Levander, 1996; Rice, 1985). Research in psychiatric institutions has primarily concentrated on the individuals perpetrating the assault and derived information about these individuals retrospectively from institutional files.

Limited work has been carried out within psychiatric settings regarding the environmental characteristics linked to the apparent level of assault, such as

institution size or population density. However, studies conducted to date have elucidated the following:

- a) crowding may lead to higher rates of assault (Kalogerikas, 1971);
- b) increasing staffing levels may not reduce levels of assault (Depp, 1983);
- c) assault may be more likely to occur at times when there is little or no structured activity (Haffke & Reid, 1983; Kalogerikas, 1971); and
- d) the number of assaults occurring in any one period may be related to spurious factors that change over time (Bidna, 1975) and may be linked by one or a combination of the following: a general societal increase in violent behaviour, a change in measurement procedures, a greater desire to record assault on behalf of the staff, and an increased number of violent individuals in institutions.

Researchers in psychiatric institutions have acknowledged the usefulness of using a range of situational, institutional and individual factors to predict who would assault others and who would be assaulted (Rasmussen & Levander, 1996). However, most studies have only focused on factors relating to the individual, such as personality, age, and prior assault history (Jacobson & Richardson, 1987; Reid, Bollinger & Edwards, 1985 [a][b]). The main findings of this research being that assaultive behaviour is more likely to occur among: younger individuals (Haffke & Reid et al., 1985 [a][b]; Pearson, Wilmot & Padi, 1986), individuals with a prior history of assaultive behaviour or aggression (Karson & Bigelow, 1987; Yesavage, 1983) and individuals associated with diagnoses of schizophrenia and psychopathy (Karson & Bigelow, 1987; Pearson, Wilmot & Padi, 1986).

Also, assaultive behaviour in psychiatric institutions has been shown to be linked with self-injurious and suicidal behaviour (Tardiff & Sweillam, 1982; Tardiff & Sweillam, 1980; Yesavage, Werner, Becker, Hollman & Mills, 1981). Although, other studies indicate that having a history of violence does not necessarily predict future violence, it may be that the effect is not evident in all types of psychiatric population (Dietz & Rada, 1982; Rasmussen & Levander, 1996). Furthermore, the relationship between diagnostic category of the individuals being studied and assaultiveness has not been supported by a number of studies (Harris & Varney, 1986; James, Fineberg, Shah & Priest, 1990; Rasmussen & Levander, 1996). This may be due to the fact that no relationship exists among the specific groups under study. Or that the type of environment may be reducing the effect of diagnostic category, for example a strict and rigid regime when the patients have little freedom may reduce the ability of a type of individual from a unique diagnostic category to commit assault.

However, there are a number of problems with studies undertaken in psychiatric institutions. Specifically, the assumption that findings obtained by such research may be compared with that from other settings, such as prisons. Most of the studies carried out in psychiatric institutions concentrated on a homogeneous group of chronically aggressive patients in acute psychiatric wards (Rasmussen & Levander, 1996; Reid, 1983). Consequently, the results may not generalise well to other institutionalised populations. Also, most of the studies in psychiatric institutions used conflicting definitions, some used definitions based on more severe altercations (Quinsey & Varney, 1977) while others used a less rigid definition and incorporated less severe behaviour and verbal altercations (Conn & Lion, 1983). As a result, these studies are likely to be measuring different behaviours, which may not be directly comparable between psychiatric institutions let alone penal populations.

In addition, the results of the studies from psychiatric institutions are often presented in an overly simplistic manner, for example, simply as the number of incidents of assaults occurring across a specified period of time (Rice, 1989). Therefore, results are not based upon the number of individuals in the institutions and do not take into account the effects of population size. Furthermore, most of the above studies were carried out looking at one institution using one data source, either incident reports (Rasmussen & Levander, 1996) or interviews (Jacobson & Richardson, 1987). As a result such studies incorporate the biases inherent with using one method of data collection.

#### **2.4 Assaultive Behaviour in Penal Establishments: Self-report & Official Records**

Examination of studies from North America and Britain that have investigated assault and/or violence within a prison setting indicate the use of two main data sources. These data sources are inmate self-report and analysis of official records. McCorkle (1992) used survey data to examine assault in prison. While, Gaes & McGuire (1985), Ruback & Carr (1993) and others, used official records alone.

A number of studies have used self-report methodology in the form of questionnaire and interview in conjunction with official records (Cooley, 1993; Fuller & Orsagh, 1977; Wright, 1991). These, and other studies, have found reported rates of assaultive behaviour obtained via questionnaires to be contrary to rates quoted in official records. Furthermore, the same studies have shown staff identification to be contrary to that of prisoners (Beck, 1994; Fuller & Orsagh, 1977). This section of the literature examines the studies from North America and Britain that have used self-report and official records data to examine assault and/or violent behaviour in

prison. The specific problems with using official records to investigate assault are discussed in detail and the implications for future research are highlighted.

#### 2.4.1 A study from North America using self-report

McCorkle (1992) looked at the type, extent, and correlates of personal precautions to violence in an adult male maximum-security prison. Using computer generated random methods 600 inmates were selected and then interviewed out of a total population of 970. One hundred of those inmates chosen were excluded from the study as they had been transferred to other institutions. A questionnaire was then delivered to the 500 inmates who remained. The response rate to the survey was 60%, as 300 were returned complete. Inmates were offered \$3 for returning a completed script. Demographic information obtained from the questionnaire sample closely matched that of the whole prison population and the sample was therefore considered to be representative. Further to the questionnaires, 25 interviews were organised with inmates who had completed the questionnaire to obtain qualitative information about assaultive incidents. However, no information was given about the method of sampling for the interviews. Therefore, it was not possible to determine whether the interview sample was representative or not.

Findings revealed that 78% of inmates who completed the questionnaire felt the risk of being involved in a violent encounter could be reduced by:

*"keeping themselves to themselves"*

McCorkle (1992 : p.165)

While 40% of questionnaire respondents believed that avoidance of particular areas of the prison was the best method. Areas of the prison which were identified as 'high risk' areas were deemed to be those where supervision was at a minimum, such as the recreational areas. A similar proportion of the sample reported spending more time in their cell as the best way of reducing risk of a violent encounter. Nearly 70% of questionnaire respondents stated that they had been forced to 'get tough' with another inmate to avoid a violent encounter, while 25% had kept a weapon nearby.

Factor analysis carried out on the main precautionary behaviours revealed that two factors were evident. The two factors were labelled "aggressive precautions" and "passive precautions". Passive precautions were, 'kept to self', 'avoided areas of the prison', 'spent more time in cell' and 'avoided activities', while aggressive precautions were 'get tough', 'kept a weapon nearby', and 'lifted weights'. The precaution 'requested protective custody' did not load significantly on either factor. Results of stepwise regression analyses with 'passive' precaution as the dependent variable revealed that inmates who were older and more socially isolated used passive methods. These variables were able to explain just over 20% of the variance. Therefore, avoiding the stronger element and their dealings was interpreted as being a good way of reducing risk. However, inmates could also see it as carrying an increased risk as passive avoidance behaviours may indicate to others that the persons exhibiting such behaviours are weak.

Stepwise regression with aggressive precaution as the dependent variable indicated that the younger inmates with protracted histories of criminal behaviour were shown to be the most salient predictors. These variables were able to explain

just over 30% of the variance. McCorkle also acknowledged that depending upon the inmate's current circumstances he may choose to adopt either the passive or the aggressive strategy, for example, an inmate who may be considered as the stronger element may choose to avoid confrontation if faced with a forthcoming parole hearing.

The wider implications of McCorkle's study were that the inmates adopting the aggressive types of behaviours should be targeted through appropriate programmes. These programmes were designed with the intention that prisoners should be empowered with the ability and knowledge to secure their own safety. However, the precautionary behaviours individuals might adopt may be mediated by certain factors, such as a parole hearing for a strong inmate in the case mentioned earlier. Indeed, the rationale behind progression systems that currently operate in a number of British prisons is that individuals will think twice before engaging in unacceptable behaviour for fear of losing 'privileges'. The rationale behind this approach is that it is hoped individuals may decide that in order to ascend the ladder to better conditions or to maintain their current status, they have to avoid violent conflict. However, further investigation is required to investigate exactly what incentives individuals might value within a system of 'token economy'. The recognisable problem with this approach is that certain prisoners may not value the rewards in place or may regard the rewards as insufficient to make it 'worth their while' to take part in the progression system. Individual bullies who choose not to try and achieve the rewards on offer may gain more from remaining in their present position (i.e. high position in the inmate hierarchy and instrumental gains).

## **2.4.2 North American studies using official records**

Owing to reported problems in conducting studies involving self-report, e.g. access to prisons, honesty of inmates and staff, compliance of prisoners, low response rates, time for design and completion, and overall expense (Bowker, 1980; Cooley, 1993), many researchers examined exclusively the presumed more objective measure of official prison records (Ekland-Olson, 1986; Farrington & Nuttall, 1980; Gaes & McGuire, 1985; McCorkle et al., 1995; Ruback & Carr, 1993).

Studies undertaken in penal settings using records as a data source originally focused upon identification of the correlates of general institutional discipline (Flanagan, 1983; Megargee, 1976; Nacci, Teitelbaum & Prather, 1977). However, more recent research has concentrated upon examining the correlates of assault discipline reports, with most studies having examined the level of assault/violence in relation to a measure of crowding/density over time (Ekland-Olson, 1986; Farrington & Nuttall, 1980; Gaes, 1994; Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Ruback & Carr, 1993). Furthermore, research has been conducted examining the contribution of prison and prisoner characteristics towards the prediction of assault severity against members of staff (i.e. how seriously prisoners assault staff) using official records data alone (Kratcoski, 1988; Light, 1990). Research on assault in North American prisons has also been carried out using prison records in addition to self-report (Cooley, 1993; Fuller & Orsagh, 1977) [see Section 1.4.4].

The following review is of a selection of papers from North America (Ekland-Olson, 1986; Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Kratcoski, 1988; Light, 1990; McCorkle et al., 1995; Nacci, Teitelbaum & Prather, 1977; Ruback & Carr, 1993) using official records.

While this section of the review outlines the salient findings of this type of research the main focus is on the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies adopted. Particular attention is given to the results in relation to levels of assault and correlates of assaultive behaviour.

Nacci, Teitelbaum & Prather (1977) looked at discipline and assault rates from 37 Federal institutions in the US from 1973 to 1976. Assessment forms were distributed to custodial personnel who completed them from the prison records. Rates of types of physical assault were collated and analysed. This was conducted separately for assaults on staff and those on inmates. While the main focus of the project was discipline rates in general, the researchers found that younger inmates were more prone to violence, and that crowding may have exacerbated violence only among the younger inmates. This result was consistent for assaults by inmates on other inmates and assaults by inmates on staff. The researchers also acknowledged that the relationship between assault and density varied by the type of facility. However, no attempt was made to control for factors such as length of sentence and type of offence when examining the effects of crowding. In an appropriate model all such factors may require investigation.

Flanagan (1983) looked at general disciplinary infraction rates of 758 male release cases from 14 Federal institutions in the US during 1973-76. The dependent variable was the number of disciplinary infractions per inmate annually. The study examined factors that might distinguish between high and low rate disciplinary offenders, from which they found age to be the most salient predictor. Also, young inmates were shown to be the group most likely to be involved in such behaviour. However, other factors were shown to operate in conjunction with age, such as

offence type, drug history, and sentence type. The extent to which the correlation's varied over time and the impact of type of institutional setting were not examined, and no delineation of the relative severity of each incident was attempted.

Ekland-Olson (1986) explored the links between more serious types of violence, such as homicide and inmate-inmate and inmate-staff assaults, and crowding and social control, using information derived from institutional records. This study sought to explain changes in the pattern of violence by examining social control mechanisms, such as staff-inmate relations and likelihood of punishment. It was hypothesised that weaknesses in these mechanisms were a major cause of assault in prison. The system-wide trends were examined for the Texas department of corrections and this facilitated comparison across years and institutions. No apparent link was found between crowding and serious violence. However, changes in the levels of assault were attributed to a reduced willingness on the part of staff to control violence and increased ineffectiveness of the staff, which was linked to crowding. The study attempted to analyse other factors apart from crowding, and revealed that crowding may be an spurious factor when determining levels of assault.

Gaes & McGuire (1985) attempted to examine the relationship between prison assault rates and aggregate measures of crowding, age and prisonisation (adoption of the inmate code and way of life) from data collected from 19 Federal prisons over a 33 month period from 1975-78 using a multivariate procedure. Assault rates were broken down into categories according to type and severity of assault; for example inmate-inmate with a weapon, inmate-inmate without a weapon, inmate-staff with a weapon, and inmate-staff without a weapon. This was initiated in order to facilitate

more detailed study of assault in relation to other variables. The authors concluded that this method of breaking down types of behaviour according to specified criteria may have served to reveal more direct effects of predictor variables. Gaes & McGuire found that crowding was the most salient predictor of prison assault rates out of the variables involved in the analysis. However, based on meticulous evaluation of current research Gaes (1994) later noted that it was perhaps more likely that some other factor, or factors, other than crowding caused the changes in violence, for example changes in management policy in the prison. These other factors may have been correlated with crowding. This view was supported by the research of Camp & Camp (1989) who surveyed prison administrators in the US and asked them the extent of crowding and the quality of management at their prison. They concluded that there was little difference between managing crowded or uncrowded prisons as good management was required in both.

Ruback & Carr (1993) examined the disciplinary reports (violent and non-violent) and their relationship with density for 65 prisons in Georgia (USA) by month over a 10 year period. Multivariate analysis holding other factors constant indicated that density of institutional population was positively related to both types of report, although the effects were very small. Similar positive relationships were found between the level of discipline reports and the size of youth institutions, and institutions with higher cost per inmate. No consistent relationship was observed across different types of prison between density and infraction rates. They also concluded that higher rates of infraction of a violent and non-violent nature occurred after any change in density regardless of whether the change was an increase or a decrease. Also, this study examined whether involvement in institutional programmes (counselling and education) may have reduced the levels of assault.

However, results were thought to be inconsistent owing to the fact that programmes lessened assaults in some prisons but did not in others.

McCorkle, Miethe & Drass (1995) set out to measure the extent of individual and collective violence and used data from 371 prisons across the United States, with the main aim of identifying structural, managerial and environmental determinants. The researchers outlined the main theories that have been supported within the literature to explain violence. The deprivation model (Gaes & McGuire, 1985) which intimates that factors occurring inside the institution may be most influential, such as stressful and oppressive conditions, or strict rule enforcement. The management model (Dilulio, 1987) which proposes that failures in prison management are the major causal factor. The importation theory (Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Gaes & McGuire, 1985) which suggests that inmates' background factors, such as a prior history of violence outside, are most important. Finally, the "*Not-So-Total institution*" perspective, (Farrington, 1992) which proposes that cultural, political, and economic factors from outside, most influence violent behaviour.

The McCorkle, Miethe & Drass (1995) study was designed to test these theories. Data was derived from the US Department of justice census' in 1984 and 1990. In total 371 all adult male prisons were examined, from all security levels. The dependent variables for the study were inmate assaults against inmates, inmate assaults against staff, and prison riots. Independent variables included measures of deprivation, management, and the external prison environment.

Findings indicated that the deprivation model variables were least useful in a regression prediction equation towards predicting a distinction between well

ordered and poorly ordered institutions. Crowding was not revealed as an important predictor of assault. No support was forthcoming regarding the effects of increased security, as institutions with high guard to inmate ratios were no more violent than those with lower ones. Furthermore, in institutions where inmates had greater access to institutional programmes there were lower rates of assault on both inmates and staff. However, links were shown between violence inside the prison and what was happening outside. An inverse relationship was shown between unemployment and inmate assaults. In addition, management factors were important, e.g. rates of assault against both inmates and staff were far greater in those institutions with higher ratios of white-black (i.e. more white than black) correctional officers. This study did not reveal any variable that could accurately predict prison riots.

The researchers concluded that the prediction of assaults and riots was not worthwhile for three reasons:

*"First, both individual and collective violence may be idiosyncratic events, precipitated by a host of individualistic factors and conditions that are not easily incorporated into a general model....Second, several predictor variables may have conflicting effects that largely nullify their explanatory power....Third, the characteristics of inmates (e.g. race, age, and type of offence, etc.) are not included in the estimated models"*

McCorkle, Miethe & Drass (1995: p 329)

The study by McCorkle et al., (1995) was ground breaking in several respects. It was one of the few studies to attempt to predict assault using a number of different types of predictor and also one of the first to try and predict riots. Although, the

inmate characteristics were overlooked within this study, the results do indicate that prison management factors may serve to conduct assault against both inmates and staff in prison.

Light (1990) examined correlates of the severity of reported incidents of assault on prison staff retrospectively over the period of one year (1983). The data available was from the New York State Department of Correctional Services. Severity of assault was measured by injury sustained by the victim. The characteristics examined were those of the individual (e.g. age, race, criminal history, time served) and those of the institution (e.g. mean age of prisoners, social density, prison size, prisoner turnover).

Regression analysis indicated that severity of assault on staff was mostly determined by institutional rather than individual characteristics, and that individual factors were deemed to have little or no effect. The principal prison characteristic deemed most responsible for fluctuations in the severity of staff assault was age distribution of a prison's population (those populated by a high proportion of younger prisoners), even when individual age of prisoner was held constant. It was acknowledged that within establishments housing younger populations age did not effect the severity of staff assaults, however, it was homogeneity of prison population in youth and young adult prisons that leads to increased staff assault severity.

The results of this study provide an interesting perspective on staff assaults, a relatively under researched area in prison settings. Furthermore, severity of assault was examined in detail in this study using rigorous multivariate procedures.

However, little information was provided with regard to the type and nature of staff assault. In particular, differences in the nature of staff assault in adult and young offender establishments require further analysis. This paper is a useful preliminary step towards examining two under researched areas concerning assaults in prison, staff assault and severity of assault.

A study by Kratcoski (1988) also examined incident reports pertaining to inmate assaults on staff. These records were examined retrospectively over a three year period in two North American penal establishments (one Federal prison and one State prison). The study revealed that four main factors were related to assaults on staff. These were, location, with more than 70% of the assaults occurring in high security areas; work experience of staff, with trainees receiving a disproportionately high number of assaults; age of the prisoner perpetrating the assault, with the majority of assaults being perpetrated by prisoners aged 25 or younger; and shift, with the majority of assaults occurring during the day shift. It was noted by Kratkowski that the effects for these four factors were the same for both 'minor' and 'serious' assaults. Analysis revealed that the nature of assaults differed between the State and Federal facilities, with the State facility experiencing more 'serious' assaults, however the two types of establishment had similar characteristics for the four factors. Moreover, from analysis of the assault report narratives it was apparent that most of the assaults were spontaneous in nature and came about either because the prisoner had been denied privileges and felt badly done to, or because the prisoner had an unusual event occur in his life (e.g. a divorce, a bereavement, etc.) and was under a great deal of stress because of it. The Kratkowski study was important as there was recognition of the distinction between assaults on prisoners and assaults on staff, and also awareness of the distinction between 'minor' and

'serious' assaults. However, the study was limited in that only two establishments were examined and the periods over which the data was collated were different for the two prisons under study.

#### **2.4.3 British studies using official records**

There are few studies conducted to date in British prisons that have attempted analysis of prison discipline reports to explicate assaultive behaviour (Cooke, 1991; Skett, Braham & Samuel, 1996; Boucher, 1995).

In a brief report Boucher (1995) examined the number and type of prison discipline reports from all male penal establishments in England & Wales for 1993 in English male prisons. Number of reports for violence per 100 average daily population (a.d.p) were reported for each type of penal institution. Findings revealed that juvenile young offender institutions had the highest number of reports reflecting violent behaviour (137 per 100 a.d.p), while open adult prisons had the lowest (1 per 100 a.d.p.). These results support the results from North American penal literature (Bowker, 1980; Gaes & McGuire, 1985), that younger prisoners are more involved in instances of overt violence in prison.

Cooke (1991) looked at temporal changes in assaults sourced from the *Prisons in Scotland Annual Reports*, and presented levels over time using figures per 100 a.d.p. Cooke's study highlighted assaults as a growing problem over time and alluded to the available literature to review the factors that might be related to assault, such as regime and personality factors. Analysis of the annual reports revealed that levels

of assault in Scottish prisons increased steadily from 4 per 100 in 1974 to 13 per 100 in 1987. Furthermore, he argued:

*"the characteristics of the regime may have a significant role in the aetiology of violent incidents"*

(Cooke, 1991: p. 95)

The conclusions of this study were borne out of a review of the available literature. However, most of the studies cited were carried out in prison settings outside the UK. While Cooke's study suggested those institutional factors, such as staff experience and training, staff morale, crowding, level of security and control may be important, this has not as yet been supported by further detailed empirical research in British Prisons. Therefore, there is a need for research on prisoner assaultive behaviour using data collected from British, and in particular Scottish, prisons. Moreover, within British prisons it may be interesting to source data from individual prison records in future studies in order to relate regime and other factors to changes in assaultive behaviour over time.

A study by Skett et al. (1996) examined the problems of drugs and violence in an English young offender establishment, which housed both remand and convicted inmates. The research came in response to management calls for "quality" information about these problems to aid strategic planning. The study was carried out in 1995. The present review will focus on the results relating to violence.

The issue of bullying and taxing (forcing an inmate to hand over goods or possessions) was identified as being associated with a drug problem in the

institution under examination. Violence in this institution was gauged using discipline reports relating to violence. The reports as they appeared in the rulebook were classified as follows:

*"Commits any assault", "fights any person", "using threatening abusive insulting words or behaviour", "in any way offends against good order and discipline", and "attempts, incites, assists any of the previous types of report"*

(SPS, 1994(a): Rule 47 paragraphs 1,4,17,21 & 22)

These reports were recorded for the year 1994 and findings showed that the rate of reports for violence (sub-categories summated) was 138.6 per 100 a.d.p. Out of the total number of reports ( $n = 2407$ ) considered in the study, 173 (7%) were related to assault on another inmate or member of staff. Fighting incidents were the most common type of violence related report comprising 62.5% ( $n = 429$ ) of the reports. Examination of the officers' description of the incidents revealed that the difference between an 'assault' and a 'fight' was unclear because in an 'assault' the 'victim' is often seen to retaliate. Often 'fights' came about as a result of an 'assault'. The researchers further indicated that assaults were often coupled with threats which were not pursued on the charge sheet. Approximately 83% ( $n = 763$ ) of the reports were considered to be 'one-off' incidents that occurred on the spur of the moment as the inmate involved only had one charge against him.

Severity of punishment was seen to differ significantly according to the type of offence, and whether an inmate was on remand or sentenced. Also, severity of punishment varied according to the governor administering the sanction. Respondents suggested that remand inmates were dealt with more harshly than

convicted inmates for similar offences. Therefore, on the whole, punishments were considered neither consistent nor fair. Remand inmates committed more assaults on fellow inmates, however this may have been attributable to the type of regime rather than the type of inmate housed there. It was surprising that results indicated that fights lead to significantly greater injuries to the participants than did assaults.

As the results of the Skett et al. study were derived from inmate responses at one institution it may be unwise to generalise to other inmate populations and to other types of prison. In addition, results for each sub-category, for example assault against staff and prisoners, were not given per 100 a.d.p., thus making comparison with other studies difficult. Furthermore, there are additional analyses that the researchers might have found interesting and informative to pursue. For example, examining changes in the reports over time and in relation to other variables (e.g. inmate to staff ratio, type of offence of inmates, sentence length of inmates, intervention measures). Examining the number of reports exclusively mentioning bullying may also have revealed interesting results regarding the qualification of such behaviour on the part of officers in the report. As violent behaviour is a general term, the Skett et al., study could not distinguish between types of violence, especially regarding the motivation and circumstances surrounding each incident. While this was largely attributable to a lack of information in the reports, further research into the motivation and circumstances surrounding these types of incident is required using a method more suitable for acquiring such information such as semi-structured interviews with inmates identified from the reports.

However, taking the above factors into account the study by Skett et al. succeeded in utilising available resources to outline the whole process of

adjudication for violence in a Young Offender Institution. This type of analysis may be extremely useful to penal institutions, and if carried out in a consistent manner can serve to highlight trends in staff and prisoner behaviour or weaknesses in the structure of reporting. An important caveat should be recognised, that official prison records are subject to a number of weaknesses. Section 2.4.6 presents a detailed synopsis of these problems, particularly with regard to the method used to measure the violent behaviour itself.

#### **2.4.4 Studies using 'triangulation' of methods to investigate assault in prison**

Fuller & Orsagh (1977) presented a seminal paper regarding a profile of victims of assault based on research in ten institutions of correction in North Carolina, USA. These researchers used data from three different sources: offence reports in each institution, interviews with the superintendents of each prison, and inmate interviews. The main aims being to examine the extent to which victimization occurs and it's correlates.

Fuller & Orsagh revealed that the victimization rate (number of prisoners being victimised) ranged from 0.6 to 19.4 per cent (based on data from each quarter of the year) according to the type of data base used. Inmates victimising members of staff occurred in approximately one in ten of the assaultive incidents. In addition, the researchers found that victimization rates varied considerably by race, age and institution. White inmates, inmates in youth institutions, and young inmates, were the groups identified as being more likely to be victimised.

Further findings revealed that victimization rates varied inversely with degree of supervision, and that economic matters and revenge were the main motivating factors of victimization. The likelihood of an inmate victimising another inmate increased if the perpetrator was shown to have committed a previous assault in prison. Suggestions for policy change included increasing the amount and quality of supervision and reorganisation of the inmate population according to their propensity to commit assault. Fuller & Orsagh also intimate that differences existed between victimization's where individuals contribute to their own victimization and those where no blame can be attributed to the victim. The victimization rate where no blame could be attributed to the victim was relatively low at 0.6 %. This may not be surprising given that prisoners who perpetrate a victimization tend to 'blame the victim' (Beck, 1992), and often victims may have low self-esteem and may blame themselves unnecessarily (Bowker, 1980; Power & Beveridge, 1990).

The main strengths of the study by Fuller & Orsagh are that they used a variety of different data sources and a variety of different definitions of victimization. Therefore, a range of victimization was derived. It was then possible to examine each type of victimization separately. However, findings were geared toward generating information about measurement of victimization and a paucity of information was presented about the motivation behind and situational factors related to the various incidents, whether they were assaults against staff, assaults against inmates, fights, or any other type of violence.

Furthermore, as the authors were economists the analysis was conducted on the basis of formula's used within the field of economics. Consequently, the

relevance of an economic analysis for a social scientific perspective on victimization may be questioned.

In a review of the current research Wright (1991) acknowledged that studies concerning violence and victimization in prison were largely:

*"rich in descriptive detail" but "limited in scope"*

Wright (1991: p1)

In the light of such observations his study set out to examine the similarities and differences between those inmates who were considered to have been violent to other inmates and those considered to have been victimised by other inmates. Particular attention was paid to the environmental factors that might reflect whether an individual becomes violent or gets victimised when in prison. Information was collated from 5 medium and 5 maximum security prisons in New York State. Inmates were randomly selected from a list of all inmates in each prison. The involvement of each inmate in the study was two sessions of two hours each. The sample consisted of 942 subjects.

Information about inmates' background and personality were derived from official records and interviews. Individuals were categorised as either being victimised or being a violent inmate according to indicators within the records and it was recognised that only the most extreme ends of a continuum indicating the behavioural traits were selected. A measure designed to obtain information about inmates' self-perceptions of adjustment (*Prison Adjustment Questionnaire*, Wright, 1985), was used to examine how inmates may have adjusted to prison and was used

as an aid for classification. The violent inmates were sub-classified according to whether they were assaulters (those officially charged with assault) or highly aggressive (those who report on the measure that they fight and argue with staff regularly, but are not officially charged with assault). The victimised were sub-classified into overlapping categories: those who had self-injured (those charged with self inflicted injury or attempted suicide); those reporting in the measure that they have been hurt by inmates in prison; and those reporting in the measure that they have been taken advantage of.

However, inmates were selected on the basis that they had been involved in an assault on an inmate or staff member over a three year period. This need not necessarily imply that the incidents were at the extreme end of the violence continuum. Indeed, many of the perpetrators may also have been victimised. A victimised inmate was classified according to whether they had inflicted self-injury or attempted suicide. No information was provided about the extent to which inmates fell into both categories and whether or not these inmates were excluded from the analysis. Furthermore, no information was given regarding the number of inmates in all the prisons partaking in the study and therefore no idea of the representative nature of the sample could be gleaned. Further doubts were also cast over the representative nature of the sample as differences in background factors were shown between the sample and the individuals who chose not to be involved in the study. In addition, Wright seemed to infer that those inmates who self-injure and attempt suicide are automatically those inmates who are being victimised within prison. This may be the case for a significant proportion of inmates finding themselves in such a position but not for all such inmates. Further clarification may be required before treating para-suicidal and victimised inmates as synonymous.

Within the interview protocol inmates completed a number of other standardised measures, including the *Prison Preference Inventory* (Toch, 1977), the *Minnesota Multi-Phasic Personality Inventory*, MMPI (Megargee & Bohn, 1979), and a new measure the *Prison Environment Inventory* (Wright, 1985). The above were used to measure subjects environmental preferences in prison, personality dimensions, and the contextual attributes of a prison setting, respectively. The MMPI was completed during a second session and the attrition rate was high at 45%. Further information about the subjects, such as age, time of incarceration etc., was obtained from institutional records.

Findings revealed that the groups of violent (assailers and aggressive inmates) and victimised inmates were distinctive. The violent inmates tended to be younger, be involved in the criminal justice system an earlier age, and have prior institutional experience. The researchers recognised that the aggressive inmates did not necessarily become assailers, and had manifestly different personality types according to the MMPI. The victims tended to be less involved in the criminal culture before incarceration and have had less institutional experience. The study also revealed that victims were unlikely to be charged with assaultive behaviour in prison but more likely to be aggressive to other inmates and staff. From this Wright concluded that victims were not necessarily assailers of other inmates but may have provoked attacks on themselves by their disputatious behaviour. Wright also recognised that the most disturbed inmates according to the MMPI were to be located among the inmates who were being victimised. Particular traits being an inability to get along with other people and poor social skills. Wright therefore

concluded that it may be more fruitful to distinguish assaulters using both personality and background factors together.

Regarding factors relating to the inmates perceptions of their environment, both assaulters and aggressive inmates expressed a preference for less structure and more freedom when institutionalised. Whereas inmates who had been assaulted expressed a preference for more structure when institutionalised. Findings also showed that individuals from the three categories (assaulters, aggressive inmates and assaulted inmates) were less likely to be satisfied with their present institutional environment than other inmates. Based on these results Wright argued that institutions tend to fail in meeting the environmental requirements of such inmate groups.

While this study suffered from a number of methodological problems, it succeeded in utilising standardised measures of personality and background factors to assess groups of inmates within a prison setting. The accumulation of such a wide range of data was only made possible through the inclusion of background information from records, and personality and environmental information from interviews, in a process of triangulation. Also, the use of a large sample size lent greater credibility to the results. Moreover, it is important to recognise that Wright's study is one of a few which actually attempted to examine factors relating the inmates' environment and how they perceived that environment. The relevance of which may be clearly apparent to prison administrators and those wishing to enhance quality of life for those living and working in penal establishments.

However, while Wright's study highlights important variables two main elements weaken the applicability of results. First, grouping inmates into categories without adequate explanation as to the number of inmates in each category or to what extent the categories overlapped, and second, the general failure to account for confounding variables in the analysis (e.g. staff/inmate relationships), may have attenuated the findings.

#### **2.4.5. Summary of studies investigating the crowding-violence relationship**

Results from studies using official records have mostly been concerned with examining the relationship between crowding and assaults. These studies have largely been inconsistent regarding support for the crowding-violence relationship, some provide support (Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Nacci et al., 1977; Ruback & Carr, 1993), while others do not (Dilulio, 1987; Ekland-Olson et al., 1983; Gaes, 1994). Ellis (1984) in a review of the available literature on the relationship between crowding, violence and social density may be mediated by a number of variables, such as age, inmate transiency, and level of social control. His review indicated how useful institutional records, and in particular discipline reports, might be as a resource for measuring institutional violence.

Gaes (1994) in a comprehensive review of the literature acknowledged the weaknesses of studies examining the effects of crowding and social density on assault in prison settings. He focused on the fact that studies failed to identify other variables that may have accounted for the relationship between crowding and violence. He was led to conclude that:

*'it is more likely that some other factor other than crowding (but possibly related with density) is associated with changes in violence'* Gaes (1994: p. 359)

Furthermore, he noted that the main body of research thus far had neglected influential prison variables (e.g. staff/inmate ratio, size of inmate population) while instead concentrating solely on:

*'examining the relationship between some operational definition of crowding and some measure of violence'*

(Gaes, 1994: p. 335)

Ekland-Olson (1986) and Ellis (1984) both advocated that mechanisms of social control may be influencing the extent of extremely serious assault occurring within a prison setting. They hypothesised that social control may be reduced by crowding as staff inmate relations deteriorate coupled with a reduced certainty of punishment. However, the research as it stands provides little insight into how the factors that may mediate assault might be related or how important each may be toward predicting assault.

#### **2.4.6. Problems with studies using official records and implications for future research**

Results from studies using official records have been reported in different ways. Fuller & Orsagh (1977) reported incidents of assault from disciplinary hearing records. They found 1.7% of the total number of hearing reports were related to assaults. However, such calculations do not take into account the aggregate

population figure, which arguably provides a more valid measure as it takes into account the relevant population size (O'Mahoney, 1994). Therefore, comparisons with other studies using the same method on different populations are made difficult. However, other studies using discipline records do express the totals with reference to the size of the population (Cooke, 1991; Farrington & Nuttall, 1980).

Studies examining the effects of crowding on victimization rates also present figures as related to the populations. Rates vary from 8.5 per 10,000 (Gaes & McGuire, 1985), to 18.61 per 1000 (Ekland-Olson, 1986), to 3.42 per 100 (Farrington & Nuttall, 1980). The time period covered by such rates also varies considerably. Again this makes comparisons difficult. Ekland-Olson (1986) examined records for yearly periods for the whole population of Texan prisons and rates of assault varied from 4.65 in 1980 to 18.61 in 1984. Farrington & Nuttall (1980) also present figures for a yearly period, while Gaes & McGuire (1985) provide a rate expressed per month.

The problems with obtaining one result as expressed by one type of rate have been outlined by O'Mahoney (1994). He discussed the limitations of accepting one rate as given when using a different rate provides the researcher with a conflicting result. For example, O'Mahoney highlighted the relative merits of using average daily population rates as opposed to reception rates with reference to suicide in penal establishments.

While the reception rate has been criticised as being a less valid measure than the a.d.p rate (O'Mahoney, 1994), inclusion of both measures in any study could be meritorious. Firstly, it may be possible to show that differences between institutions

change dramatically according to the type of rate used. Secondly, robust differences that survive changes in rates would become more valid when supported by two measures.

A further question relates to whether analysis is best conducted on an aggregate or individual level regarding prison types. Porporino (1986) noted that analysis of incidents of assault on the aggregate level (total for a group of prisons) might reveal more reliable patterns occurring in the character of violence. Such patterns may suggest how policy can be changed or indeed how programmes can be organised or developed in order to aid assault prevention within penal settings. However, researchers attempting to show relationships between general levels of discipline and other variables (e.g. population size) have indicated that while such relationships may hold for aggregate totals derived from the entire prison system they disappear when the data is broken down to individual prisons (Ekland-Olson, Barrick & Cohen, 1983; Fry, 1988).

Therefore, future study may benefit from analysing the figures for adult and young offender institutions separately, as a supplement to the aggregate data. This is because such methods allow researchers to evaluate whether either group may be contributing a disproportionate number of assaults to the overall total or whether relationships between variables disappear when deconstruction takes place. Furthermore, this procedure allows researchers to identify whether important predictors remain when the types of institution are analysed separately.

Researchers conducting studies incorporating official records have reported a number of problems. Only an extremely limited amount and specific type of

information can be gleaned. Incidents are lost through under-reporting and reluctance to disclose. These points were highlighted by previous studies with regard to both parasuicide (Liebling, 1991), and victimization (Bowker, 1980). Bias of those subjects completing or filling out the records can lead to falsely inflated or deflated rates (Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Ruback & Carr, 1993). Records are only available in the form that they are in at the time information is collected and as a result any extra information the researcher may wish to ascertain is frequently unobtainable.

## 2.5 Overall Conclusions

Most of the studies discussed within this chapter were conducted to outline the extent and correlates of the violent behaviour using self-report and analysis of official records. Although much of the existing literature on assault behaviour is relevant to the research proposed herein, its usefulness remains limited in the following respects. Studies in both prisons and psychiatric institutions have investigated either institutional or individual variables and how they are related to assault behaviour. The debate as to which of the factors is most important has largely been inconclusive owing to differences in the methodologies and sampling frameworks. Few studies have attempted to incorporate individual, situational, and institutional factors within an appropriate explanatory model. Research in both prisons and psychiatric institutions has concentrated upon the role of the aggressor in the assault incidents and limited work has focused on incidents from the perspective of the victim.

Moreover, methods of analysis adopted by previous studies in prison have failed to account for the effects of variables extrinsic to the dependent variable under study. For example failing to take into account factors such as, age, prison size and inmate transience when examining the effects of crowding. Furthermore, prison research has generally failed to distinguish consistently between assaults which are minor or in nature, assaults inflicted on staff or prisoners, and between different types of establishment (e.g. adult and young offender). Such factors may have considerable bearing on the overall rate of assault presented in official figures. Limited prison research has been directed towards examining assaults against prison officers or prison staff in general. In particular, a dearth of research exists on the severity of assaults on staff.

Furthermore, studies in prisons and psychiatric institutions have focused on either the environmental or institutional precipitants of assaults. Research on assault behaviour in British prisons has largely overlooked the direct motivation of the prisoner initiating the assault incident. Studies in prisons and psychiatric institutions have made only cursory attempts at differentiating the causes, circumstances surrounding, and consequences of assault incidents from the perspective of the aggressor and the victim.

Few studies are available that examine assaultive behaviour in British penal establishments, and even fewer in Scottish prisons. Few comprehensive British studies are currently available carrying out analysis of assault incident reports. Few studies have attempted to combine methods of obtaining data to examine assaults in prison (e.g. official records, interviews, and incident reports). No study has investigated an entire population within a prison system using such methods. Also,

limited work has been conducted comparing the nature of assaults in Young Offender Institutions and adult prisons. Further study is required if these gaps in the research are to be filled and the methodological weaknesses of previous studies are to be accounted for.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **SELF-REPORTED ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG OFFENDERS**

## **Chapter 3**

### **Self-Reported Attitudes and Experiences of Young Offenders**

#### **Abstract**

*Questionnaires were distributed to young offenders in all Scottish Young Offender Institutions in an attempt to ascertain the nature and extent of bullying. From a total of 756 distributed, 707 were returned complete, indicating a response rate of 94%. Overall, 29% of young offenders reported having been bullied during their current sentence. The most common method of bullying involved verbal threats and spreading untrue rumours. Respondents were self-identified into one of four categories, as either bully, bully & victim, neither bully nor victim, and victim. Self-reported bullies were shown to have spent a greater total amount of time incarcerated than self-identified victims. Self-reported victims were shown to be less likely to have a record for violent offences than other young offenders. The main characteristic identified by young offenders as predisposing towards being a bully was knowing a lot of young offenders while the main factor that predisposed toward being a victim was type of offence. Those young offenders who had spent a greater total amount of time incarcerated were more likely to be bullies regardless of current location, regime, or whether currently on remand or serving a short or long term sentence. Results are discussed in relation to factors influencing bullying in Young Offender Institutions.*

### **3.1 Introduction**

Previous studies of bullying and victimization used a range of different criteria to express the extent of the problem. McGurk & McDougall (1991) and Ireland & Archer (1996) reported the number of subjects having seen or heard of a bullying incident; others reported the number of subjects who had been bullied (Beck, 1994; Cooley, 1993; Ireland & Archer, 1996; Mutchnick & Fawcett, 1990); and others reported the number of subjects recognising that they themselves had been bullies at one time or another (Beck, 1994; Ireland & Archer, 1996). All the aforementioned studies began with a predetermined definition of bullying from which to work.

However, problems exist when providing young offenders with definitions of bullying or victimization, as such behaviour may not be compatible with their own perception or definition of such behaviour. Few studies have examined the behaviours of such a group in detail. Therefore, knowledge about the way young offenders conceptualize the problem is sparse. Studies have already shown marked differences among definitions of bullying between young offenders and staff (Beck, 1994), and male and female adult prisoners (Ireland and Archer, 1996). These studies highlight the problem of using pre-determined definitions for different subject groups. It was for these reasons that it was considered problematic to provide respondents with a definition of bullying in the present study.

### **3.2 Aims**

In light of the gaps in the research literature as a whole and the weaknesses of previous studies, outlined in Chapter 1, the present study had the following aims. First, the study aimed to find out the extent of bullying among the population of Scottish young offenders based on a range of criteria, such as: number subjected to and/or exhibiting bullying behaviour; number perceiving bullying as a problem; and number having seen bullying of others. Second, the study aimed to elucidate the nature of bullying by examining different types of bullying, where bullying occurs and what young offenders believe can be done to prevent bullying. Third, the study aimed to identify factors that may be linked with being a 'bully' and a 'victim'. Finally, the study aimed to examine whether differences exist between bullies and victims concerning background factors (e.g. age, sentence length, offence type, total time spent incarcerated and attitudes toward staff).

### **3.3 Setting**

Data collection took place at five Young Offender Institutions in Scotland (see Table 3.1 for profiles of the establishments). All of which provided accommodation for young male adults aged 16-21 years. All establishments housed different populations depending upon type of offence, length of sentence and security category:

**Table 3.1 Features of Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) Derived from a Three Month Period (1/10/94-31/12/94)**

	<b>Polmont</b>	<b>Glenochil</b>	<b>Dumfries</b>	<b>Castle Huntly</b>	<b>Longriggend</b>
<b>Average Daily Population</b>	376	161	94	60	187
<b>Receptions over 3 Months</b>	1289	193	26	22	488
<b>Average Stay in YOI (Yrs)</b>	0.7	1.4	2.4	2.2	0.8
<b>YO/Staff<sup>2</sup> ratio</b>	7.8/1	6.0/1	8.5/1	10.0/1	7.5/1
<b>Min-Max sentence Length</b>	14dys-4yrs	14dvs-2vrs	4yrs-Life	Less than 4 yrs to serve <sup>3</sup>	N/A
<b>Type of YOI</b>	Closed, medium security	Closed, medium security	Closed, high security	Open, low securit	Closed remand unit

<sup>2</sup> Refers to the number of operational and residential staff on duty at any one time

<sup>3</sup> Or less than 3 years to serve of a longer sentence.

1. **HMYOI Polmont:** At the time of the study, Polmont held young offenders serving sentences of between one and four years. This facility also held those young offenders awaiting assessment and transfer to other establishments. At the time of the study Polmont had an anti-bullying group, composed of prison staff, working on the development of an anti-bullying initiative that was not yet operational. Polmont had a capacity of 486.
2. **HMYOI Glenochil:** At the time of the study, Glenochil held young offenders serving up to two years. All young offenders at Glenochil had been transferred from Polmont by virtue of their lower prison category. Glenochil was a less structured regime than Polmont. An anti-bullying initiative was already in place at Glenochil. The initiative was developed in the latter months of 1993, and implemented by staff in March 1994. It involved addressing staff attitudes through training sessions, increasing vigilance in vulnerable areas, and holding of persistent bullies in cells nearer to staff. Glenochil YOI had a capacity of 179.
3. **HMYOI Dumfries:** At the time of the study, Dumfries provided secure accommodation for long-term young offenders who, at the start of their sentence, were required to be located within a high security setting. The facility also housed those young offenders who had been disruptive in other establishments. Dumfries also held a small group of local prisoners, both young offender and adult (n = approx. 40). This latter group was not included in the analysis so as not to confound the results. The establishment had no anti-bullying initiative in place at the time of the study. However, intelligence reports were mentioned by staff as

being a method of obtaining information about bullies leading to their placement in separate basement cells. Dumfries had a capacity of 151.

4. **HMYOI Castle Huntly:** At the time of the study, Castle Huntly was an open establishment holding young offenders serving sentences of less than four years or who have less than three years left to serve of a longer sentence. All types of offence were represented except those of a sexual nature. The regime was based on trust between prisoners and staff. The emphasis in this establishment was on extra vigilance by staff. It was intended that bullies and victims who were identified by officers be kept under increased supervision, however, this aspect of the regime was not fully operational at the time of the study. Castle Huntly had a capacity of 125.

5. **HMRI Longriggend:** At the time of the study, Longriggend received all under 21 year old males remanded in custody by the courts within a large central region of Scotland. Also detained were approximately 20 convicted adults sentenced up to two years who carried out domestic duties (these individuals were not included in the present study). No specific anti-bullying initiative was in operation for this facility, however general bullying awareness groups were running in the learning centre at the time of the study. Longriggend had a capacity of 222.

### 3.4 Participants

Seven hundred and fifty-six questionnaires were distributed to all Scottish young offenders, located in the five separate establishments, of which 707 (94%) were

completed and returned<sup>4</sup>. Of the completed questionnaires, 326 (46%) were from an establishment for young offenders serving short-term sentences and awaiting assessment and transfer to other establishments [Polmont]; 139 (20%) from an establishment for those serving short term sentences [Glenochil]; 69 (10%) from a high security establishment [Dumfries]; 29 (4%) from an open establishment [Castle Huntly]; and 144 (20%) from a remand unit [Longriggend]<sup>5</sup>.

The response rates for the establishments were as follows (see Table 3.2):

- at Polmont 326 were completed out of 350 distributed (93.1%)
- at Glenochil 139 were completed out of the 142 distributed (97.9%)
- at Dumfries 69 were completed out of the 77 distributed (89.6%)
- at Castle Huntly 29 were completed out of the 40 distributed (72.5%)
- at Longriggend 144 were completed of the 147 distributed (98.0%)

It is important to note that while the response rates remained high in all establishments it can be seen from Table 3.2 that the institutions housing inmates serving long-term sentences in both an open and high security establishment (Castle Huntly and Dumfries respectively) were underrepresented. This may have been due to the fact that these individuals were familiar with the use of surveys in prisons and therefore were more cynical about the value of taking part in such a study.

<sup>4</sup> Not all young offenders completed all questions and therefore on certain questions the sample size may be less than 707.

<sup>5</sup> Those young offenders who were recognised by the staff or were self-identified as having problems with literacy were helped in completing the questionnaire by a member of the research team or another young offender.

**Table 3.2      Response rates for all establishments under study**

YOI	Number completed	Number distributed	Number of inmates in YOI at time	% response rate	% of overall population sampled
Castle Huntly	29	40	67	<b>72.5</b>	43.3
Dumfries	69	77	127	<b>89.6</b>	54.3
Longriggend	144	147	188	<b>97.9</b>	76.6
Polmont	326	350	369	<b>93.1</b>	88.4
Glenochil	139	142	159	<b>97.9</b>	87.4
Total	707	756	910	<b>93.5</b>	77.6

The ages of the young offenders ranged from 15 to 21 years, (mean = 18.6 years, SD = 1.34). The establishments examined in this study all housed male young offenders. The offences committed by the participants of the study were divided into seven areas according to standard Scottish Home Department classification criteria:

- Non-sexual crimes of violence, e.g. homicide, serious assault, n=179 (25%);
- Crimes of indecency, e.g. sexual assault, n=19 (3%);
- Crimes of dishonesty e.g. housebreaking, theft, fraud, n=411 (58%);
- Fire raising and vandalism, n=17 (2%);
- Other crimes, e.g. crimes against public justice, drugs offences, n=150 (21%);
- Miscellaneous offences, e.g. breach of the peace and common assault, n=225 (32%); and
- Motor vehicle offences, e.g. drink driving, n=68 (10%).

Other background characteristics recorded in the questionnaire included: length of sentence; time left to serve of present sentence; number of previous incarcerations; and total time incarcerated (including present sentence).

Once the questionnaires had been coded and analysed the respondents were classified into discrete categories, (group names in parentheses):

- bully (Bully);
- victim of bullying (Victim);

- neither bully nor victim (Other); and
- both bully and victim (Bully-Victim).

The young offenders' responses led to classification based on the answers "yes" or "no" to the following questions:

*"Have you ever been bullied by other young offenders during your current sentence and in this establishment?"; and "Have you ever bullied other young offenders during your current sentence in this establishment?".*

### 3.5 Questionnaire

The main research issues were developed into questions that could be answered within a questionnaire booklet. Thirty young offenders from the largest Young Offender Institution in Scotland (HMYOI Polmont) participated in a pilot survey in which they were asked to respond to the content and lucidity of the questionnaire. Amendments were made to the proposed main questionnaire in response to recommendations and answers of the pilot subjects.

A range of questions was used to obtain general estimates of the extent of bullying in Scottish Young Offender Institutions. Young offenders were asked whether they believed bullying was a problem at their establishment and whether they believed it to be a problem in Scottish Young Offender Institutions in general. Respondents were asked to indicate how often during their present sentence and in their current establishment they had been bullied by staff or young offenders; how often they had bullied other young offenders; and how often they had seen other

young offenders being bullied. The response categories were less than once a week, 1-2 days per week, most days, and every day. A further question related to the number of bullies usually involved in the incidents, and respondents ticked either, one, two, or more than two.

The respondents were required to indicate which factors they associated with being a victim and being a bully. Furthermore, respondents were asked how often they had seen bullying within their establishment. Respondents were also asked to indicate which types of bullying they had seen most frequently. Respondents were then asked about their own experiences as a bully or as a victim when in prison. Young offenders were also asked to suggest what they believed could be done to prevent bullying at their establishment.

### 3.6 Procedures

The questionnaires were distributed to young offenders in all Scottish Young Offender Institutions from May to August 1995. Young offenders completed the questionnaire in their cell and without recourse to responses of other young offenders wherever possible. A research assistant facilitated the distribution of the questionnaires. A team of individuals composed of members of staff (both uniformed and non-uniformed) within each facility assisted with distribution. The team were instructed as to the precise explanation they should provide to young offenders prior to questionnaire distribution.

Young offenders were informed that the questionnaire was developed by the University of Stirling and as such the research was independent of the Scottish

Prison Service; that all information would remain confidential; that their views were considered important; and that their anonymity would be preserved owing to the absence of names and the returning of completed scripts in a sealed envelope. In addition, all young offenders were reminded that they were volunteers and were under no obligation to take part. The young offenders were all given 40 minutes in which to complete the questionnaire during a lunch time 'lock up' period.

### 3.7 Results

#### 3.7.1 Extent of bullying

The number of respondents having seen bullying going on during their present sentence and in their current establishment was 76% (n=535). The number of respondents reporting that they had been bullied by other young offenders during their present sentence and in their current establishment was 201 (29%) and the number reporting that they had bullied other young offenders during their present sentence and in their current establishment was 112 (16%). Some individuals identified themselves simultaneously as being a 'bully' and a 'victim' (n=34, 5%). This group became a different category in the analysis and were labelled as 'bully/victims'. From the entire sample 61% (n=428) did not fall into the categories of 'bully' and 'victim' and were instead classed as 'others'.

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<sup>6</sup>As the 'bully/victim' group were discrete from the other three groups for the purposes of analysis, n=34 were subtracted from the 'bully' group and the 'victim' group.

### 3.7.2 Background characteristics

The only background variable to reflect differences between the groups (bully, bully-victim, other, victim)<sup>7</sup> was 'total time spent in prison' ( $F [3, 678] = 3.7, p < 0.05$ ), with bullies having spent a greater total amount of time incarcerated than victims. The variables 'age', 'sentence length', 'time left to serve', and 'number of times in prison' revealed no significant differences between the groups.

An analysis was then conducted comparing the four young offender groups<sup>8</sup> (bully, bully-victim, other, and victim) according to establishment type (long term, short term, remand) and taking 'total time spent in prison' as the variable of interest. A significant main effect was shown for young offender grouping ( $F [3, 535] = 3.7, p < 0.05$ ). In other words, the time individuals had spent incarcerated varied according to whether they were a bully, victim, bully-victim, or other. No interaction effect was evident between group and establishment ( $F [11, 535] = 0.76, \text{n.s.}$ ). Therefore, the results revealed that young offenders who had spent a greater amount of time incarcerated were more likely to be bullies regardless of establishment location, regime, or whether currently on remand, or serving a short or long term sentence.

Analysis of types of offence<sup>9</sup> (see Table 3.3) revealed that differences between the four groups existed only for violent offences, with 'victims' less likely to be charged with such an offence than the other groups, 'bully', 'other' and 'bully-victim', 16% vs 43%, 30%, and 38% respectively ( $\chi^2 = 20.3, df = 3, p < 0.005$ .)

<sup>7</sup> Analysis of variance (ANOVA) with post-hoc Scheffé test

<sup>8</sup> ANOVA with post-hoc Scheffé test

<sup>9</sup> Chi-Square test

**Table 3.3 Percentage of 'Yes' Responses and Summary of Differences Between the Groups: Bully, Bully-Victim, Victim and Other for Type of Offence Committed (3 =Df).**

Offence <sup>10</sup>	Bully (n=78)	Bully- Victim (n=34)	Other (n=428)	Victim (n=167)	$\chi^2$	P
A	43.1	37.9	29.5	16.1	20.3	<0.0005
B	1.4	6.7	2.1	5.3	5.9	n.s.
C	62.5	63.3	65.3	64.7	0.2	n.s.
D	22.2	20.0	24.0	24.0	0.3	n.s.
E	30.6	40.0	36.3	34.7	0.8	n.s.
F	9.7	3.3	11.2	11.3	0.6	n.s.

**Key:**

A=Violent offences

B=Sexual offences

C=Offences of dishonesty

D=Other offences

E=Miscellaneous offences

F=Motor vehicle offences

<sup>10</sup> The percentages do not add up to 100% for each group owing to the fact that some inmates had committed several offences.

### **3.7.3 Bullied by members of staff?**

Of the 657 (93%) respondents answering the question "*Have you ever been bullied by staff during this sentence and in this establishment?*", 215 (33%) gave a 'yes' response. The groups 'bully', and 'bully-victim', were significantly more likely than the groups 'victim' and 'other' to give a 'yes' response, 63% and 64% vs 32% and 25% respectively ( $\chi_2 = 54.56$ , df = 3, p < 0.005).

### **3.7.4 Feared for your safety?**

Of the 668 (95%) respondents answering the question "*Have you ever feared for your safety during this sentence and in this establishment?*", 279 (42%) gave a 'yes' response. The groups 'victim' and 'bully-victim', were significantly more likely than the groups 'bully' and 'other' to give a 'yes' response, 87% and 91% vs 23% and 22% respectively ( $\chi_2 = 248.64$ , df = 3, p < 0.0005).

### **3.7.5 Is bullying a problem?**

Of the 693 (98%) respondents answering the question "*Do you think bullying is a problem in Scottish Young Offender Institutions in general?*", 560 (81%) gave a 'yes' response. The groups 'victim' and 'bully-victim' were significantly more likely to give a 'yes' response than the groups 'bully' and 'other', 98% and 91% vs 74% and 75% respectively ( $\chi_2 = 45.40$ , df = 3, p < 0.005). Of the 693 (98%) respondents answering the question "*Do you think bullying is a problem at this establishment?*", 464 (67%) gave a 'yes' response. Again, the groups 'victim' and 'bully-victim' were

significantly more likely to give a 'yes' response than the groups 'bully' and 'other', 95% and 88% vs 62% and 55% respectively ( $\chi^2 = 94.31$ , df = 3,  $p < 0.0005$ ).

### 3.7.6 Characteristics of bullies

Young offenders considered 'knowing a lot of young offenders' to be the most important factor that contributed toward 'being a bully', 354 (53%). Other factors of significance included; 'area young offenders are from' (those from Glasgow and West Central Scotland), 193 (29%); 'aggressive behaviour', 164 (24%); 'type of offence', 123 (18%); 'large build', 104 (16%); and 'long criminal record', 73 (11%).

### 3.7.7 Characteristics of victims

Young offenders believed 'type of offence' to be the most important factor that contributed toward the identification of a prisoner as a victim, 318 (46%). Other factors of importance included; 'area the young offender is from' (areas outwith Glasgow and West Central Scotland), 265 (39%); being a 'first offender', 216 (32%); being 'odd looking', 139 (20%); 'knowing few young offenders', 129 (19%); and 'unusual behaviour', 98 (14%).

### 3.7.8 Frequency of bullying

Of those young offenders specifying that they were victims of bullying, 75 (37%) reported that they had been bullied by other young offenders "*most days*" or "*every day*" during their present sentence and in their current establishment. Of the 535 young offenders who had seen bullying, 351 (66%) stated that they had seen it

being carried out "*most days*" or "*every day*". Of the 112 self-reported bullies 44 (39%) reported bullying other young offenders "*most days*" or "*every day*".

### **3.7.9 Number of bullies involved**

Of the 531 young offenders indicating that they had seen bullying, 292 (55%) stated that it was mostly perpetrated by "*more than two young offenders*", 145 (27%) by "*two young offenders*", and 94 (18%) by "*a young offender acting alone*". Sixty eight percent (n=136) of self-reported victims mentioned that they had been bullied by "*more than two young offenders*", 42 (21%) stated that they were bullied by "*two young offenders*", and only 22 (11%) stated that they were bullied by a "*young offender acting alone*". However, this result conflicts with that of self-reported bullies. When self-reported bullies were asked how many other young offenders were with them when they bullied, only 18 (16%) stated "*two or more*", 29 (27%) stated "*one*", while the greatest percentage stated they "*acted alone*", 62 (57%).

### **3.7.10 Location of bullying**

According to the perceptions of all young offenders answering this part of the questionnaire (n=693), most bullying occurred in the hall or wing, 220 (32%); work party, 181 (32%), [this percentage was based on a smaller number of respondents, n=558, as the young offenders on remand are not required to work and therefore were not included in the analysis]; showers, 181 (26%); recreation, 179 (26%); physical education showers, 134 (19%); corridors, 83 (12%); and reception, 28 (4%). The results were similar regardless of whether respondents were recording their experiences as a victim, a bully, or other.

### **3.7.11 Type of bullying**

Of the 693 young offenders completing this part of the questionnaire, the majority, 314 (45%), rated taxing (threatening individuals for material gain) as prevalent. Other types of bullying believed to be most prevalent were threats 271 (39%); untrue rumours, 216 (32%); name calling 193 (28%); and physical attack 141 (20%). However, taxing was not considered to be most frequently experienced by victims of bullying. Victims stated that they experienced threats most frequently 150 (75%), followed by untrue rumours, 93 (46%), name calling, 92 (46%) and taxing, 68 (34%).

### **3.7.12 Changes necessary to reduce prevalence of bullying**

In total, 484 (68%) respondents answered the question "*If you were Governor of this establishment, what changes would you like to see made to prevent bullying?*". Of these, the largest number, 126 (26%), stated they would like to see "segregation of the bullies". Other suggestions included; "increase staff vigilance" 96 (20%); "segregate according to the area of Scotland they are from", i.e. that they normally reside in, 58 (12%); "increase wages and privileges" 53 (11%); and "harsher punishment for the bullies" 53 (11%). Eighty one of the respondents to this question (17%) believed that "nothing could be done". Young offenders in the 'other' group were significantly more likely to answer this question than those in the groups 'bully', 'victim', and 'bully-victim', 38% vs 23%, 20% and 24% respectively, ( $\chi^2 = 23.4$ , df = 3,  $p < 0.0005$ ).

### **3.8 Discussion**

The levels of reported bullying within this study are comparatively high when compared with previous studies examining similar populations. Beck (1994) reported that 21.1% of young offenders were self-reported victims, while Ireland and Archer (1996) and Mutchnick & Fawcett (1990) reported figures of 14.5% and 13.8% respectively. However, the results from the present study are perhaps more usefully compared with those of Beck (1992), as he reported results for an analogous population. Beck found that 30% of young offenders admitted having been bullied in their current establishment.

A high number of young offenders in the present study reported having bullied other young offenders (16%). This figure is higher than previous research has shown (Beck, 1994; Ireland & Archer, 1996). The present study also obtained information largely unconsidered within the literature, such as, the number of bully-victims (5%), and the number of young offenders stating that they had been bullied by staff (33%).

However, care must be taken when interpreting these results as there are several factors which may have led to the comparatively high levels of bullying presented in this chapter. One would perhaps expect higher levels of bullying than in previous studies owing to the fact that no definition of 'bullying' or 'victimization' was included with the questionnaire. As a result, the respondents had greater choice as to what he believed to be bullying. However, previous studies that provided respondents with a definition of bullying (Beck, 1994; Ireland & Archer, 1996) may have excluded behaviours recognised as bullying within the realms of the present study. Furthermore, younger incarcerated offenders have been shown to engage in

victimising behaviours more frequently than adult prisoners in numerous previous studies (Bartollas & Sieverdes, 1981; Fuller & Orsagh, 1977). As less experienced young offenders serving shorter sentences were overrepresented in the sample, while more experienced offenders in open accommodation were underrepresented, we might expect levels of reporting to be higher.

Additionally, all five Young Offender Institutions in the present study were developing anti-bullying initiatives to varying degrees at the time the questionnaire was issued. This may have led to young offenders having a greater willingness to acknowledge the existence of a problem and describe their own experiences. Also, the way in which data were collected, incorporating a number of measures in place to protect anonymity and confidentiality may have led to an increased willingness to divulge information.

In the present study, the differences among the four comparison groups (bully, bully-victim, other, victim) in respect to total length of time spent incarcerated occurred independently of establishment type (i.e. young offenders' custody status or establishment regime). The results lend support to the view (Beck, 1994; Biggam & Power, 1997) that young offenders incarcerated for longer periods are those more likely to report bullying others. This could relate to the fact that young offenders who have been incarcerated for a long time have an extensive knowledge of young offender lore and an established peer group from which to draw support. Consequently, this group is more likely to engage in exploitative behaviour.

The present study also revealed that victims were less likely to have a record for violent offences. This result may indicate a predisposition to being a victim owing

to the type of offence committed. If one is not a violent offender one may be predisposed to being a victim. This could be because victims are less aggressive and thereby vulnerable to being bullied, or that merely being known as a violent offender makes one less likely to become a target.

The results also revealed that the self-reported bullies were more likely to report being bullied by staff than other young offenders. This increase in reporting among the bullies may have occurred because they are more likely to end up in 'trouble' with staff, and therefore are more likely to be placed on misconduct report than other young offenders. Such bullies may feel more aggrieved at staff behaviour because they have been treated in a punitive manner for their disruptive behaviour.

Results from those young offenders seeing and experiencing bullying indicated that group bullying did predominate. However, the self-reported bullies in the present study reported themselves as acting alone rather than in groups. This may result from an unwillingness to risk being seen as an informer or 'grass' by implicating other young offenders. Alternatively, self confessed bullies may be less willing to acknowledge their reliance on others when bullying. Another explanation may be that the bullies simply prefer to act alone because bullying initiated by a group is easier to locate, particularly with the heightened awareness among the staff in response to anti-bullying initiatives.

The types of bullying most commonly reported as being experienced by young offenders were taxing, threats, rumours and name calling. All were considered to be more prevalent than physical bullying. This may suggest that although young offenders report bullying more frequently than adults (Cooley, 1993;

Fuller & Orsagh, 1977), young offenders mostly report the less severe forms of the behaviour.

Concerning the characteristics that determine who will become a bully, young offenders reported 'knowing a lot of young offenders' to be the most important. Whereas, 'type of offence', e.g. sex offenders; 'area young offenders are from', e.g. areas outwith Glasgow and the West of Scotland; and being a 'first offender' were considered to be characteristic of being a victim. The stigma of being a sex offender within an establishment may reflect a young offender value system that makes them 'legitimate' targets of bullying (Ireland & Archer, 1996; Toch, 1992). That young offenders considered 'area they are from' as a determinant of being a victim may reflect that the Young Offender Institutions studied were largely composed of young offenders from Glasgow and the West of Scotland. Therefore, those from outlying areas may lack peer support and are seen as different from the majority group, thus making them easier targets for a bully or group of bullies. Consistent with previous research (Bartollas & Sieverdes, 1981), 'being a first offender' was also considered to be a characteristic of being a victim by many respondents. The established prisoner may view first offenders as an easy target owing to their lack of knowledge of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and that first offenders lack any peer support.

Regarding ways suggested to prevent bullying, a significant number of young offenders stated that they believed "*nothing at all could be done*", which was an answer consistent with the views of young offenders in the study by Ireland & Archer (1996). That young offenders were reluctant to believe anything could be done may reflect the opinion that bullying is an 'acceptable' part of life as a young

offender. Alternatively, it may reflect the type of behaviour that occurs outside and is brought into establishments where the victim has less chance to escape the bully. Tattum & Herdman (1995) express the lack of concern regarding bullying among both young offenders and staff that they believe may be a reflection of the fact that bullying is seen to be "*an inevitable part of young offender life*". This acceptance of the problem also may be a consequence of the fact that it occurs under a cloak of secrecy and is therefore difficult both to monitor and address.

To date, the current study appears to be one of the first examining bullying using data obtained from an entire young offender population. However, there are a number of methodological problems with the present study as it stands. While every effort was made to ensure the sample was representative of the population as a whole, younger and less 'jail-wise' inmates (inmates with less experience of prison life) were overrepresented. Conversely, 'jail-wise' inmates (inmates with more experience of prison life) from high security establishments and open establishments were underrepresented.

Another weakness concerns the cross-sectional nature of the study. As a result, the researcher was unable to determine the exact reasons behind the relatively high level of bullying. What is more, as no definition of bullying was included in the study it was difficult to compare findings with those of studies incorporating a specific definition. In addition, a more theoretical standpoint than the one presented in the current study is required to further our understanding of the antecedents and consequences of bullying behaviour. Future studies might focus on the respective roles of personality and/or social background factors in differentiating the groups involved (i.e. bullies and victims). Another important caveat concerns the

categorisation of 'bullies', 'victims', 'bully/victims' and 'others'. These groups were determined on a post-hoc basis and therefore comparisons may be less valid than if the groups had been categorised apriori.

In conclusion, the present study indicated that levels of bullying among Scottish young offenders are comparable with those found in previous studies conducted in English Young Offender Institutions. Furthermore, the current study was designed to provide general information about different elements of the problem prior to further specific and detailed studies. Several background factors (e.g. type of offence and having peers within prison and home location) were identified by inmates as possible 'determinants' of being a 'bully', 'victim' or 'other' inmate. While it is hoped that the current study provides prison staff with indicators of possible involvement in bullying in Scottish Young Offender Institutions, the extent to which it is possible to predict membership of groups involved 'i.e. bullies and victims' as yet has gone uninvestigated within the British literature.

Given that the study of bullying is relatively new within penal establishments it warrants further investigation using a variety of different methods. Few studies of bullying or victimization have attempted to incorporate data from both prison records and young offender self-report (Cooley, 1993; Fuller & Orsagh, 1977). The strength of such studies lies in the triangulation of methods to measure extent of victimization (prison records of disruptive behaviour, staff interviews and prisoner interviews). Indeed, other studies have shown that using different methods provides the researcher with a wide range and increased depth of information (Dumond, 1992; Morgan, 1988). With the benefits of triangulation in mind, the next chapter of the present thesis attempts to examine the views and attitudes of staff from all Scottish

Young Offender Institutions regarding bullying among young offenders. In doing so, it is intended that such views and attitudes be compared with those of the young offenders found in the present chapter. In addition, a more theoretical approach to that adopted in the present thesis is required to further an understanding of bullying behaviour. Future studies might focus on the role of peer group support, personality, or social background factors of the different groups involved (i.e. bullies and victims).

## **CHAPTER 4**

**COMPARISON BETWEEN THE  
ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES OF  
STAFF AND YOUNG OFFENDERS**

## **Chapter 4**

### **Comparison between the Attitudes and Experiences of Staff and Young Offenders**

#### **Abstract**

*Questionnaires were distributed to members of staff in all Scottish Young Offender Institutions in an attempt to ascertain their attitudes and experiences regarding the nature and extent of bullying, and to compare results with those for young offenders in the same establishments (see Chapter 3). From a total of 221 staff questionnaires, 220 were returned completed, indicating a response rate of 99.5%. From a total of 756 young offender questionnaires distributed, 707 were returned, reflecting a response rate of 94%. Young offender and staff responses regarding the factors that differentiate bullies from victims; areas where bullying was unlikely to occur; types of bullying most frequently exhibited; and changes suggested to combat bullying were generally found to be very similar. However, there were considerable differences between staff and young offenders with regard to the number believing bullying to be a problem and those having seen bullying incidents occurring. More staff perceived bullying as a problem both throughout all Scottish Young Offender Institutions (94%) and in their own establishment (92%), than did young offenders (79% and 66% respectively). In addition, more staff reported having seen a bullying incident in their own establishment (88%) than did the young offenders (76%). Results are discussed in relation to factors influencing bullying in Young Offender Institutions.*

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Few studies have attempted to examine different samples within the prison system (i.e. staff and inmates) in an effort to cross validate group perceptions and experiences with regard to bullying (Beck, 1992; Adler, 1994). The Beck study was discussed in detail in the literature review (Chapters 1). Beck (1992), however, did reveal that prisoners identified by staff as engaging in bullying behaviour did not correspond with the inmates' self-reported bullying behaviour, however, Beck's study only examined the extent of bullying. Using an interview procedure, Adler (1994) examined the prevalence of fearing for ones own safety among staff and inmates. The study was designed to be comparable with the National Prison Survey (Walmsley, Howard & White, 1992). Adler examined three establishments housing category B and C inmates only. Twenty two per cent of officers surveyed by Adler thought inmates may be worried about bullying by other inmates. However, Adler's study did not examine staff perceptions of the nature and extent of bullying among inmates in any detail. Conversely, none of the prisoners questioned identified bullying as a problem, although 7% stated that they feared assault. While the above studies attempted to examine the nature and extent of bullying among young offenders, neither of the studies made attempts to directly compare staff and prisoner perceptions with regard to bullying behaviours in detail. Neither of the above studies used information gathered from more than 10% of the young offender population in England & Wales, and neither study included all offender types. No study has therefore attempted to examine at a national level, the perceptions of all staff and all young offenders living and working within Young Offender Institutions. What is more, both of the above studies were conducted in English establishments, and as yet no such research has been conducted in a Scottish context.

## **4.2 Aims**

This part of the study was designed to address the omissions within the research as a whole:

- to obtain staff perceptions of the extent and the nature, of bullying (e.g. types of bullying, where it occurs);
- to ascertain the views of the staff concerning what can be done to prevent bullying in young offender establishments; and
- to compare the results from staff with those from the young offenders.

## **4.2 Method**

A questionnaire was devised for both young offenders and staff based on information gained from previous research; talking to staff and young offenders; and analysis of official records. Two hundred and twenty one questionnaires were distributed to as many staff as were available (officer grades, social workers, senior officers, and management staff) at four Scottish Young Offender Institutions, of which 220 (99.5%) were returned complete. The method chosen for this part of the study was opportunistic sampling, whereby a specific time for data collection is selected when the most representative sample can be obtained. In order to provide as many staff with the chance to fill in a questionnaire and to ensure the least disruption to the running of the establishment, staff changeover was selected. It was only through adopting this method that it was possible to sample two shifts (i.e. both out going and in coming staff).

Not all staff completed all questions and therefore on certain questions the sample size may be less than 220. The overall number of operational and residential staff working in the Young Offender Institutions at the time was 720. Therefore, the sample represented 30.6% of the whole population.

During staff change-over periods, all outgoing staff and other non-uniformed staff on duty were assembled. Staff were requested to fill in the questionnaire and were informed that the questionnaire was developed by a group of researchers from the University of Stirling and as such was independent of the Scottish Prison Service; all information would remain confidential; their views were considered important; and that their anonymity would be preserved owing to the absence of names and the returning of completed scripts in a sealed envelope. In addition, all staff were reminded that they were volunteers and therefore under no obligation to take part. Staff were given 20 to 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Both young offenders and staff were given the same information regarding the rationale behind and purpose of the questionnaire.

### 4.3 Results

Of the 215 respondents giving their gender, 202 (94%) were male and 20 (6%) were female. In the staff population as a whole the respective figures were 689 (95.7%) and 31 (4.3%). Therefore, female staff were slightly overrepresented in the sample. The ages of the staff ranged from 23 to 59 years (mean = 37.5 years, SD = 14.4).

The staff questionnaire revealed that the number of respondents reporting that they 'had been bullied' by other members of staff during their time working in their current establishment was 16 (7%) and the number reporting that they 'had bullied' other members of staff during their time working in their current establishment was 2 (1%). The number of staff reporting that they had been bullied by a single young offender or group of young offenders during their time in their current establishment was 12 (6%). Overall, the number of staff reporting that they had been bullied by members of staff and/or young offenders during their period of employment in their current establishment was 25 (12%).

Statistically significant differences ( $p<0.05$ ) existed<sup>11</sup> between the views of staff and young offenders (see Table 4.1) with regard to the number perceiving bullying among young offenders as a problem in Scottish Young Offender Institutions; (staff 206 [94%] v young offenders 560 [79%]). The number perceiving bullying as a problem among young offenders in their own establishment, (staff 202 [92%] v young offenders 464 [66%]). The number having seen bullying among young offenders during time spent at their present establishment, (staff 194 [88%] v young offenders 535 [76%]). The number having seen bullying among young offenders in their present establishment most days or every day; (staff 72 [37%], young offenders 351 [65%]).

Further comparison between staff and young offender responses revealed that staff, like prisoners, were more inclined to see bullies operating in groups of two or more. In response to the factors that were perceived to be important determinants of being a victim, staff rated the area young offenders are from (areas outside

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<sup>11</sup> Using Chi-Square analysis

Glasgow and West Central Scotland) as the most influential determinant (195, 89%). Other factors of importance included, type of offence (191, 87%), and being a first offender (162, 74%). The young offenders rated type of offence (318, 46%) as most influential. Other factors which the young offenders rated as important were; area young offenders are from (265, 39%), and being a first offender (216, 32%). In response to the factors that were perceived to be important determinants of being a bully, staff rated 'knowing a lot of young offenders' (191, 87%) as most influential.

Other factors of importance were, 'aggressive behaviour' (170, 77%) and 'area the young offender is from' (151, 69%). The young offenders also rated 'knowing a lot of young offenders' (354, 53%) as the most influential determinant. Other factors considered by the young offenders to be of importance were 'area the young offender is from' (193, 39%) and 'aggressive behaviour' (164, 24%).

In respect to the areas where bullying was seen to be most prevalent, staff rated recreation (190, 86%) as most common. Other areas where bullying was thought to take place included the hall/wing (155, 71%) and the work party or workshop (150, 68%). Young offenders rated the work party or workshop (181, 32%) and the hall/wing (180, 32%) jointly as areas where most bullying was seen to occur. Other areas rated by the young offenders as being prone to bullying incidents were the recreation area (179, 26%) and the showers (181, 26%).

**Table 4.1 Comparison between the Responses of Young Offenders and Staff regarding Extent of Bullying Problems in Young Offender Institutions**

	Young Offenders (n=707)		Staff (n=220)		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
	n	%	n	%		
Bullying a problem Among YOs in all YOIs	560	79	206	94	24.7	<0.0001
Bullying a problem Among YOs in own establishment	464	66	202	92	57.2	<0.0001
Seen bullying among YOs	535	76	194	88	15.9	<0.0001
Frequency seen bullying	351	65	72	37	19.4	<0.0001

In response to which type of young offender bullying was seen most frequently the majority of the staff rated threats (215, 98%) as most common. Other types of young offender bullying deemed to be common by staff were taxing (207, 94%) and name calling (126, 57%). Young offenders also rated threats (271, 39%) as a frequently seen form of bullying. However, young offenders believed taxing (314, 45%) to be the most frequently seen type of bullying.

Both young offenders and staff were asked within the questionnaire whether they could suggest any changes that could be introduced at their establishment to reduce the incidence of bullying. Both staff and young offenders most often suggested segregating the bullies from the remainder of the population as a way of preventing bullying (35, 31% and 126, 26%, respectively). Other suggestions mentioned frequently by staff were, harsher punishment for the bully (27, 24%) and increased staff supervision (16, 14%). Similarly, young offenders frequently suggested increased staff supervision (20, 96%), segregate all young offenders by area they normally reside in (58, 12%), and harsher punishment for the bully (53, 11%). Seventeen per cent of young offenders (n=81) and 7% of staff (n=11) believed that nothing could be done to prevent bullying and that it was an inevitable part of life as a young offender.

#### **4.4 Discussion**

The number of staff members stating that they had been bullied either by young offenders or fellow members of staff was 12%. This is a comparatively low figure when compared with the findings of Adler (1994) and Wozniak, et al. (1994) who found that respectively, 67% and 72% of officers expressed concern over their

safety. Many members of staff may be caused generally to fear for their safety at some point during their period of employment owing to incidents unrelated to bullying. However, relatively few members of staff may actually experience a bullying incident as causing them immediate danger. Bullying by other members of staff or by young offenders may cause staff distress, embarrassment, or anxiety, while not causing them to fear for their safety.

Young offender and staff responses regarding the factors that differentiate bullies from victims; areas where bullying was deemed to occur; types of bullying most frequently experienced; and changes suggested to combat bullying; were generally found to be very similar. These are possible areas where further research is required. Perhaps the predictors of young offenders who are more likely to become victims or bullies could be identified and used to aid monitoring and supervision. Previous research has shown victims to be younger (Bartollas & Sieverdes, 1981) and more likely to be incarcerated for their first offence (Wenk et al., 1972) than other young offenders, while prisoner victimisers have been highlighted as being older (Bartollas & Sieverdes, 1981) and more likely to be incarcerated for a serious offence (Tennenbaum, 1978). Moreover, factors such as personality, coping abilities, family background, or criminal history, may reliably distinguish bullies and/or victims from the rest of the prisoner population (Shields & Simourd, 1991).

Although, the responses of young offenders and staff were similar with regard to the above questions, there were considerable differences between responses for the number believing bullying to be a problem and those having seen bullying incidents occurring. More staff perceived bullying as a problem both throughout all Scottish Young Offender Institutions (94%) and in their own

establishment (92%), than did the young offenders (79% and 66% respectively). In addition, more staff reported having seen a bullying incident in their own establishment (88%) than did the young offenders (76%). However, while a greater proportion of staff may have seen a bullying incident, the young offenders reported seeing bullying incidents more frequently than staff.

Sixty five per cent of young offenders having seen bullying most days or every day as opposed to only 37% of staff. Differences between the perceptions of staff and young offenders with regard to bullying have been highlighted before (Beck, 1992) and may indeed reflect differences in the way the two groups perceive bullying in Young Offender Institutions.

Differences between staff and young offender responses must be treated with caution as there are a number of reasons why staff may be seeing more bullying and perceiving it to be more of a problem. Staff may feel obliged to report bullying as a problem in their establishment in the light of the development of anti-bullying initiatives and the necessity to be seen to be aware of the problem. Moreover, staff tend to remain in Young Offender Institutions longer than the young offenders, and therefore their opinions may be based on exposure over a longer period to a greater number of events linked with bullying. Also, staff are trained to look out for such behaviour and to be vigilant at all times. Furthermore, young offenders may be reluctant to report episodes of bullying owing to the desire to avoid 'grassing' and running the risk of being seen to 'inform' on fellow young offenders.

Conversely, there are a number of reasons why one might have expected young offenders to see more bullying and perceive it to be more of a problem than

staff. This may have been reflected in the frequency with which young offenders reported seeing bullying. Young offenders are incarcerated 24 hours a day, are involved in daily activities with other prisoners and on the whole make an effort to keep the majority of their activities and communication with other young offenders from the staff. Whereas, staff do shift work, largely remain outside young offender culture and activities, and are unable to observe all aspects of young offender behaviour owing to the small numbers of staff in comparison to large numbers of young offenders.

Another important issue in explaining the apparent differences between staff and young offenders regarding the nature, impact, and extent of bullying may be that both parties are aware of different aspects of bullying. Staff may be more aware of the extent of overt bullying for a whole establishment while young offenders are more likely to be attentive to the subtle and covert aspects of bullying that happen on a daily basis in their own hall or wing. Furthermore, both groups may have slightly different conceptions of what they regard as problems associated with bullying.

To conclude, findings revealed similarities between the perceptions of young offenders and staff regarding the factors relating to individuals that might determine 'victim' or 'bully' status. However, differences still existed with regard to the extent to which young offenders and staff perceived bullying to be problematic and the amount of bullying observed by young offenders and staff. The results provide an interesting comparison of the attitudes, views and experiences of staff and young offenders regarding bullying among inmates.

However, it is important to recognise several methodological problems with the current study. While the study attempted to sample staff from all Young Offender Institutions, no demographic information was available to the researcher for the staff population as a whole. Therefore, it was not possible to determine whether the sample was representative of the population. Furthermore, given that anti-bullying initiatives were being developed in three of the four establishments at the time of the study this may have led to more staff reporting bullying. As outlined in Chapter 3, the cross-sectional nature of this study means that the relative importance of causative factors of bullying can only be surmised.

Both Chapter 3 and the current chapter attempted to obtain information regarding the extent and nature of 'overt' bullying using questionnaire self-report by inmates and staff. However, the following chapter makes an attempt to utilise an alternative and perhaps more consistent data source (i.e. prison discipline records) for the same purpose. Moreover, the next chapter attempts to assess the 'hidden' level of bullying, which has previously gone uninvestigated within the literature. This 'hidden' or 'covert' level refers to incidents that may be related to bullying but are not specified as such within official records. It may be particularly important to investigate the 'hidden' or 'covert' level of bullying given the potentially subversive nature of the behaviour where bullies operate under a cloak of secrecy (Beck, 1992). Also, the following chapter uses official records of bullying to assess the impact of an initiative designed to reduce bullying among inmates in one Young Offender Institution. Such a procedure requires data for periods before and after the introduction of the initiative. Therefore, such analysis was only feasible using retrospective data from prisons' discipline records.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **OFFICIAL RECORDS AS INDICES OF BULLYING: OVERT AND COVERT BULLYING AND THE IMPACT OF AN ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVE**

## **Chapter 5**

### **Official Records as Indices of Bullying: Overt and Covert Bullying and the Impact of an Anti-Bullying Initiative**

#### **Abstract**

*Official records were analysed from five Scottish Young Offender Institutions to ascertain any differences between establishments in the nature and extent of bullying. Discipline reports were examined over a comparable three-month period, for all five establishments. Results indicated considerable differences in the extent to which overt and covert bullying is expressed in different Young Offender Institutions, probably reflecting differences in the inmate composition of such establishments. Moreover, the manifold differences in terms of administration and young offender composition precluded direct comparison between the Young Offender Institutions. More extensive information was also obtained from the discipline reports of one establishment (HMYOI Glenochil) examined retrospectively for a four year period. This was carried out to highlight changes that may have occurred in response to the introduction of an anti-bullying initiative. Results indicated that following the introduction of an anti-bullying initiative there was a reduction in overt indices of bullying but an increase in covert indices of bullying. Results are discussed in terms of the limitations of using official records as indicators of the nature and extent of bullying.*

### **5.1 Introduction**

A considerable body of research has been conducted in recent years to find out the nature and extent of victimization in penal establishments. There have been two main methods of enquiry in this area: young offender self-report (questionnaire and interview) and analysis of official records. Previous research has shown rates from ad hoc questionnaires to be contrary to official records, and staff identification to be contrary to that reported by young offenders (Fuller & Orsagh, 1977). Thereby, highlighting the need for alternative measures in addition to self-report.

To date, no study has examined inmate discipline reports with particular reference to different types of bullying behaviour in British Young Offender Institutions. No study has investigated an entire young offender population within a penal system. Of the studies that have used official records most have examined indices of assaults (Cooley, 1993; Gaes & McGuire, 1985) and indices of general institutional misconduct (Flanagan, 1983) rather than bullying. No previous study has adequately compared and contrasted different methods of recording bullying rates using official records, for example, looking at measures that may be indicative of covert bullying behaviour compared with those indicative of overt bullying behaviour.

Throughout the present study the researchers attempted to incorporate methods previously unconsidered by previous research. In addition, attempts were made to incorporate as many types of behaviour as possible that could be construed as bullying within prison misconduct reports. The entire national Scottish young offender population was examined including remand and sentenced prisoners. The

profiles and regimes of the Young Offender Institutions (Table 3.1) were also evaluated in relation to the misconduct reports.

## 5.2 Aims

The study outlined in the present chapter was designed to investigate the nature and extent of bullying across five Scottish establishments over a comparable three-month period using official prison discipline records. Issues specifically included in this part of the study were:

- a) to consider the utility of prison records as a data source for determining bullying rates;
- b) to examine any differences in patterns of overt and covert bullying as collated within prison records of different establishments; and
- c) to assess any differences in patterns of overt and covert bullying in one establishment following the introduction of an anti-bullying strategy.

## 5.3 Procedures

The Governors' discipline reports (SPS, 1994[a]) were used as the primary source from which it was possible to examine comparable periods across all establishments. The comparable three month period from 1 October 1994 to 31 December 1994, was chosen for each establishment.

Retrospective examination of the discipline reports from 1991-1994 was also undertaken at one establishment to highlight changes that may have occurred over a

longer period. The same three month period was analysed for each year. Glenochil was examined because its anti-bullying initiative had been in place for the longest period (developed in the latter months of 1993 and officially implemented in March 1994). Records were analysed for comparable three month periods during two years prior, and one year following the introduction of the anti-bullying initiative.

Analysis revealed two overt indicators of bullying specified in the discipline reports:

- those specified by the victim to the officer in question, for example, a young offender placed on report for refusing to work would state that the reason behind it was, "*fear of being hassled by other young offenders in the work party*"  
**[specified victims]**, and
- those specified by the officer having seen, or being suspicious of an incident taking place, for example, an officer stating that he saw a young offender bully or assault a fellow prisoner  
**[specified bullies]**

Where involvement in a bullying incident was unspecified in the records, information was analysed according to whether bullying was likely to have been implicated or not. Using the covert indicators, discipline reports again were divided into those identifying possible victims and those identifying possible bullies:

- unspecified incidents pertaining to the victim, for example, a prisoner placed on discipline report for refusing to work but with no specification as to the reasons why.

In discussion with the wing staff it was revealed that the inmates were often too frightened to reveal that they were being bullied at work and decided to stay in their cell for this reason. [unspecified victims], and

- unspecified incidents pertaining to the bully, for example, a young offender being caught in possession of another's belongings, such as a phone card, item of clothing or other personal possessions. On these occasions the wing staff informed the researcher that it was likely that the items had been 'taxed' from other inmates [unspecified bullies].

Information concerning young offenders who were placed on discipline report because they were involved in a fight was also analysed, as such behaviour may also be bullying related:

- fights, remain separate from specified incidents above because in these cases where two or more prisoners were involved apportioning any type of responsibility to one or the other party was not possible [Fighting incidents].

The criteria for classification into each of the categories were discrete. As a result the five categories were distinctive and mutually exclusive.

## **5.4 Results**

### **5.4.1 Establishment profiles for the three month period**

The salient regime and custodial characteristics that differentiate the five penal establishments over the three month study period, are outlined in Table 3.1. The varying nature of certain regime characteristics (e.g. remand versus sentenced, long term versus short term inmates) may help explain differences in the prevalence or manifestation of bullying behaviour between establishments. The relationship between inmate/establishment characteristics and patterns of bullying behaviour are considered in the discussion section of this chapter.

### **5.4.2 Discipline report results per 100 average daily population (a.d.p.)**

If we examine the aggregate number of reports for all five establishments pertaining to specified bullying we obtain a figure that is comparable with results relevant to assault rates in previous studies (Cooke, 1991). For the three month period the a.d.p. for all five establishments, was 878. The number of reports, over this three month period, concerning specified incidents of bullying was 13.9 per 100 a.d.p. This figure is a conservative estimate of the prevalence of bullying, taking into account only the most severe and overt forms of the behaviour. An alternative figure is the total of all five measures (specified bullying, unspecified bullying, specified victims, unspecified victims, and fights), which is 81.9 per 100 a.d.p.

In previous studies, official measures of victimization have been shown to underestimate greatly the volume of events (Cooley, 1993; Skogan, 1975). One

method of producing a more representative picture may be the presentation of a range of possible scores, varying from reliable indicators of overt bullying to more speculative indicators of covert bullying.

It is therefore likely that for all five establishments, the actual level of bullying falls somewhere between 13.9 and 81.9 per 100 a.d.p. for the three month period of the study. Thus the different methods of calculating the level of bullying within all five establishments produce a very wide range of figures with the 'true' rate of victimization falling somewhere inbetween these two extremes. Amalgamating the overt and covert figures may provide a somewhat inflated rate (81.9 per 100 a.d.p.), and it is therefore important to apply caution when interpreting the results.

#### **5.4.3 Discipline report results for each establishment**

Table 5.1 presents the levels of reports identifying: specified bullies, unspecified bullies, specified victims, unspecified victims and fighting incidents, as per 100 of the average daily populations for the three month period.

Polmont appears to have the highest levels for four of the five measures: specified bullying (20.5), unspecified bullying (14.9), specified victims (26.3), and unspecified victims (39.1), with the exception of fighting incidents. Longriggend conversely had the lowest rates for four of the five measures: unspecified bullying (1.6), specified victims (0.0), unspecified victims (2.7), and fighting incidents (7.5), with the exception of incidents specifying bully involvement.

**Table 5.1 Discipline Report Groupings Relevant to Bullying by Establishment as per 100 of the adp. (over a Three-Month Period.)**

	Polmont	Glenochil	Dumfries	Castle H.	Longrig.
<b>Specified bullying</b>	20.5	16.8	1.1	13.3	4.3
<b>Unspecified bullying</b>	14.9	12.4	6.4	13.3	1.6
<b>Specified victims</b>	26.3	6.8	5.3	1.7	0.0 <sup>12</sup>
<b>Unspecified victims</b>	39.1	19.9	20.2	6.7	2.7
<b>Fighting incidents</b>	17.3	28.0	9.6	80.0	7.5

<sup>12</sup> At Longriggend young offenders do not work, therefore one would expect there to be grossly deflated levels in comparison with other establishments as inmates cannot be sanctioned for avoidance of work.

If the a.d.p. rate was the only type of measure that was taken into account then conclusions made on the basis of this would be that Polmont had more reports relating to bullying owing to a greater amount of bullying going on and/or a greater eagerness on the part of those writing the reports to punish this type of behaviour. The converse was apparent at Longriggend, less bullying going on, and/or officers being less inclined to write reports. However, conclusions as to which establishment exhibits the highest or lowest levels of bullying should not be based solely on the a.d.p. rates as use of reception rates may present a different profile.

#### 5.4.4 Discipline reports as per 100 receptions

Examination of reception rates with reference to the various indices of bullying (Table 5.2) produced a quite different result from that shown when using the a.d.p. (Table 5.1). Castle Huntly now had the highest levels for three of the five measures: specified bullying (36.4), unspecified bullying (36.4), and fighting incidents (218.2), whereas Dumfries had the highest levels for the other two; specified victims (19.2) and unspecified victims (73.1). Longriggend still maintained the lowest levels but now it did so on all five measures.<sup>13</sup> From the results so far mentioned, using a.d.p. and reception rates, it appeared that Longriggend presented the most consistent results as the establishment with the lowest level of bullying. However, using the reception and a.d.p. rates to identify the establishment with the highest rates of bullying was much more problematic, and different conclusions were arrived at depending on the measure used.

<sup>13</sup> The comparative advantages of using each measure (a.d.p. and reception rate) are discussed at length in an article by O'Mahoney (1994). In the article, he discusses the relative worth of the two rates when

**Table 5.2 Discipline Report Groupings Relevant to Bullying as per 100 Receptions by Establishment (Over a Three-Month Period.)**

	Polmont	Glenochil	Dumfries	Castle H.	Longrig.
<b>Specified bullying</b>	6.0	14.0	3.8	36.4	1.8
<b>Unspecified bullying</b>	4.3	10.4	23.1	36.4	0.6
<b>Specified victims</b>	7.7	5.7	19.2	4.5	0.0 <sup>14</sup>
<b>Unspecified victims</b>	11.4	16.6	73.1	18.2	1.0 <sup>14</sup>
<b>Fighting incidents</b>	5.0	23.3	34.6	218.2	2.9

trying to measure levels of suicide in penal establishments. O'Mahoney concludes that the a.d.p. rate is a reliable gauge as long as the number of receptions are not overlooked.

<sup>14</sup> At Longriggend young offenders do not work, therefore one would expect there to be grossly deflated levels in comparison with other establishments, as inmates cannot be sanctioned for avoidance of work.

#### **5.4.5 Discipline reports as a percentage of the overall reports**

The utility of examining records without reference to the population is doubtful (Farrington & Nuttall, 1980). However, examination of figures as a percentage of the total reports has been carried out in previous studies (Sylvester et al., 1977). It may only be through examination of the profile or pattern of bullying behaviour (Table 5.3) that establishments can be legitimately compared. Also, when presented as a percentage, trends can be identified more easily than with the other methods. Fighting incidents contribute most to the overall totals at Castle Huntly (69.5%), Longriggend (45.2%), and Glenochil (33.3%) and to a far lesser extent at Polmont (14.6%) and Dumfries (16.9%). This would suggest that fights are a significant factor in reports that may be relevant to bullying at all Young Offender Institutions, but particularly at Longriggend and Castle Huntly.

Reports specifying victims contributed the least to the overall totals at Glenochil (8.2%), Castle Huntly (1.5%), and Longriggend (0.0%), but conversely to a considerable degree at Polmont (22.3%). This suggests that there were proportionally more young offenders admitting to 'going behind their doors' because of bullying at Polmont than was apparent at other establishments. This was further supported by the high rate (33.1%) of unspecified victims (those prisoners 'going behind their doors' without giving a reason for such action) at the same establishment. Castle Huntly (5.8%) is the only facility where reports concerning unspecified victims is not a major factor. This, coupled with the low rate of specified victims (1.5%) at Castle Huntly, indicated that young offenders went 'behind their doors' far less frequently than at other establishments.

**Table 5.3 Discipline Report Groupings Relevant to Bullying as a Percentage of Total Relevant Reports. (Over a Three-Month Period.)**

	Polmont	Glenochil	Dumfries	Castle H.	Longrig.
<b>Specified bullying</b>	17.3	19.9	2.0	11.6	28.9
<b>Unspecified bullying</b>	12.7	14.8	36.3	11.6	9.6
<b>Specified victims</b>	22.3	8.2	9.3	1.5	0.0 <sup>15</sup>
<b>Unspecified victims</b>	33.1	23.8	35.5	5.8	16.3
<b>Fighting incidents</b>	14.6	33.3	16.9	69.5	45.2
<b>Total %</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

<sup>15</sup> At Longriggend young offenders do not work, therefore one would expect there to be grossly deflated levels in comparison with other establishments, as inmates cannot be sanctioned for avoidance of work.

There was a low rate of reports concerning specified bullying at Dumfries in comparison with the other establishments. This indicates that few prisoners in this facility were highlighted as being bullies in the reports. However, Dumfries had the highest rate of unspecified bullying (36.3%) and this may reflect the differences between the type of inmate at Dumfries compared with other Young Offender Institutions. In that inmates at Dumfries were long termers incarcerated for more serious offences and as such are arguably less likely to 'grass' on fellow inmates. These results provide interesting and alternative information to a.d.p and reception rates. However, caution must be exercised when examining discipline reports as a percentage of total reports as this method fails to take into account differences in the population figures between establishments.

Taking the data from the Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 we can identify certain features that were robust enough to survive changes in methods of measurement used:

- Castle Huntly always had the highest level of fighting incidents;
- Longriggend had rates for most of the measures that were comparatively low when expressed as per 100 a.d.p and per 100 receptions; and
- fighting incidents contribute considerably as a percentage of overall reports relevant to bullying at all five establishments<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> However, it must be borne in mind that two individuals are 'placed on report' for one fighting incident, therefore, if an establishment exhibited 30 fighting incidents across a specified period a total of 60 reports would be recorded.

Bullying appeared to be manifested in a way that was dependent on the characteristics of the young offender populations. For instance, Dumfries housed a more stable population of long term inmates, who were older. At such establishments one might expect more stable hierarchies to develop and anticipate the emergence of behaviours akin to that of an adult population. Hence, one would expect more incidences of covert bullying and less overt bullying. This was indeed the case in that the results revealed the highest levels of covert bullying (e.g. unspecified bullying [36.3%] and unspecified victims [35.5%]).

Given the above findings for Dumfries, one would expect contrary findings at Longriggend where there was a greater proportion of first offenders, a more fluid population and a wider range of offence types. An unstable hierarchy would be existant, where inmates are less inclined to attempt to hide their actions. Consequently, one would anticipate there to be more fighting incidents and overt incidences of bullying at Longriggend. This was indeed the case as results revealed a high percentage of fights [45.2%] and specified bullying [28.9].

#### **5.4.6 Discipline report results for Glenochil YOI retrospectively for the last four years (as per 100 a.d.p.)**

Table 5.4 expresses the levels for reports of specified bullying, unspecified bullying, specified victims, unspecified victims and fighting incidents for an equivalent three month period (1st October-31st December) for the four years (1991, 1992, 1993 and 1994) at Glenochil YOI as per 100 a.d.p.

In Glenochil, an anti-bullying initiative was developed towards the end of 1993 and officially introduced in March 1994. Expressing figures from Glenochil

over a prolonged period allowed investigation of changes in patterns of reporting, in relation to the introduction of an anti-bullying initiative.

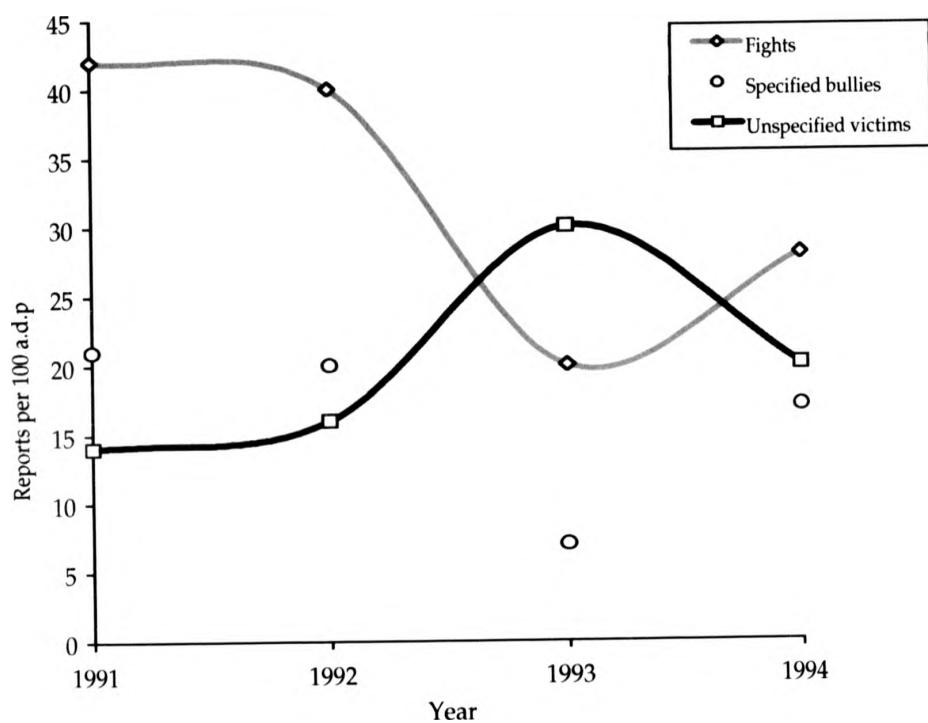
A consistent pattern in the results was evident concerning the types of bullying reported in both 1991 and 1992. The most frequently recorded types of bullying were fighting (41.7 and 39.7 respectively) and specified bullying (20.5 and 19.9 respectively).

The introduction of an anti-bullying initiative in 1993 was coupled with a three-fold reduction in specified bullying (6.6) and a two-fold reduction in fighting (19.9); but there was also a three-fold increase in unspecified victims which became the most frequently recorded type of bullying (30.5) [see Figure 5.1].

In 1994, the year after the anti-bullying initiative was set up, specified bullying doubled to 16.8. Fighting increased by half, when compared with the previous year, and rose to 28.0, this was also the case for unspecified victims that reached a total of 19.9. It therefore appears that initially the anti-bullying initiative changed the way bullying was manifested and/or reported by reducing identified, overt, aggressive behaviours (specified bullying and fights).

However, at the same time it appears that the more covert and subversive bullying, as manifested by the unspecified victims who were reluctant to report that they were being bullied, increased [see Figure 5.1]. However, after some time had elapsed, that is in 1994, it was apparent that the bullying profile of Glenochil reverted back to a profile similar to that before the development of the anti-bullying initiative.

**FIGURE 5.1 GRAPH TO SHOW BULLYING PER 100 A.D.P.  
ACROSS A FOUR YEAR PERIOD AT GLENOCHIL YOI**



**Table 5.4 Discipline Record Groupings from 1st October to 31st December per Year (1991-1994) at Glenochil YOI (as per 100 a.d.p)**

	1991	1992	1993	1994
<b>Specified bullies</b>	20.5	19.9	6.6	16.8
<b>Unspecified bullies</b>	6.0	4.0	4.6	12.4
<b>Specified victims</b>	1.3	3.3	3.3	6.8
<b>Unspecified victims</b>	13.9	15.9	30.5	19.9
<b>Fighting incidents</b>	41.7	39.7	19.9	28.0

## 5.5 Discussion

The level of bullying as per 100 a.d.p. for the five Young Offender Institutions for the three-month period was found to be between 13.9, when using the more conservative figure of number of specified bullying reports, and 81.9, when using the wider measure of both specified and unspecified bullying and victimization, plus fights.

This part of the study attempted to use discipline records in a variety of ways to demonstrate the variety of ways in which bullying may be monitored. Consequently, the range of 13.9 to 81.9 per 100 a.d.p. was wider than those found in previous studies using official records in a more restricted manner. Indeed, this range may be more comparable with results from self-report studies (Beck, 1994; Cooley, 1993; Mutchnick & Fawcett, 1991) than with previous studies using official records.

Several contributory factors may have led to the comparatively high rate of 13.9 specified bullying reports per 100 a.d.p. The definition of specified bullies used in the present study was wide ranging. The definition incorporated incidents that have not been investigated thoroughly in previous studies. Such studies (Cooley, 1993; Nacci, Teitelbaum & Prather, 1977) have tended to examine assaultive behaviour alone and not other forms of victimization, such as verbal bullying.<sup>17</sup> Young offenders have been found to have higher rates of assault and victimization in previous studies (Fuller & Orsagh, 1977), and all five establishments house prisoners of the age group 16-21. Furthermore, with little recourse to other methods of penalising recalcitrant behaviour, the discipline report may be used more frequently by officers as a sanction against bullying behaviour. Also, this sanction may have become more widely used in

<sup>17</sup> Note: the rate obtained by the present study could have been larger still as it does not include prisoner on prison officer assault as in previous studies (Ekland-Olson, 1986; Nacci et al. 1977).

response to management calls to address the problem in the light of anti-bullying initiatives.

When the results were presented by establishment, Polmont had the highest level of specified bullying. However, the profiles of the establishments (Table 3.1) indicated that Polmont also had the largest population and the highest number of receptions. This may have contributed toward higher figures as per 100 a.d.p. at Polmont (Table 5.1).

According to the a.d.p and reception rates, and the figure obtained as a percentage of total relevant reports (Tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3), Castle Huntly seemed to have the highest proportion of fighting incidents. This may be due to young offenders having more opportunity to exhibit aggressive behaviour as a result of being supervised less by staff, or officers being more rigorous in their reporting behaviour as they have relatively few young offenders to observe. Again, we could not be sure to what extent we were measuring officer reporting behaviour when completing the discipline reports, rather than the prisoners actual behaviour.

Longriggend appeared to have rates of bullying that were lower than the other establishments (Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3), however, it could be due to officer reporting behaviour in response to the nature of the young offender, or prisoner bullying behaviour, or both. For instance, Longriggend has a very rapid turnover of remand prisoners making the discipline report limited in its usefulness to officers as a sanction against misbehaviour. This is because remand prisoners are not yet sentenced and do not work, therefore they cannot have their wages decreased or lose remission.

Particular care must be taken, therefore, when comparing figures for Longriggend with the other four establishments.

Comparisons between establishments revealed that they were vastly different in their organisational structures, young offender composition, transience, level of supervision, and size of population, all of which are factors that have been shown in previous literature (Ellis, 1984; Gaes & McGuire, 1985) to be influential upon victimization rates. Bullying appeared to be manifested in a way that was dependent on the characteristics of the young offender populations. For instance, Dumfries housed a more stable population of long term inmates, who were older. At such establishments one might expect more stable hierarchies to develop and anticipate the emergence of behaviours akin to that of an adult population. Hence, one would expect more incidences of covert bullying and less overt bullying due to the reluctance to be seen by peers as a 'grass'. This was indeed the case in that the results revealed the highest levels of covert unspecified bullying (see Table 5.3).

Given the above findings for Dumfries, one would expect contrary findings at remand institutions such as Longriggend where there is a greater proportion of first offenders, a more fluid population and a wider range of offence types. An unstable hierarchy would be in existence, where inmates are less inclined to attempt to hide their actions. Consequently, one would anticipate there to be more fighting incidents and overt incidences of bullying as young offenders vie to exert authority over one another. This was indeed the case as results revealed a high percentage of fights and specified bullying (see Table 5.3). However, these results are dependent on one method of presentation, as a percentage of total reports, and therefore must be treated with caution.

The data analysis on the discipline rates at each of the establishments highlights the potential inadequacy of using a single measure from official records to assess the prevalence of bullying. The lack of clearly defined and unambiguous rates of bullying behaviour may have been partly in response to the fact that this type of data was not designed to measure bullying behaviour. It was therefore not possible to control other factors that might have influenced the results or to obtain more appropriate data.

Examining the rates solely at Glenochil allowed researchers to show the value of looking at rates over different years. Clearly there was some sort of change in young offender or officer behaviour during 1993, compared with preceding years (Table 5.4 and Figure 5.1). Although not present in detail in this chapter, the change over the four years was robust enough to survive variations in the particular method of presentation (i.e. as per 100 a.d.p., as per 100 receptions and as a percentage of the total reports). However, any change appears ephemeral as in 1994 the figures returned to levels similar to those in 1991 and 1992. One reason for this temporary change could be the novelty of a new initiative affecting either officer reporting behaviour, or prisoner bullying behaviour, or both.

At Glenochil it is noteworthy that reports highlighting specified bullying and fighting incidents decreased while those of unspecified victims increased (Figure 5.1). Less overt bullying (specified bullies and fighting incidents) may have resulted in a concomitant rise in covert bullying that would have been more likely to manifest itself in the behaviour of victims (unspecified victims). These changes may have come about in response to the development of the anti-bullying initiative, however, conclusions as

to the nature of the change are again attenuated by the inability to account for confounding variables.

Partly as a consequence of the inadequacies of official records and partly as a result of methodological weaknesses this chapter only provides tentative conclusions to the research questions posed. Types of bullying may indeed have differed between establishments (e.g. percentage of total reports), however, they also varied according to the measure of rates used (e.g. a.d.p, receptions) and therefore must be treated with caution. Rates of bullying may indeed have been higher at Polmont and lower at Longriggend. However, explanations for such differences between establishments must be borne out through further investigation that take both regime features and inmate characteristics into account.

Furthermore, in the absence of any specific records of 'bullying' the researcher used inmate discipline reports to examine 'covert' and 'overt' behaviours. However, the discipline reports themselves were never designed to measure bullying behaviours. As a result, many of the external factors that may have influenced the results could not be identified or measured in a retrospective way. For example, it was not possible to determine whether changes in levels of bullying at Glenochil were attributable to changes in inmate behaviour, staff reporting behaviour or some other factor.

Perhaps the most salient problem with the present study was the paucity of information available to the researcher concerning reasons behind, circumstances surrounding and consequences of the incidences of 'covert' and 'overt' bullying in the records. The role of the 'group climate' and inmate sub-culture in influencing

bullying within the different establishments have also received limited research attention. However, these types of information may be best ascertained through in-depth qualitative forms of enquiry similar to the one used in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 6**

**BULLYING IN YOUNG OFFENDER  
INSTITUTIONS:**

**RESULTS FROM FOCUS GROUPS**

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Bullying in Young Offender Institutions: Results from Focus Groups**

#### **Abstract**

*This part of the study attempted to obtain information regarding the nature and extent of bullying in Scottish prisons using focus groups. Eleven focus groups were conducted in four Scottish Young Offender Institutions. Participants were prisoner volunteers who were resident within the wings where the main questionnaire (see Chapter 2) had previously been distributed. Focus group questions concerned young offenders attitudes to, and experience of, bullying within the prison environment. The results from the focus groups revealed that young offenders talked predominately about staff bullying and the ways young offenders might overcome the problem of bullying among young offenders. The focus groups provided rich qualitative data about the nature of bullying but group composition may have skewed responses in an unrepresentative manner through bullies dominating and the victims remaining silent. The concomitant strengths and limitations of using focus groups are discussed in the context of the research.*

## **6.1 Introduction**

Focus groups have been shown to be useful as a supplement to other qualitative and quantitative techniques, because such data triangulation has been deemed to improve the preciseness of research technique (Cohen & Engelberg, 1989; Dumond, 1992; Podhisita, Havanon, Knodel & Sittirai, 1990). In research, the principal uses of focus groups have been in marketing (Szybillo & Berger, 1979) and general health related enquiries (Gregory et al., 1990). However, focus groups have been put to limited use in the social and prisons psychology literature. This is perhaps surprising given the substantial utilities of adopting focus groups in conjunction with other methodologies, such as questionnaires and interviews, i.e. orienting oneself to a new field, generating hypotheses based on informants insights, evaluating different research sites, developing interview schedules or questionnaires and getting participants impressions on previous research ideas and conclusions (Morgan, 1988). In view of the fact that some young offenders would have literacy difficulties and may find the expression of ideas easier using a verbal medium, as well as the advantages cited by Morgan (1988) above, it was considered important to use focus groups as part of the current thesis.

## **6.2 Aims**

The current study was designed in response to the weaknesses of current methods used to investigate bullying, namely official records and questionnaire self-

report<sup>18</sup>. The main aim being to obtain in-depth data from cross-referenced multiple opinions (focus group) in order to gain a more thorough understanding of the problem of bullying in Scottish Young Offender Institutions. This data was sought so that it could be compared with information derived from other methods comprising this report.

Specifically, the focus group stage to the study was designed to ascertain young offenders':

- attitudes regarding prisoner-prisoner bullying behaviour;
- experiences of prisoner-prisoner bullying within their establishment;
- experiences of, and attitudes toward, staff-prisoner bullying behaviour; and
- opinions about how to combat bullying in their establishment<sup>19</sup>.

### 6.3 Establishments

Data were collected from young offenders at three Scottish establishments (Polmont, Glenochil and Dumfries), and one remand unit (Longriggend). All the Young Offender Institutions housed male young offenders aged between 16-21 and comprised different populations in respect to offence type, sentence length and security category (see Table 3.1). All young offenders within each wing of the prison were informed that group discussions on 'bullying in prison' were taking place and

<sup>18</sup> An in-depth review of the relative benefits and costs of using these measures is included in Chapter 1 of the present report.

<sup>19</sup> These were the same principal areas of enquiry as the questionnaire, examined in Chapter 3

that volunteers were required. When too many young offenders volunteered from each wing then participants were selected at random.

#### 6.4 Procedures

Eleven focus groups (comprising four to seven young offenders on average) were conducted with groups of volunteers from the four Young Offender Institutions. Smaller group sizes were preferable owing to the possibility of disruption occurring within larger groups (Morgan, 1988). The standard practice of selecting participants who do not know one another was considered to be impractical within closed prison settings.

Three groups were run at each Young Offender Institution for convicted young offenders, (Polmont & Glenochil) and three groups at the establishment for prisoners remanded in custody by the courts (Longriggend). Two groups were carried out at a high security establishment for long term young offenders (Dumfries). A group session was conducted for each wing within each establishment to produce data representative of the facility as a whole<sup>20</sup>. In total, 11 focus groups were conducted.

The groups were carried out as soon after the completion of the survey (see Chapter 2) as was possible (either the same week or the next week). As a result, most

<sup>20</sup> All the groups were facilitated by the main researcher, except for group eight in Dumfries which was conducted by the researcher's supervisor because of time limitations. Both facilitators were the same sex as the young offenders. All the focus groups lasted from 45 minutes to one hour.

of the prisoners taking part in the groups would have also completed, or at least received a copy of, the main questionnaire.<sup>21</sup>

This procedure was adopted for two reasons:

- it was thought that young offenders may speak more freely and candidly about the problem if prompted by a prior questionnaire seen to be commissioned by a group outwith the establishment; and
- in order to enhance comparability of results between the two methods.

Each session was recorded on tape. Subjects were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality before starting the group, and were informed as to the reasons behind the use of a tape recorder. While conducting the sessions the researcher had in front of him a set of questions to ensure that each group was given instructions that were both relevant and consistent, and to prompt the group from the start.

Each session began with a brief outline of the research objectives and the topic under discussion. During the course of each group emphasis was placed on flowing dialogue between young offenders in which the researcher was to take only a minor role. Interruption by the researcher was only required when conversation came to a halt or when discussion became discursive. Each session ended with the facilitator providing a brief summary of the main points arising from the discussion, and time was allotted at the end for any further relevant comments. Detailed transcripts were made of each of the sessions.

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<sup>21</sup> The results of which are presented in Chapter 2

## **6.5      Method**

The main aim of this research was to obtain quality, in-depth, and abundant information from an alternative method of data collection. The presentation of the results for the focus groups was qualitative and based on the researchers' observations regarding outstanding comments and trends within the data.

Owing to the lack of research carried out using focus groups within the realms of a prison the mode of analysis chosen for this study was based on a study of health practices (Ward et al., 1991).

The focus group transcripts were analysed and coded according to whether the contributions were considered relevant or irrelevant to the four salient areas of enquiry and according to how frequently specific points were mentioned (all the main points presented in the results were raised in over 50% of the groups). The main points arising from the groups are herein presented separately for each area of enquiry in tabular format.

## **6.6      Results**

The four main categories of data highlighted by the research are presented in Tables 6.1 to 6.4 below. The results showed that the focus groups provided additional in-depth information to that provided previously by the questionnaires (see Chapters 3 & 4) and the analysis of official records (see Chapter 5).

### **6.6.1 Attitudes to bullying**

The findings highlighted that young offenders believed bullying to be a pervasive problem in Scottish Young Offender Institutions in general. However, when asked specifically about bullying going on in their own establishment, few young offenders from any of the groups were forthcoming with an admission that bullying was a problem. None of the groups considered physique an important factor in determining who becomes a bully or a victim in Young Offender Institutions.

Examining young offenders' attitudes regarding ways for the establishments to best combat bullying revealed that the majority of participants thought increasing staff supervision would fail. This was owing to the perceived "*bad shift*" not carrying out the supervision adequately. When this line of argument was put forward by any individual within the focus groups it consistently generated fervent agreement from the rest of the group.

When young offenders were asked if they had ever "*feared for their safety during their present sentence and in their current establishment ?*", only one or two individuals from the focus groups admitted ever fearing for their safety. When asked if they had been bullied by other young offenders during their present sentence and in their present prison, not one focus group participant acknowledged that he had been bullied by another young offender or group of young offenders.

### **6.6.2 Additional information provided by the focus groups**

The results also showed that the focus groups provided the researcher with relevant supplementary information not generated by the questionnaire or official records. The most common piece of advice given by young offenders participating in the groups with reference to how to combat bullying was action on the part of the individual being victimised: "*get your head down*", "*don't take any hassle*", and "*stick up for yourself*". Young offenders also highlighted that "*everyone gets teased, but some people can't take it and end up cracking up*", which alludes to the victim's inability to handle difficult situations and life in prison. Young offenders being bullied were deemed to be at fault and this was attributed to their inability to "*stand up for themselves*" and that they deserved what they got for "*being a daftie*", or "*being a sex offender*".

These very pertinent issues were not covered anywhere within the questionnaire (see Chapter 3) and are testament to the usefulness of focus groups to tease out important information that may be missed through rigid methods, such as questionnaires or examination of records.

The four salient areas of enquiry and accompanying comments from the young offenders are presented in Tables 6.1 to 6.4 below.

**Table 6.1 Results from the Focus Groups: Attitudes Regarding Prisoner on Prisoner Bullying (10 Variables)**

<b>FOCUS GROUP: MAIN ITEMS ARISING FROM DISCUSSION</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Bullying among young offenders was acknowledged as a widespread problem in Scottish prisons by most participants.</li><li>2. Young offenders denied a problem existed within their own establishments and this was common in all but three sessions. However, examples of bullying were forthcoming as each of the sessions progressed.</li><li>3. The 'work party' was mentioned rarely as a vulnerable area. More commonly mentioned areas included the cells at night and recreation.</li><li>4. Taxing was mentioned most frequently when young offenders were asked to give examples of bullying. Items of 'currency' were also discussed, for example phone cards, sweets, and tobacco.</li><li>5. Sex offenders were mentioned frequently as being prime targets for bullies, but were considered to deserve this negative attention owing to the nature of their crime.</li><li>6. Being from a rural area or different town from others in the establishment were mentioned as important toward determining whether one became a victim. Young offenders from areas outside large cities, such as Glasgow, were deemed to be susceptible.</li><li>7. Being new to prison life was also a common characteristic of victims. "Not knowing how you should act" or not being "jail-wise" were frequent utterances.</li><li>8. Participants commented on the propensity for anyone to become a bully or a victim regardless of size. Physical size was not deemed to be an important factor by any of the groups.</li><li>9. There was widespread consensus that giving information to officers or "grassing" was unacceptable and rumours regarding whether someone had "grassed" were frequently named as a reason for bullying someone.</li><li>10. Having a large number of friends in jail, mainly from your area, leads to bullying by groups on perceived alien individuals, for example "Glasgow boys Vs other areas".</li></ol>

**Table 6.2 Results from the Focus Groups: Bullying by Staff on Prisoners  
(2 Variables)**

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**FOCUS GROUP: MAIN ITEMS ARISING FROM DISCUSSION**

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1. Young offenders stressed that the report system was "unfair", that it depended on the shift that was on duty, "good shift-bad shift". It was also posited that prior to staff intervention the officers could not possibly know what exactly occurs in bullying situations before acting.
  2. Bullying, and maltreatment, by staff engendered most comment among all groups. Staff were constantly cited by young offenders as being the worst bullies, particularly by the more vocal young offenders .
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**Table 6.3 Results from the Focus Groups: Attitudes on how to Combat Bullying (3 Variables)**

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**FOCUS GROUP: MAIN ITEMS ARISING FROM DISCUSSION**

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1. Segregation of the bully was considered to be the most popular method. However, many believed that it should only be implemented if accompanied by some form of counselling where these behaviours were challenged.
  2. Whenever staff supervision was suggested, young offenders did not consider it viable because some staff ("bad shift") would fail to be as observant. However, improving supervision with better trained staff and CCTV were recommended by several groups.
  3. Many individuals within the groups stated "nothing can be done" when asked for suggestions and were unerring in this view.
-

**Table 6.4 Results from the Focus Groups: Experience of Prisoners Bullying other Prisoners (4 Variables)**

**FOCUS GROUP: MAIN ITEMS ARISING FROM DISCUSSION**

1. Very few young offenders admitted that they had feared for their safety, most stated they felt safe nearly all the time.
2. Examples of bullying type behaviours were forthcoming from all groups, particularly taxing, and verbal bullying at night. However, at no point did individuals actually acknowledge their involvement in bullying or state they had seen such behaviour. One frequently given example of verbal bullying at night was referred to as a "chicken"; which is when a young offender is threatened with violence unless he publicly humiliates himself by behaving like, and pretending to make a loud noise like, a chicken.
3. In two groups, participants stated openly that they had bullied other young offenders while at their establishment. The presence and contribution of such bullies tended to dominate the rest of the group.
4. When asked, no prisoner mentioned that they had been bullied. A few young offenders stated that when people had tried to bully them they had used force and emphasised the importance of "sticking up for yourself in prison".

## **6.7 Discussion**

In an attempt to fully understand the factors that may influence bullying behaviour among a population of adolescent young offenders a relatively new method of obtaining in-depth data (focus groups) was adopted. The main areas of enquiry centred on the quality and novelty of the information and comparing and contrasting the results with those from other methods (questionnaires & official records, Chapters 3 & 5 respectively). The results showed that focus groups supplied information that was both comparable and supplementary to that generated by using questionnaires and official records.

Focus group participants believed bullying was a widespread problem in Scottish Young Offender Institutions in general. Although, they would not admit to it being a problem in their own establishment. This may affirm the young offender's desire to appear 'macho' in front of his peers. However, inmates were still able to recognise that a problem exists, even though their machismo would not allow them to admit such a problem in their own 'domain'. Alternatively, their lack of willingness to admit that bullying goes on in their own establishment may reaffirm that they do not want to appear to be a 'grass' in front of their peers.

On the whole, during the focus group sessions young offenders were reluctant to talk about incidents of bullying they had seen or in which they had been involved. This is perhaps not surprising given the sensitive nature of the topic in question and the culture of young offenders. Also, the fact that the young offenders do not wish to be seen to inform or 'grass' on other young offenders in any way, may have inhibited their responses. 'Dominant' individuals within the group may also be known bullies and therefore prohibit free discussion among the other participants,

particularly victims. Also, it may be expected that none of the participants wish to appear 'weak' in front of their peers by admitting having been bullied.

On the whole, the focus groups allowed participants to express their beliefs about, and experiences of, bullying in an unstructured fashion. This provided the researcher with information on previously unconsidered facets of the behaviour and provided alternative information from the forced choice element present in the questionnaires and the restricted nature of prison records.

The major benefit gained from adopting focus groups as a data gathering medium was the generation of additional information. An example of how focus groups provided additional data was recorded when answers were compared with those of the questionnaire regarding the question of staff bullying. The fact that the problem seemed to be delineated by shift, "*good shift-bad shift*", did not arise in the questionnaires yet was mentioned repeatedly by participants in nine of the twelve groups.

Furthermore, young offenders were forthcoming on '*chickens*' (see Table 6.4) and the issue of public humiliation and the gross abuse of power. This is an element of bullying that has not been covered in definitions of bullying to any great degree and was not covered in the questionnaire of young offenders discussed in Chapter 3. Such behaviour may have profound effects on individuals who are locked up for the first time, those who have no friends in prison and those who have nobody to turn to for support. The fact that '*chickens*' usually occur at night means that the young offender victim has no staff to turn to and no place he can go to 'escape'. This issue

is evidence of the quality and vividness of information that can be obtained from an in-depth data gathering technique such as focus groups.

The focus groups also facilitated for the researchers an insight into the dynamics of the group, and of young offender sub-culture. Focus groups also provided information that contributed towards the researchers gaining a strong impression of the subtle complexities of bullying among young offenders at an early stage in the research. This is particularly important when examining a phenomenon such as bullying where the dynamics and individual appraisals of a situation are vital towards determining who fits where in the bullying hierarchy. Indeed, the focus group facilitators noted that hierarchies did develop within each group, which may have reflected prisoners' relative positions within their wing. As a result, discussion tended to be dominated by one or two young offenders in each group, with 'weaker' ones often agreeing without question to what the 'dominant' ones were saying.

Furthermore, the focus groups highlighted the propensity for sex offenders and 'grassers' to be victims of bullying. This has been found in a previous study within a Scottish prison (Dobash, Waterhouse, Carnie, Tait & Tisdell, 1995) to be a major issue for staff working in halls where sex offenders and inmates who 'grass' live with other prisoners. However, while these groups were identified as vulnerable it was also noted within the current study that inmates could use a rumour of someone being either a sex offender or a 'grass' as a threat against them in a bullying scenario.

The above findings have implications for identifying such individuals on admission into the establishment and ensuring their safety is assured either by segregation in vulnerable prisoner units or by increased monitoring and supervision. However, it is important to acknowledge that segregating such prisoners has consequences, in that 'hierarchical' mainstream prison culture may be re-located within such units. Therefore, the diligent supervision of prison staff may be a more appropriate way forward towards preventing bullying among any population whether they be vulnerable or mainstream prisoners.

However, the usefulness of focus groups in this study was limited by the sensitive nature of the topic under discussion and the reluctance of the young offenders to acknowledge bullying that they had seen occurring in their establishments. Bullies rely upon the victims being too frightened to tell anyone and come forward with information, and young offenders in general are sceptical of authority and may be eager to appear 'macho' in front of one another (Ball-Rokeach, 1973).

The dynamics within the focus groups only allowed the researcher to acquire a specific type of information. The sensitive nature of the topic meant that those young offenders who were victims of bullying and those who were of a quiet disposition could not voice their opinions and experiences in front of other young offenders. This was demonstrated by the fact that nobody admitted being bullied in the focus groups in comparison with approximately one quarter of those completing the questionnaire admitting to having been bullied. In addition, in such an atypical group situation the united front of young adult males against the staff prevailed and staff bullying was highlighted disproportionately to prisoner bullying.

On the whole, reflecting on the weaknesses of the focus group technique it is evident that the information gained from this procedure was predominately concerned with staff-prisoner bullying from a victim or by-standers perspective, prisoner-prisoner bullying from a bully or bystander's perspective, and how bullying occurs in relation to the dynamics of the young offender sub-culture.

Focus groups may be more productive if used for similar research in the future if they focus exclusively on similar types of young offender within the prison, such as self-reported victims or self-acknowledged bullies. In these situations the participants may be more willing to talk about their experiences without the complicated dynamics present in a more heterogeneous group.

Focus groups can be of enormous benefit to a researcher beginning to delve into a topic of such complexity as bullying in Young Offender Institutions. The advantages of using such a technique were evident from the data regarding staff bullying. Staff bullying was talked of frequently, and because limited research has been carried out examining this topic the information received here provides a useful grounding for further work concerning this problem.

However, using focus groups as the sole data gathering method, particularly on a population of young offenders, may be unwise owing to the weaknesses discussed earlier. Focus groups are a useful but limited medium when dealing with the topic of bullying owing to the nature of the prison culture and the type of covert behaviour involved. Researchers should be aware of these problems if they are considering using focus groups to examine such a sensitive topic in the future.

While this present research indicates that such a method may have limited use when applied on its own, focus groups appear to have considerable benefits when used in conjunction with a more numerical method, such as a questionnaire. What a study may gain from precision and subject anonymity from the questionnaire can be added to gains from the production of new and in-depth information from focus groups.

Focus groups and questionnaire methods each have their respective benefits and weakness. However, neither method facilitates information on the possible individual characteristics associated with bullying involvement (e.g. as a bully or a victim). Indeed, individual factors such as intelligence, social background and personality may differ according to whether a person is classified as a 'bully' or a 'victim' (Shields and Simourd, 1991). The next chapter utilises a structured interview incorporating standardised measures to investigate whether such factors can be used to determine bullying involvement in a penal setting.

## **CHAPTER 7**

**SELF-ESTEEM AND SOCIAL  
BACKGROUND VARIABLES AS  
DISCRIMINATORS OF BULLIES,  
VICTIMS, AND OTHER YOUNG  
OFFENDERS**

## **Chapter 7**

### **Self-Esteem and Social Background Variables as Discriminators of Bullies, Victims, and Other Young Offenders**

#### **Abstract**

*This part of the study examined 105 incarcerated young offenders to determine personality, social background, and intelligence characteristics associated with being a 'bully', a 'victim', or an 'other' young offender (non-bully and non-victim). The young offenders were divided into one of the three groups based on analysis of official records and officer assessment. A discriminant function analysis compared bullies, victims, and other young offenders on: age, Rosenberg Self-Esteem, Prison Locus of Control, National Adult Reading Test and Young Offender Level of Supervision Inventory sub-scales. The significant discriminant functions differentiated the three groups on self-esteem and social background factors. Victims had lower self-esteem scores and more family background problems than other groups, while bullies had more extensive criminal histories. Results are discussed in relation to a typology of classification regarding bullying in penal settings.*

## 7.1 Introduction

There is a large body of research from North America investigating a typology of delinquency regarding children in the community who offend against society (Brown, Jenkins and Rhodes, 1992; Brown & Miller, 1988; Jenkins, 1973; Jenkins & Brown, 1988). This research follows on from the initial seminal work of Hewitt & Jenkins (1936) who proposed that there were two types of delinquent child, the undersocialised and the socialised. This typology is currently acknowledged in the DSM IV (1993) as conduct disorder (group type) and conduct disorder (solitary, aggressive type). Typical factors related to being a group type include, coming from a large impoverished family living in the inner city, having delinquent friends or siblings, and having a father who is absent or an alcoholic; while factors relating to being solitary, aggressive type included, having limited supervision and maternal rejection (Brown, Jenkins & Rhodes, 1992). While this dichotomy was pursued within North American literature (Deutsch & Erikson, 1989), a paucity of such work exists in Britain. Although, a comprehensive longitudinal study from Cambridge did reveal that a number of factors evident when individuals are young might predict delinquent behaviour in later life (Farrington & West, 1990). Predictors primarily included family factors such as: coming from a low income family; coming from a large family; having parents who are unsatisfactory at child rearing; having a parent with a criminal record before the child's tenth birthday; but also included having below average intelligence on testing.

Some British studies have also attempted to highlight the salient characteristics of those involved in victimising incidents, for example, Beck (1994) showed that bullies were incarcerated for longer than other young offenders and that

victims were more likely to be first offenders. However, such studies often examined a narrow range of variables, or contained anecdotal descriptive analyses of the extent of bullying, types of bullying and where bullying occurs (McGurk & McDougall, 1991). Ireland & Archer (1996) attempted to identify the differences between male and female adult inmates' perceptions of bullying and found females perceiving higher levels of bullying than males, and males identifying different behaviours as bullying than females. However, this study did not control adequately for other factors that may have contributed towards differences in the perceptions of the two groups (male vs female), such as length of sentence, type of offence or type of establishment.

The aforementioned studies primarily concentrated upon readily identifiable characteristics of individuals, such as age, length of sentence and physique. These studies attempted to differentiate between bullies, victims and other children in school or between types of delinquent in the community. Unfortunately, more complex factors, such as personality, intelligence and social background factors and how they related to bullying, have not as yet been the subject of extensive investigation in British Young Offender Institutions. This view was also posited by Connell & Farrington (1996) in a review of existing literature regarding bullying in penal and other settings. Of the research on bullying/victimization that was done with young offenders, only one paper compared different groups of young offenders regarding risk/need factors. This study focused on the background factors of 'predators' (bullies), in comparison with 'normal' young offenders in a North American penal establishment (Shields & Simourd, 1991). Shields & Simourd found that predatory young offenders had more problems with education and employment; their relationship with their family; their interaction with peers; and

substance abuse than did those classified as non-predators (Shields & Simourd, 1991).

In summary, most research within the community and in penal settings has concentrated on the salient factors associated with being either an aggressor or recalcitrant juvenile while limited research has been done examining factors relating to young offenders in British establishments. No previous work has utilised personality, intelligence and social background factors in an attempt to differentiate between membership of groups involved in bullying behaviour within a British Young Offender Institution.

## 7.2 Aims

The main aim of the present study was to identify factors that differentiate between various groups in Scottish establishments (bullies, victims, and those who were neither bullies nor victims)<sup>22</sup>. Discriminant function analysis was used to assess the relative contributions of family background, criminal history, and intelligence to successful group differentiation. While previous researchers have recognised these variables as important, they have not been investigated in such an amalgamated and comprehensive manner.

## 7.3 Participants

Participants were 105 inmates from 4 Scottish Young Offender Institutions, 33 from Polmont, an institution for inmates serving short-term sentences and awaiting

assessment and transfer to other institutions (approximate average daily population [a.d.p.] = 369); 27 from Glenochil, an institution for those serving short term sentences (approximate a.d.p. = 159; 15 from Dumfries, a high security institution (approximate a.d.p. = 127); and 30 from Longriggend, a remand unit (approximate a.d.p. = 188). Inmates ranged in age from 15 to 20 years with a mean age of 18.7 years ( $SD = 1.3$ ). All participants were male.

## 7.4 Measures

In addition to gathering demographic information [Appendix IV], the following measures were used in this part of the study:

### 7.4.1 Personality measures

- The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory [RSEI] (Rosenberg, 1965) [Appendix VII] is one of the most commonly used measures of global self-esteem and has been demonstrated to be a valid measure by many previous researchers (Crandall, 1973; Hagborg, 1993; Rosenberg, 1979). The measure consists of ten items scored as an additive likert scale from 1 (low) to 4 (high). Therefore, high scores reflect high self-esteem.
- The Prisoner Locus of Control Scale [PLOC] (Pugh, 1992) [Appendix VI] was designed primarily for use within an incarcerated setting and has been shown to be a reliable and valid measure of young offenders' locus of control. The measure has been subsequently revised (Pugh, 1994). The scale includes 20 items to which prisoners respond 'agree' or 'disagree'. Scoring is the addition of all external

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<sup>22</sup> No 'bully/victims' were included given the smaller numbers and difficulties in identification (see

responses, with high scores indicating more external locus of control. Some of the items were adapted for use in the present study in order to account for cultural differences in prison lexicon. High external locus of control scores indicate that the individual believes his/her actions are controlled by the environment. Conversely, low scores suggest that the individual believes himself/herself to be more in control of his/her own actions.

#### **7.4.2 Intelligence measure**

- The National Adult Reading Test [NART] (Nelson & Willison, 1991) [Appendix IX] is a relatively short test that does not demand prolonged concentration from the subject. The measure has been shown to correlate strongly with IQ (Nelson & McKenna, 1975; Nelson & O'Connell, 1978). The NART comprises a list of 50 words in order of increasing difficulty of pronunciation. All words are 'irregular' in respect to common pronunciation. The subject reads the list aloud and the number of errors is recorded. Full Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale [WAIS] IQs are derived from the scores obtained (Crawford et al., 1989).

#### **7.4.3 Measure of social background factors**

- The Young Offender Level of Service Inventory [YO-LSI] (Shields & Simourd, 1991) [Appendix VIII] is a scale designed to identify 'risk' and 'need' based on sampling the background and present situation of incarcerated adolescents. The measure was based on a similar measure for adults, the Level of Service Inventory [LSI] (Andrews, 1982). The YO-LSI is delivered to subjects as a structured interview, with supplementary information being obtained from prison records. There are 76

questions scored in binary format, with '1' indicating a problem and '0' its absence. The total YO-LSI score being the sum of all problem items. The measure is grouped into seven sub-tests:- criminal history; substance abuse; education/employment problems; family problems; peer relation problems, accommodation problems, and psychological variables. The measure was considered valid for use with a Scottish young offender population as both the total score and the sub-tests (except for accommodation problems) have already highlighted differences between predatory and non-predatory incarcerated adolescents (Shields & Simourd, 1991).

### 7.5 Procedures

An interview schedule comprising standardised measures was used to collect data on the personality, intelligence and background characteristics of bullies, victims, and other prisoners (young offenders who were neither bullies nor victims) in Scottish young offender establishments [see Appendix IV]. Inmates responded orally and responses were recorded in both a quantitative and qualitative format. The results of the qualitative analysis were not analysed for the purposes of this thesis. The quantitative section of the interview schedule incorporated the above measures of personality, intelligence and background characteristics. All interviews were carried out by a research assistant over a period of four months. Subjects were informed that they had the opportunity to take part in a study by Stirling University to find out their views regarding the problem of bullying in Scottish YOs. In addition, they were told that any information given in the context of the interview would remain confidential and that participation or non-participation would in no way affect their position in the prison.

Young offenders were categorised into one of three groups (victims, bullies, and other young offenders) by two independent raters (prison officers) from each of the wings where the prisoners were situated. The young offenders were drawn from eight wings (three in Polmont, three in Longriggend, two in Glenochil, and two in Dumfries) and therefore 16 officers took part in assessment of status. Each officer independently made a list of as many young offenders in their wing who they considered to be involved in bullying type behaviours as either a bully or a victim (approximately ten prisoners per officer, five victims and five bullies). The list was in descending order with the young offender involved most frequently in such behaviours registered first.

In total 114 young offenders initially enumerated by the officers from the four establishments were still in that location at the time of interview, and of these 65 were identified victims and 49 were identified bullies. Young offenders were only assigned to one of the two groups (bullies and victims) if the two officers from the wing in question concurred. When disagreement occurred (in approximately 30% of cases, n = 37) the young offender was omitted from the study. The level of disagreement between the officers was similar for bullies and victims. Individuals were included as 'other' young offenders if neither officer from the wing in question had included them on their preliminary list as bullies or victims. The identification of the bullies and bullied individuals was further supported by recognition of such behaviour in official discipline records, while the identification of the other young offenders was supported through an absence of such behaviour in the records. If information failed to support the officer's appropriation the individual was omitted.

Once the lists had been compiled for each of the three categories, the researcher then interviewed as many young offenders as were available. Young offender participation was voluntary. Interviews were by descending order, with the individuals deemed to be involved most frequently in the behaviour interviewed first. Once interviewing was complete the following distribution of bullies, victims, and other young offenders for each of the establishments was recorded: Longriggend (10 per group), Polmont (10 bullies, 10 other young offenders, and 14 victims), Glenochil (10 bullies, 10 other young offenders, and 6 victims), and Dumfries (5 per group). Data collection ceased when the groups were of equal size and were considered to be comparable. Each group contained 35 young offenders.

Participants were informed that they were chosen at random, and the order in which bullies, victims, and others were interviewed was purposely inconsistent. These methods were employed at this part of the study to avoid identifying individuals as 'victims' in front of other young offenders and thus incur further bullying. Furthermore, these methods were adopted to avoid stigmatising inmates by labelling them as 'victims' or 'bullies'.

## 7.6 Results

In order to determine whether any variable or combination of variables could be used to predict group membership (bully, victim, or other inmate) a stepwise discriminant function analysis was performed using eleven variables. This statistical procedure facilitates the identification of variables most strongly associated with group categorisation and is based on grouping subjects according to pre-set criteria. Predictors were PLOC (Prisoner Locus of Control), RSEI (Rosenberg Self-Esteem

Inventory), NART (National Adult Reading Test), age, and seven measures of background characteristics (criminal history, substance abuse history, family background problems, peer relational problems, psychological variables, accommodation problems, and education/employment problems) from the YO-LSI (Young Offender - Level of Service Inventory) [see Table 7.1]. These variables were selected on the basis of their correlating with the grouping variable of whether inmates were classified as a bully, a victim or other inmate. It was not necessary to exclude any data on the basis that it was either missing or incomplete.

A maximum significance level for inclusion of variables was set at .05. Eight of the variables failed to meet the significance criterion to enter the prediction equation (age, locus of control, intelligence, substance abuse, peer relation problems, psychological variables, accommodation problems, and education/employment problems) and took no further part in the analysis. The Wilks stepwise method of discriminant function analysis was used. This method selects the most useful variables from a selection of potential ones. The most discriminating variable is selected first, followed by the second variable best able to enhance discrimination criterion in conjunction with the first variable (Shewan, Gemmell & Davies, 1994). Further variables are then entered in the same way. A maximum significance level for inclusion of variables was set at .05. Eight of the variables failed to meet the significance criterion to enter the prediction equation (age, PLOC, NART, substance abuse, peer relation problems, psychological variables, accommodation problems, and education/employment problems) and took no further part in the analysis. Table 7.2 illustrates the results showing that two functions were significant according to the chi-square analysis. The two discriminant functions accounted for 68% and 32% respectively, of the between groups variability.

**Table 7.1 Means and Standard Deviations for the Groups: Bullies, Victims and Other Young Offenders on Different Variables**

Dependent measure	Bullies (n = 35)		Victims (n = 35)		Others (n = 35)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Age	18.7	1.3	18.3	1.4	19.1	1.0
Locus Of control	7.5	3.4	8.5	3.3	6.5	3.7
Self-esteem	29.9	4.0	26.9	3.5	30.3	3.8
Intelligence	95.4	8.7	94.7	9.0	92.8	8.4
Social background (sub-tests):						
Criminal history	9.9	2.5	8.4	3.2	7.2	3.4
Substance abuse	5.9	1.7	6.2	1.8	5.6	2.5
Education/ Employment	5.6	1.3	5.4	1.2	5.2	2.1
Family problems	3.6	2.5	5.1	2.5	2.8	2.4
Peer relation problems	7.8	1.3	7.2	2.5	7.1	1.8
Accommodation problems	1.7	0.9	1.6	1.2	1.2	1.0
Psychological variables	2.9	1.4	2.6	1.4	2.4	1.3

**Key**

- Locus of control: higher scores = higher external locus of control
- Self-esteem: higher scores = higher self-esteem
- Intelligence: higher scores = higher I.Q.
- Social background: higher scores = greater number of problems

**Table 7.2 Results of the Discriminant Function Analysis Computed on the Total Score of the Predictor Variables**

Function	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Canonical correlation	After Function	Wilks $\lambda$	$X^2$	df	p
				0	.68	37.22	6	.000
1	0.29	68.11	.48	1	.88	12.4	2	.002
2	0.14	31.89	.35					

The canonical discriminant functions evaluated at group means (group centroids) [Table 7.3] revealed that the first function (self-esteem and family background problems) primarily discriminated between the victims, and the bullies and other groups. Inmates who were victims had more family background problems (mean = 5.1), than the bullies (mean = 3.6) or other inmates (mean = 2.8), and lower self-esteem, (mean = 26.9), than the bullies (mean = 29.9) or other inmates (mean = 30.3). The second function (criminal history) primarily discriminated between the bullies and the other inmates. More extensive criminal histories prior to present incarceration were reported by the bullies (mean = 9.9) than the other inmates (mean = 7.2).

A loading matrix of correlations was used to interpret between predictors and discriminant functions (Table 7.4), with loadings of less than .50 being ignored (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). The best predictors for distinguishing between victims and bullies and other inmates (Function 1) were their self-esteem, as assessed with the RSEI, and the prevalence of problems in their family background, as measured by a sub-test of the YO-LSI. The best predictor for distinguishing between the bullies and the other inmates was their criminal history, again as measured by a sub-test of the YO-LSI. Results of classification analyses (Table 7.5) revealed that 55% of the inmates could be accurately classified based on the two discriminant functions, compared with 35 (33.3%) who would be correctly classified by chance alone. Looking more closely at the accuracy with which the two discriminant functions predicted group membership indicates that 45.7% of others, 60.0% of victims, and 60.0% of bullies were classified accurately. When errors in classification of young offenders were made, other inmates were more often mis-classified as bullies than victims.

**Table 7.3 Canonical Discriminant Functions Evaluated at Group Means  
(Group Centroids)**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Function 1</b>	<b>Function 2</b>
Others	-0.37	-0.44
Victims	0.76	0.00
Bullies	-0.37	0.44

**Table 7.4 Rotated Correlations Between Discriminating Variables and Canonical Discriminant Functions**

Variables	Function 1	Function 2
RSEI	.77	.15
History of Family Problems	.69	.40
Criminal History	-.05	.99

**Table 7.5 Percentages of Cases Correctly Classified Using Discriminant Function Analysis**

Group	No. of cases	Predicted group membership		
		Others	Victims	Bullies
<b>Others</b>	35	16 45.7%	7 20.0%	12 34.3%
<b>Victims</b>	35	6 17.1%	21 60.0%	8 22.9%
<b>Bullies</b>	35	7 20.0%	7 20.0%	21 60.0%
Cases correctly classified: 55.24%				

## 7.7 Discussion

The present study highlighted two significant factors that could predict group membership of 55% of the young offenders taking part. The self-esteem and family background variables, measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory and the Young Offender-Level of Service Inventory respectively, accounted for the greatest amount of between groups variance. This suggested that being a bully, a victim or an other young offender was characterised mostly by self-esteem and family background. An additional variable (criminal history), from the Young Offender-Level of Service Inventory added to the predictive validity of the discriminant function. The young offenders scores in respect to the degree to which they had exhibited criminal behaviours in the past also differentiated the groups.

The results derived from this study served to highlight differences between the groups, which can be examined in light of theoretical models of the development of delinquency and social conduct. First, the results indicated that victims had more family background problems than bullies or other young offenders. The literature abounds with research inferring a link between disruption in early family life and varying types of maladaptive behaviour in later life. Bowlby (1979) reported that conduct disorders may be generated by having the parent-child attachment upset in early childhood. Deutsch & Erickson (1989) found that the families of undersocialised youths underwent more life events of a stressful nature than did socialised youths. More specifically, Olweus (1993a) revealed that boys who become victims have more overprotective mothers than do non-victimised boys. Furthermore, Troy & Soufe (1987) found that victims often had a history of insecure parent/child interaction patterns. These family background problems may in

themselves contribute to the potential for recidivism but following incarceration such background variables may enhance the possibility of being victimised.

Second, consistent with cross-sectional studies carried out in school settings, victims of bullying in the present study were found to have lower self-esteem (Roland, & Munthe, 1989; Slee & Rigby, 1993 [a]) than other groups. One might expect constant pressure and verbal abuse from other prisoners to deflate a young offender's self-esteem. However, another viewpoint suggests that a prisoner's low self-esteem may lead to him becoming a target for bullies owing to the fact that victims present themselves as 'quiet' and/or 'submissive'. Olweus (1993b) found that boys who were victims at school were more likely to be characterised as being over sensitive and cautious at an age before they began to be victimised. The question as to whether low self-esteem and other similar personality traits actually precipitate the problem and/or whether low self-esteem results largely from the victimization itself is the topic of ongoing debate. Such issues have important implications for staff in prison settings as studies have revealed that young offenders labelled as 'victims' by staff can be placed in positions where they question their self-worth and thus their self-esteem further decreases (McGuire & Priestly, 1989).

Third, in accordance with previous research carried out in prison settings (Shields and Simourd, 1991) the present study found that bullies had more extensive criminal histories than other young offenders. A body of research exists showing a relationship between the intractable young offender and extensive criminal history (Goetting & Howsen, 1986; Megargee & Bohn, 1979; Porporino, 1986), although, the intractable prisoner and the prisoner likely to bully may not necessarily be one and the same. Clearly those young offenders who have been in prison for longer periods

and who have committed an extensive number of different crimes may be more aware of what they can "try to get away with" within the prison system and may have more friends and social support on which to rely when incarcerated. Thus they have "back up" from others within their wing and therefore can enhance their capability to bully if they so desire.

However, the results from the present study must be treated with caution owing to weaknesses in data collection and analysis. The first concerns classification of young offenders into groups, which was made on the basis of officer identification and from information contained in official records, which may also depend on officer reporting behaviour. In previous studies, officer identification was shown to differ considerably from young offender self-identification (Beck, 1994). This may be accounted for in future research by providing more than one method of identifying group membership.

Further problems exist when trying to identify and/or predict group membership on the basis of the data presented. While 55% of the sample could be correctly classified in one of the three target groups, this also suggests that 45% were not classified accurately. Although this finding appears to be better than on a 'chance' assignment (i.e. 33%), the very small mean difference in between group scores indicates there is little practical significance in attempting to use such scores to identify bullies or victims, or others. The self-esteem index, by way of example, for bullies indicated a mean score of 29.9 versus 30.3 for others. Attempting classification on such a basis between these two groups would almost be by 'chance'.

A further weakness of the current study concerns the possible oversimplification of the categorisation of inmates involved in bullying. Indeed, the category of 'bully/victim' (see Chapter 3) may have been useful to compare. Also, previous studies from the literature in schools have identified many sub-categories of bully and victim, for example the provocative and passive victims (Perry, Kusel & Perry, 1988; Stephenson & Smith, 1989) and anxious and non-anxious bullies (Stephenson & Smith, 1989). However, such research has not yet been supported by studies with young offenders and limited work has been conducted in school settings to support such a taxonomy. Therefore, this may be a future avenue for research in Young Offender Institutions.

Although the present preliminary study has a number of weaknesses the results do show that certain personality and background characteristics can discriminate between young offender groups. In so doing, the research tries to make a positive step toward developing a typology of young offenders involved in bullying.

However, at best, young offenders' personality, background, and intelligence characteristics only represent a small part of the whole picture regarding the nature of bullying within Scottish Young Offender Institutions. The ethos of the establishment's regime, the attitudes of the officers, and many other factors, may also be of importance in determining whether or not specific individuals might become involved in bullying behaviour. Further research is also required to examine the environmental predictors of bullying, such as crowding, staffing levels, and policy ramifications.

The findings from the present study indicate that there is a demand for sound longitudinal research incorporating a range of social, physical, and demographic factors to reveal whether the behaviour of bullies and victims changes over time and following multiple periods of incarceration. In so doing, the predictive utility of pre-imprisonment characteristics of the individual young offender in relation to different types and length of prison experience might assist us in achieving a more appropriate typological differentiation. Furthermore, although inmate age was examined as a variable in the present study this was only possible for the age range 16-21 years. No such investigation of bullying has thus far been undertaken in a Scottish adult prison context. Consequently, no comparisons between settings (i.e. adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions) and populations (i.e. adults and young offenders) have been conducted. This may be partly in response to the association of the term 'bullying' with childhood and adolescence and not with adulthood (Smith & Thompson, 1991).

To date there is a paucity of research in Scotland providing comparisons between institutions housing different types of offender (e.g. adult prisoners and young offenders). In response to this the following chapter was devised in an effort to compare and contrast the extent and nature of victimization in adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions using assault reports as a dependant variable.

## **CHAPTER 8**

**CAUSES, CIRCUMSTANCES  
SURROUNDING AND  
CONSEQUENCES OF, ASSAULTS IN  
PRISON:**

**ADULT PRISONS COMPARED WITH  
YOUNG OFFENDER INSTITUTIONS**

## **Chapter 8**

### **Causes, Circumstances Surrounding and Consequences of, Assaults in Prison: Adult Prisons Compared with Young Offender Institutions**

#### **Abstract**

*Assault incident reports sent to the Scottish Prison Service Headquarters by establishments were analysed over the same 21 month period<sup>23</sup>. However, for the purposes of this part of the current study assaults were sub-divided into those occurring in Young Offender Institutions and adult prisons to facilitate comparison. Analysis was restricted to prisoner on prisoner assaults forwarded to Headquarters by establishments<sup>24</sup>. Differences were shown between adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions for a number of variables: reasons behind assaults, witness presence, association with fighting, injury type (i.e. stab/slash wounds, physical blows, etc.) and information about the perpetrator. However, no significant differences were apparent between adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions regarding the severity of assault (i.e. degree of threat to life of injury). The discussion surrounds the importance of making distinctions between types of establishment, in this case adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions, when investigating the causes, circumstances surrounding, and consequences of assaults in prison.*

<sup>23</sup> The researcher was requested by the Scottish Prison Service to investigate 'assaults' owing to the topical nature of the behaviour (HMCIP, 1996). At the time of the study no records pertaining to 'bullying' were available for comparison between adult prisons and YOIs. Also, initial discussion with staff and inmates revealed that adult prisoners may not participate if the term 'bullying' was used given its association with younger offenders. Therefore, assault records were chosen for the current study to best facilitate a comparison between adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions regarding the nature, extent and correlates of victimization..

<sup>24</sup> Only prisoner on prisoner assaults were used as there were insufficient numbers of assaults on staff to facilitate comparison.

## **8.1 Introduction**

Previous research has indicated that violent and aggressive behaviour tends to be prevalent in penal establishments housing young offenders (Beck, 1994; Boucher, 1995; Ellis, Grasmick & Gilman, 1974).

Research has also been conducted in psychiatric institutions acknowledging the usefulness of a range of factors to predict which types of individual are liable to assault other individuals (Rasmussen & Levander, 1996; Reid, Bollinger & Edwards, 1985 [a][b]). A number of studies have focused on factors relating directly to the individual, such as personality, age, and prior assault history. The main conclusions of such research were that assaultive behaviour is more likely to be instigated by younger individuals (Haffke & Reid, 1983; Pearson et al., 1986; Reid et al., 1985) and those with a prior history of assaultive behaviour or aggression (Karson & Bigelow, 1987; Yesavage, 1983). However, there are a number of problems with studies undertaken in psychiatric institutions. Specifically, concerning the assumption that findings obtained by such research are comparable with that from other settings, such as prisons. For example, most of the studies carried out in psychiatric institutions have concentrated on homogeneous groups of chronically aggressive individuals in acute psychiatric wards. Arguably, such study samples are not comparable with prison populations.

Studies conducted in penal settings in North America have identified the age of the prisoner as the salient factor determining the likelihood of assaults occurring in any establishment. Fuller & Orsagh (1977) revealed that inmates in youth institutions and young inmates were the groups identified as being more likely to be

victimised in a North American prison setting. Nacci, Teitelbaum & Prather, (1977) looked at official prison records of discipline and found that younger inmates were more prone to violence. Furthermore, Wright (1991) found that violent prisoners tended to be younger, involved in the criminal justice system at an earlier age, and have prior institutional experience. McCorkle (1992) also found that the factors most likely to predict a propensity to engage in violent behaviour in prison were age of inmate and criminal history. Those prisoners who were younger and had protracted histories of criminal behaviour were most likely to engage in this type of behaviour. Kratcoski (1988) in a study of assaults on prison staff also revealed that younger adult prisoners under the age of 25 years were disproportionately responsible for the assaults.

In reference to English and Welsh prisons, Boucher (1995) examined the number and type of discipline reports for all penal establishments. Findings revealed that juvenile Young Offender Institutions had the highest number of reports reflecting violent behaviour (137 per 100 a.d.p), while open adult prisons had the lowest (1 per 100 a.d.p.). These results support those from North American penal literature cited above that younger prisoners are more involved in instances of overt violence in prison.

Research thus far has mostly presented figures for assaults at the aggregate level (Porporino, 1986), incorporating data from different types of establishment housing heterogeneous types of prisoner. However, researchers attempting to show relationships between general levels of discipline and other variables (e.g. population size) have indicated that while such relationships may hold for aggregate totals derived from the entire prison system they disappear when the data is broken down

to individual prisons (Ekland-Olson, Barrick & Cohen, 1983; Fry, 1988). Therefore any relationships that exist at the aggregate level appear to be weak and not able to be replicated at the individual or institutional level. Unfortunately, detailed research investigating this topic in relation to Scottish prisons is scarce both at a national aggregate level and at any subdivided level, for example when comparing adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions

Therefore, this part of the present study aims to break down the assault figures into those for adult prisons and those for Young Offender Institutions. Thereby allowing researchers to evaluate which group may be contributing a disproportionate number of assaults to the overall total or whether relationships between variables disappear when deconstruction takes place. Furthermore, this procedure allows researchers to identify whether important predictors remain as such when the types of institution are analysed separately.

## 8.2 Aims

- to identify changes in assault levels over time for adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions separately<sup>25</sup>; and
- to compare and contrast the content of prisoner against prisoner assault reports among adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions with regard to information about the nature and dynamics of the assaults<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Numbers were examined at 21 points over the 21 month period

<sup>26</sup> At the time of the study no records pertaining to 'bullying' were available in adult prisons. Also, the researcher was advised by the Scottish Prison Service to investigate 'assaults' and not to use the term 'bullying' within adult prisons given its association with younger offenders. Therefore, the only data

### **8.3 Setting & Procedure**

When an assault occurs within any establishment the information about the incident is recorded and forwarded to Operations Branch at Headquarters for accretion and analysis. Once there, incidents are assessed to see if they conform to the definition of 'serious' assault in the Corporate Plan of the Scottish Prison Service, 1996-99<sup>27</sup>. All the report forms sent to Headquarters by establishments for a 21 month period were obtained from the Operations Branch where they had been stored and collated since April 1995. This was the data set used in the analysis. Figures relating to assault incidents for the 21 month period were examined on an aggregate level for this period as a whole.

Centrally held records of assault were examined at the Headquarters of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS HQ). The records represent incidents that had occurred during the period April 1995 to December 1996 inclusive. All assault records available at the time were scrutinised. At the time there was only one female penal establishment in Scotland, which incurred a small number of assaults, therefore it was decided that results should be analysed on an aggregate level for adult male prisoners and young offenders only.

The a.d.p for the male population of Scottish adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions for the 21 month period was 5631. All assault incident reports retained by SPS Headquarters were examined and categorised according to a

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facilitating a comparison between adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions regarding the nature, extent and correlates of victimization were assault records.

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter 1 for a description and assessment of the definition

predetermined three-point 'severity' scale. This scale was based on the 'Medical Lethality Index' (Faberow, 1950; Power & Spencer, 1987). The criteria for inclusion in one or other of the categories were according to the severity of the injury/injuries sustained by the victim:

- a) physical injury which required no medical/nursing treatment and where there was no threat to life, i.e. minor injury or no injury (e.g. bruising);
- b) physical injury which required medical/nursing treatment and where there was no threat to life, i.e. moderate injury (e.g. fractured limbs, stab or slash wounds with limited blood loss); and
- c) physical injury which required medical/nursing treatment and without which there would have been a threat to life, i.e. severe injury (e.g. deep stab wounds).

An additional researcher<sup>28</sup> experienced in the field of prisons research rated 50 of the same assault incidents according to the above assessment criteria. The same category was conferred on the incident by both researchers in 90% ( $n = 45$ ) of the cases.

#### 8.4 Results

The results from sections 8.4.1 to 8.4.14 are presented in Table 8.1.

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<sup>28</sup> Theresa Martinus (MSc student) helped with determining inter-rater reliability.

#### **8.4.1 Number of assaults**

A figure of 254 assaults by prisoners on other prisoners over the 21 month period consisted of 47 assaults on young offenders by other young offenders, and 207 assaults on adult prisoners by other adult prisoners. These figures were also calculated by taking into account the average daily population (a.d.p.) of adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions over the same period. The a.d.p. for adult prisons was 4538 while the same figure for Young Offender Institutions was 910. The rate of assault for the 21 month period for adult prisons was calculated as 4.6 assaults per 100 a.d.p. while that for Young Offender Institutions was 5.2 per 100 a.d.p.

#### **8.4.2 Time series analysis**

Time series analysis was conducted where any rise in the inmate population was controlled for. This analysis revealed that for young offenders the total number of assaults increased significantly over time ( $R^2 (1, 19) = .63, p < .0005$ ); as was the case for the total number of adult assaults ( $R^2 (1, 19) = .42, p < .005$ ).

#### **8.4.3 Locations of the assaults**

Regarding the locations of the assaults, 70.7% (n=128) of reports in adult prisons indicated that the incident occurred within the hall/wing in which prisoners resided, while in Young Offender Institutions only 31.8 % (n=14) stated that the assault occurred there. In Young Offender Institutions 68.2% (n=30) of assaults

occurred in areas outwith the hall/wing (e.g. corridors, workshops, reception), while in adult establishments only 29.3% (n=53) occurred there [ $\chi^2 = 7.43$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .05$ ].

#### 8.4.4 Action taken against perpetrators

Significant differences existed between Young Offender Institutions and adult prisons regarding those reports where action or inaction against the perpetrator was mentioned. Concerning assaults in Young Offender Institutions, no perpetrators were charged in the discipline reports, while the comparable figure for perpetrators in adult prisons was 7.3% (n=15). In 12.8% (n=6) of assaults in Young Offender Institutions, the perpetrator was charged by the police while only 2.9% (n=6) of perpetrators in adult prisons were charged by the police. In addition, only 8.5% (n=4) of perpetrators in Young Offender Institutions were exonerated and not charged, while the comparative figure for adult perpetrators was 14.5% (n=30) [ $\chi^2 = 19.6$ ,  $df = 9$ ,  $p < .05$ ].

However, the most interesting result from this part of the analysis concerned the high percentage of incident reports giving no indication as to whether the assailant had been charged by the authorities or not (78.7%, n=37 & 75.4%, n=156 for young offenders and adults respectively). This result may reflect the speed with which staff complete incident report forms and forward them to Headquarters for accretion. When the forms are sent, the perpetrator may be waiting to appear before the Governor and therefore no mention is made of the sanction bestowed on him/her.

#### **8.4.5 Presence of a staff witness**

Significant differences existed between reports of assault occurring in Young Offender Institutions and adult prisons where the presence or absence of a staff witness was specified. Concerning Young Offender Institutions, 25.5% (n=12) of assault reports stated that a member of staff had witnessed the incident, whereas the comparable figure from adult establishments was 13.0% (n=27). In total, 43.5% (n=90) of reports from adult establishments specified that no staff witnesses were present, whereas the comparable figure from Young Offender Institutions was only 14.9% (n=7) [ $\chi^2 = 17.79, df = 3, p < .0005$ ].

This result may indicate that young offender assaults are less likely to occur out of the sight of the staff. This may reflect the 'spontaneity' of assaults among young offenders.

#### **8.4.6 Reasons behind the assaults**

A significant difference existed as to whether the reasons behind the assault were apparently known or unknown to the staff reporting the behaviour. Concerning Young Offender Institutions, only 29.8% (n=14) reports gave a reason for the assault occurring, whereas the associated figure for adult establishments was 46.9% (n=97) [ $\chi^2 = 4.70, df = 1, p < .05$ ]. This may reflect the fact that adult prisoners may be more likely to plan assaults and thereby give reasons for the assault when confronted. Conversely, young offenders may be more likely to exhibit 'spontaneous' assaults and as such may be less likely to have a pre-determined reason for the assault and also be less likely to communicate with staff.

**Table 8.1 Comparison between the Characteristics of Assaults in Adult Prisons and Young Offender Institutions**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Adult</b>		<b>Young Offender</b>		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		
<b>Location of assaults (DF=1):</b>						
Hall/Wing/Dormitory	128	70.7	14	31.8	7.4	<0.05
Outside Hall	53	29.3	30	68.2		
<b>Action taken(DF=9):</b>						
Discipline reports	15	7.3	0	0	9.6	<0.01
Police	6	2.9	6	12.8		
Not charged	30	14.5	4	8.5		
No mention	156	75.4	37	78.7		
<b>Witness presence (DF=4):</b>						
Witnessed by staff	27	13.0	12	25.5	17.8	<0.005
Not witnessed	90	43.5	7	14.9		
No mention	90	43.5	28	59.6		
<b>Reasons for assaults (DF=1):</b>						
Reason given	97	46.9	14	29.8	4.7	<0.05
No reason given	110	53.1	33	70.2		
<b>Fights and assaults (DF=1):</b>						
Fight occurred	21	10.1	10	21.3	10.8	<0.001
No fight occurred	186	89.9	37	78.7		
<b>Treatment for victims (DF=1):</b>						
In prison	59	28.5	12	25.5	0.2	n.s.
Outside prison (NHS)	148	71.5	35	74.5		
<b>Times of assaults (DF=4):</b>						
Morning	64	30.1	14	29.8	0.2	n.s.
Afternoon	72	34.8	17	36.2		
Evening	71	34.3	16	34.0		
<b>Days of assaults (DF=1):</b>						
Weekend	55	26.6	9	19.1	1.2	n.s.
Weekday	152	73.4	38	80.9		
<b>Severity of assaults (DF=4):</b>						
Minor	8	5.8	3	6.4	0.9	n.s.
Moderate	175	84.5	42	89.4		
Severe	20	9.7	2	4.2		

NB: Table 9.1 continued overleaf

**Table 8.1 (Continued) Comparison between the Characteristics of Assaults  
in Adult Prisons and Young Offender Institutions**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Adult</b>		<b>Young Offender</b>		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		
<b>Assailants identified (DF=1):</b>						
Named perpetrator	81	39.1	29	61.7	7.9	<0.005
No perpetrator named	126	60.9	18	38.3		
<b>Weapons used (DF=1):</b>						
Used	153	73.9	24	51.1	9.2	<0.005
Not used	54	26.1	23	48.9		
<b>No. assailants (DF=4):</b>						
One	60	29.0	18	38.3	2.44	n.s.
More than one	23	11.0	9	19.2		
No indication	124	60.0	20	42.5		
<b>Injury type (DF=4):</b>						
Slash/stab	136	65.7	23	48.9	9.6	<0.05
Physical blow	66	31.9	22	46.8		
Other	6	2.9	2	4.3		

#### **8.4.7 Fighting and assaults**

Significant differences existed between Young Offender Institutions and adult prisons with regard to whether the assaults were followed by fights between the prisoners involved. Concerning Young Offender Institutions, 21.3% (n=10) of assault reports mentioned that a fight also occurred between the prisoners involved, whereas the comparable figure from adult establishments was 10.1% (n=21) [ $\chi^2 = 10.83, df = 1, p < .001$ ].

Both the above results seem to indicate that fights were implicated in assaults more often in Young Offender Institutions than in adult prisons and this may be a reflection on the predetermined and covert nature of assaults in adult establishments. Furthermore, as the majority of assault incidents involving young offenders implicated a fight, this may indicate that assaults among young offenders are more inclined to involve two prisoners of similar 'strengths' than assaults among adult prisoners.

#### **8.4.8 Treatment given after the assaults**

No significant differences existed between adult establishments and Young Offender Institutions regarding the type and location of the treatment administered to the assault victims. Most treatment for both groups occurred at external National Health Service hospitals, 74.5% (n=35) of young offender assaults and 71.5% (n=148) of adult prisoner assaults respectively. While a smaller number were treated in situ

at the prison health centre, 25.5% (n=12) of young offenders and 28.5% (n=59) of adult prisoners.

#### **8.4.9 Timing of the assaults**

No significant differences existed between adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions regarding the timing of the assault. Both young offenders and adult prisoners were therefore equally likely to be assaulted during the morning, afternoon, or evening. Furthermore, young offenders and adult prisoners were also equally likely to be assaulted at weekends and weekdays.

#### **8.4.10 Severity of the assaults (degree of threat to life caused by injury)**

The assaults were divided into a three point scale of severity: minor (no physical injury), intermediate (physical injury with no immediate threat to life), and major (physical injury with a threat to life) [see Section 8.3]. No significant differences were evident between adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions. However, it is interesting that most of the assaults in both adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions were in the 'moderate' category (i.e. needed medical attention but with no threat to life). This result may suggest a degree of similarity in the severity of the assaults occurring in adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions.

#### **8.4.11 Perpetrator identification**

Significant differences existed between reports of assault occurring in Young Offender Institutions and adult prisons with regard to whether the perpetrator of the

assault was identified. Concerning Young Offender Institutions, 61.7% (n=29) of assault reports named a perpetrator, whereas the comparable figure from adult establishments was 39.1% (n=81) [ $\chi^2 = 7.9$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .005$ ]. This result seems to link in with other salient findings concerning Young Offender Institutions, such as the presence of more staff witnesses at assaults and the greater likelihood of a fight being preceded by, or following on from, an assault. All results point to the overt and impromptu nature of assaults among young offenders, and the covert and planned nature of assaults among adults.

#### **8.4.12 Weapons used in the assaults**

Significant differences existed between reports of assault occurring in Young Offender Institutions and adult prisons where the use of a weapon was implied. This analysis found that for young offenders 51.1% (n=24) of reports indicated the use of a weapon, whereas in adult prisons the comparative figure was 73.9% (n=153). The results of this analysis also revealed that for Young Offender Institutions 48.9% (n=23) of the reports either did not involve a weapon, while the comparative figure for adult institutions was 26.1% (n=54) [ $\chi^2 = 9.2$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ].

Results therefore suggest that adult assaults were more likely to involve a weapon. This would fit in with the notion that adult assaults are mostly planned, and therefore take place away from staff and involve more effective concealment of the weapon. Conversely, in Young Offender Institutions the assaults may be more likely to involve a weapon that comes to hand more easily. Also, among young offenders it appears that less thought is given to the consequences of their actions, as assaults were more likely to occur in front of, or in close proximity to, staff.

#### **8.4.13 Number of perpetrators involved**

No significant differences existed between adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions regarding the number of perpetrators who were specified as being involved in the assaults. The majority of reports in both adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions contained no indication as to the number of perpetrators involved (60%, n=124 and 62.5%, n=20). This result was a consequence of the fact that no perpetrators were identified in these reports therefore the numbers involved could not be ascertained. Of those reports in Young Offender Institutions specifying the number of assailants involved (n=28), two thirds (n=18) involved only one perpetrator. In adult prisons, 83 reports specified the number of assailants involved, and of those nearly three quarters (n=60) mentioned that there was only one perpetrator. While these results may suggest that assaults in both adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions infrequently involve more than one assailant, the large proportion of data missing means that it is not possible to accurately assess the numbers of assailants generally involved.

#### **8.4.14 Injury type sustained by the victims**

Significant differences existed between reports of assault occurring in Young Offender Institutions and adult prisons with regard to the types of injury sustained by the victims involved. Concerning Young Offender Institutions, 48.9% (n=23) of assault reports mentioned that the victim sustained a slash or stab wound, whereas the comparable figure from adult establishments was 65.7% (n=136) [ $\chi^2 = 9.6, df = 4, p < .05$ ]. This result suggests that assaults in adult establishments were more likely to involve the use of a knife or sharpened implement. This result is commensurate with

the previous finding that weapons are more likely to be used in adult prisons than in Young Offender Institutions.

### 8.5 Discussion

Over the 21 month period, analysis revealed that the total number of assaults by prisoners increased for both adult and Young Offender Institutions. Although, the rate of assaults was found to be higher among young offenders than it was among adults. This result is consistent with findings from previous North American (Cooley, 1993; Fuller & Orsagh, 1977) and British (Boucher, 1996; Edgar & O'Donnell, 1997) studies that have found higher levels of assault among inmates between the ages of 18 and 21. While these studies in Britain and in North America have shown differences between adults and young offenders, few have attempted to differentiate the causes and consequences of the incidents themselves.

The present study attempted to investigate some of the circumstances surrounding incidents of assault in order to assess whether they were similar or different in adult and Young Offender Institutions. Results revealed that assaults among young offenders had a tendency to be caused by some 'spontaneous' event and occur in a more overt way. Conversely, assaults among adult prisoners had a tendency to be 'planned' by inmates and occur in a covert fashion.

The rationale for making these assertions came from the following findings. The assaults involving young offenders were more likely to arise from, or result in, a fight. Therefore, this suggests that there may be a certain 'spontaneity' to the assaults when compared with those occurring in adult prisons. It also suggests that

there may be less premeditated intent and planning involved in assaults concerning young offenders. The fact that a weapon was less likely to be used and that slash/stab wounds were less likely among the young offender victims further supports this theory. What is more, the typical young offender assault was found to be more overt as the perpetrators were more likely to be identified and staff were more likely to witness the events. Whereas, the assaults among adults were less likely to have been seen by staff and less likely to have the perpetrators identified. The victims of adult assaults were more likely to have incurred a slash or stab wound, and a weapon was more likely to have been used.

Toch (1994, p349) has argued that "sub-cultures of violence" can develop within institutions. These sub-cultures depend on a range of factors, such as the mean age of the inmates, social background of the inmates, attitudes of the staff, regime types, architecture of the institutions, levels of crowding, etc. Therefore, different sub-cultures can develop in different types of establishment. The results of the current study suggest that this indeed may be the case for adult prisons and young offender establishments in Scotland.

However, as the present study was cross-sectional and retrospective in nature there were difficulties in attributing causation to the differences between the adult and young offender establishments. It was therefore only possible to surmise the reasons behind the differences found. One possible reason could be inmate behaviour, for example, young offenders are more volatile, less able to cope with external stressors (e.g. family problems outside prison), or more openly aggressive in order to appear 'stronger' in front of their peers. Another explanation could be type

of regime, for example, young offender regimes being more rigid or having less activities available to them. Therefore, young offenders may be more likely to become bored or frustrated, which can lead to aggression. Staff attitude may also be an influential factor, for example, staff being more punitive and confrontational with young offenders thereby unintentionally provoking an aggressive response. Further studies might attempt to determine to what degree each of these factors contribute to the differences found between Scottish young offender and adult penal establishments or whether other factors are important.

Another salient weakness with the current study concerns the relatively short time period over which data was gathered. Using a period of less than two years only presents a picture of assaults over that short time. This may reflect a different pattern of behaviour than if a longer period had been used and this should be borne in mind when interpreting the results. Indeed, it may be that the level of assault over the short period is abnormally high or low. However, this can only be investigated using a longer period than was available in the present study.

Also, if there happens to be instability in the institutional environment, for whatever reason, this may contribute to the differences in the nature and extent of assault found in different types of establishment. Previous North American studies have shown that instability in the social environment caused by high turnover is related to increased levels of assault (Ellis, 1984; Porporino, 1986). As the present study was retrospective in nature it was impossible to isolate all the changes that may have been occurring in adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions during the period under analysis. In order to counter this problem future studies might be advised to take a longer period into account and to accurately monitor changes

occurring during the period on a prospective basis. A longitudinal study similar to that by Quinsey & Varney (1977) who completed research into assaults in psychiatric institutions is suggested for use in penal settings in the future.

While assaults on staff were not examined in the present study, owing to the small number of incidents during the period of analysis, such examination is required in the future to see whether similar results to those in the current study would be evident.

To conclude, the current study has revealed that the nature of assault may differ in adult prisons when compared with Young Offender Institutions. The next chapter makes an attempt to investigate the extent to which individual inmate characteristics (i.e. those of perpetrators and victims) contribute to such differences.

## **CHAPTER 9**

**COMPARISON BETWEEN THE  
TYPOLOGIES OF ADULT PRISONERS  
AND YOUNG OFFENDERS  
INVOLVED IN PRISON ASSAULTS**

## **Chapter 9**

### **Comparison Between the Typologies of Adult Prisoners and Young Offenders Involved in Prison Assaults**

#### **Abstract**

*Assault incident reports sent to the Scottish Prison Service Headquarters by establishments were analysed in detail over the same 21 month period as in Chapter 9. Background data were collected from the Prisoner Records Application about all prisoners named in the incident reports. Individuals involved in the assaults were then divided into three groups (perpetrators of assault on staff, perpetrators of assault on prisoners, and victims of assault on prisoners). The groups were compared in relation to background variables that previous research has shown to be linked with prison assault, (e.g. having a previous history for assaultive behaviour). Analysis was conducted separately for adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions.*

*Results suggested that victims of prisoner assault in both Young Offender Institutions and adult prisons were likely to come from the East of Scotland. Also, victims of prisoner assault in adult prisons were likely to come from a low security category and to be on remand. Whereas, they were unlikely to be characterised as having a history of violent behaviour in prison and be incarcerated for a violent offence.*

*Young offender perpetrators of assault on staff were likely to be older, come from an area outside Glasgow and Edinburgh, and be incarcerated for a violent offence. Adult perpetrators of assault on staff were likely to have a history of violence in prison, to be incarcerated for a violent offence, to have been highlighted as a special risk for violent behaviour on entering prison, and to come from a higher security category. Interestingly, adult perpetrators of assault on staff were likely to have exhibited para-suicidal behaviour and to be placed on 'protection'.*

*Among young offenders, the perpetrators of assault on prisoners were shown to be younger and likely to come from the West of Scotland. Adult perpetrators of assault on prisoners were also liable to come from the West of Scotland. However they were also shown to be prone to fighting in prison, to be from a higher security category in prison, and to have been highlighted as a special risk for violent behaviour on inception into prison.*

*Further statistical analysis revealed that the three groups (victims of assault on prisoners, perpetrators of assault on staff and perpetrators of assault on prisoners) could be differentiated significantly for adult prisoners and young offenders, albeit with weak discriminating power. Results are discussed in relation to the determination of a typology of assault and implications for risk/need assessment in prison.*

## **9.1 Introduction**

Research on assault among psychiatric inpatients has revealed that younger individuals (Haffke & Reid, 1983; Pearson et al., 1986; Reid, Bollinger & Edwards, 1985 [a][b]), individuals with a prior history of assault behaviour or aggression (Karson & Bigelow, 1987; Kay et al., 1988; Yesavage, 1983) and individuals associated with diagnoses of schizophrenia and psychopathy (Karson & Bigelow, 1987; Pearson, Wilmot & Padi, 1986) are likely to commit assault within psychiatric institutions. However, there is disagreement among researchers concerning the links between diagnostic category of the individuals being studied and propensity to commit assault. This disagreement has arisen as such a relationship is not supported by a number of studies (Harris & Varney, 1986; James, Fineberg, Shah & Priest, 1990; Rasmussen & Levander, 1996). Lack of consistency as regards the influence of diagnostic grouping may be due to the confounding influence of type of institutional environment that operates. For example, the type of institutional environment may reduce the effect of diagnostic category such that a well supervised and organised regime where patients have little opportunity or need to show aggression may reduce the likelihood of any individual committing an assault, regardless of diagnostic category.

Studies undertaken in penal settings using official records as a data source originally focused upon identification of the correlates of general institutional discipline (Flanagan, 1983; Megargee, 1976; Nacci, Teitelbaum & Prather, 1977). However, more recent research has concentrated upon examining the correlates of assault discipline reports, with most studies having examined the level of assault/violence in relation to a measure of crowding/density over time (Ekland-

Olson, 1986; Farrington & Nuttall, 1980; Gaes, 1994; Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Ruback & Carr, 1993). Although, these studies have used large data sets in order to examine relationships between factors, the role of prisoner characteristics to determine who will become a victim and who a perpetrator of assault have been overlooked. In a review of the current research Wright (1991) acknowledged that studies concerning violence and victimization in prison were largely:

*"rich in descriptive detail" but "limited in scope"*

Wright (1991: p.1)

Bearing this in mind, Wright examined the similarities and differences between those inmates who were considered to have been violent to other inmates and those considered to have been victimised by other inmates. Particular attention was paid to the environmental factors that might reflect whether an individual becomes violent or gets victimised when in prison. Information about inmates' background and personality were taken from a combination of official records and interviews. Individuals were categorised as either a victimised or violent prisoner according to indicators within the records.

Findings revealed that the characteristics of violent and victimised inmates were distinguishable. The violent inmates tended to be younger, be involved in the criminal justice system at an earlier age, and have prior institutional experience. The victims tended to be less involved in the criminal culture before incarceration and have had less institutional experience. Wright also revealed that victims were unlikely to be charged with assault behaviour in prison but nevertheless more likely to be aggressive to other prisoners and staff. From this Wright concluded that

victims were not necessarily 'archetypal victims' of assault but may have provoked attacks on themselves by their disputatious behaviour. While this study suffered from a number of methodological problems, such as inadequate explanation as to how the groups were determined, it succeeded in utilising novel factors, such as those concerning personality and background, to assess groups of prisoners within a prison setting.

On the whole, the studies thus far alluded to have identified several types of prisoner who would be likely to commit an assault in prison:

- younger adult prisoners (Flanagan, 1983; Nacci et al., 1977; Reid et al., 1985 [a][b]; Wright, 1991);
- young offenders (Boucher, 1995; Light, 1990);
- those with a history of assaultive behaviour when institutionalised (Yesavage, 1983);
- those with an extensive history of criminal behaviour per se (Wright, 1991);
- remand prisoners (Skett, Braham & Samuel, 1996);
- those who have been incarcerated before (Wright, 1991); and
- those with high psychiatric morbidity (Pearson et al., 1986; Tardiff & Sweiillam, 1982).

No study thus far has identified factors that might characterise those prisoners who commit assault on fellow prisoners in a Scottish prison setting. What is more, studies have not examined in detail whether those prisoners who commit assaults on other prisoners and those who commit assaults on prison staff have discernible characteristics. Furthermore, studies thus far have focused on the factors

intrinsic to perpetrators of assault and neglected the characteristics of victims of assault. The studies to date have also made insufficient attempts to control for extrinsic variables that might influence the results. The present part of the study was designed to rectify some of these problems and omissions.

## 9.2 Aims

The present part of the study attempted to utilise data from prisoner records to highlight background factors that might distinguish between three specific groups. These groups were, victims of assaults on prisoners, perpetrators of assaults on prisoners and perpetrators of assaults on staff.

The analysis was conducted separately for adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions in order to see whether predictors differ according to type of regime.

## 9.3 Procedures

Assault incident records stored at SPS Headquarters were explored in depth. (see Chapter 8, Section 8.3 for a detailed description of the procedures adopted in this part of the thesis). Once perpetrators of assault on staff, perpetrators of assault on prisoners and victims of assault on prisoners were identified, cross-referencing of their names and official numbers with the computerised Prisoner Records Application (PRA) was undertaken.

The background variables that had been shown to have links with assault in the literature<sup>29</sup>, were then extricated from the PRA and compared for the three groups. However, certain variables had to be excluded at this stage as they contained an unacceptably high proportion of missing data (e.g. height, weight).

## 9.4 Results

Over the 21 month period, April 1995 to December 1996, there were 334 reported incidents of assault in Scottish prisons (254 incidents of prisoner on prisoner assault & 80 incidents of prisoner on staff assault). Included in these reports were 268 victims of prisoner on prisoner assault, 154 perpetrators of prisoner on prisoner assault, and 80 perpetrators of prisoner on staff assault<sup>30</sup>.

### 9.4.1 Types of Offence

Tables 9.1 and 9.2 compare the three groups on a range of background variables obtained from PRA. The analysis was conducted separately for young offenders and adult prisoners<sup>31</sup>. Offence types examined included those where sufficient data was available to allow between groups comparison and included drugs offences, offences of non-sexual violence against the person and offences of dishonesty (e.g. theft, reset and fraud). Results revealed significant differences between the three groups (victims of assault on prisoners, perpetrators of assault on prisoners, and perpetrators of assault on staff) regarding offences of violence.

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter 2 for a detailed outline of the descriptor variables identified in previous studies

<sup>30</sup> Due to missing or erroneous data for certain variables the sample size of groupings may vary when reporting results throughout the current chapter.

<sup>31</sup> A proportion of information was not available for remand prisoners, therefore in some of the analyses the results apply to convicted prisoners only.

### **Young offenders (Table 9.1)**

Analysis of young offender data alone revealed that perpetrators of assault on staff were more likely to have been incarcerated for a violent offence (70%, n=7), compared with perpetrators of assault on prisoners (42.9%, n=15) and victims of assault on prisoners (24.4%, n=10) [ $\chi^2 = 7.96$ , df = 2,  $p < 0.05$ ].

No significant differences were observed between the three groups regarding convictions for crimes of dishonesty.

### **Adult prisoners (Table 9.2)**

Similarly, for adult prisoner data alone, perpetrators of assault on staff were most likely to have been incarcerated for a violent offence (81.2%, n=39), compared with perpetrators of assault on prisoners (50.3%, n=36) and victims of assault on prisoners. (53.9%, n=82) [ $\chi^2 = 13.9$ , df = 4,  $p < 0.005$ ].

Therefore, in both adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions, perpetrators of assault on staff were more likely than the other two groups to have been convicted for a violent crime.

No significant differences were observed between the three groups regarding convictions for crimes of dishonesty and convictions for drug related crimes .

**Table 9.1 Differences Between Offence Types for Perpetrators of Prisoner Assault (Group 1), Perpetrators of Staff Assault (Group 2), & Victims of Prisoner Assault (Group 3) [Young Offenders Only]**

Note: Figures exclude remand prisoners for which there was no such information available.

Offences	Category	Group 1 (n = 35)		Group 2 (n = 10)		Group 3 (n = 41)		DF	$\chi^2$
		N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>Dishonesty</b>	No	18	51.4	3	33.3	22	53.7	2	1.24
	Yes	17	48.6	6	66.7	19	46.3		
<b>Violence</b>	No	20	57.1	3	30.0	31	75.6	2	7.96*
	Yes	15	42.9	7	70.0	10	24.4		

\* p < 0.05

NB: Insufficient data was available to conduct chi-square analysis on offences relating to drugs for young offenders as in more than 20% of cases the cell sizes were less than five (Everitt, 1977).

**Table 9.2 Differences Between Offence Types for Perpetrators of Prisoner Assault (Group 1), Perpetrators of Staff Assault (Group 2), & Victims of Prisoner Assault (Group 3) [Adult Prisoners Only].**

Note: Figures exclude remand prisoners for which there was no such information available.

Offences	Category	Group 1 (n = 76)		Group 2 (n = 51)		Group 3 (n = 155)		DF	$\chi^2$
		N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>Drugs</b>	No	70	95.9	43	89.6	137	90.1	2	2.42
	Yes	3	4.1	5	10.4	15	9.9		
<b>Dishonesty</b>	No	53	72.6	42	87.5	125	82.3	2	4.71
	Yes	20	27.4	6	12.5	27	17.7		
<b>Violence</b>	No	37	50.7	9	18.8	70	46.1	2	13.9*
	Yes	36	50.3	39	81.2	82	53.9		

\*p < 0.001

**KEY** (The figures are those pertaining to the prisoner at the time the assault took place)

<b>Dishonesty</b>	Most recent sentence for an offence of dishonesty
<b>Drugs</b>	Most recent sentence for a drugs related offence
<b>Violence</b>	Most recent sentence for a violent offence (excluding sexual offences)

#### **9.4.2 Background Variables**

In Tables 9.3 and 9.4 the three inmate groups (perpetrators of assault on prisoners, perpetrators of assault on staff and victims of assault by other prisoners) are compared regarding background variables pertaining to convicted and remand prisoners over the 21 month period. Results are presented for adult prisoners and young offenders separately.

##### **Young offenders (Table 9.3)**

Regarding the home location of the young offenders, more victims of assault on prisoners were from East Central Scotland (23.8%, n=15), than perpetrators of assault on prisoners (5.5%, n=3) or perpetrators of assault on staff (0%, n=0). Furthermore, more perpetrators of assault on young offenders were from West Central Scotland (67.3%, n=37), than perpetrators of assault on staff (40.0%, n=6) or victims of assault on young offenders (44.4%, n=28).

Also, more perpetrators of staff assault (73.3%, n=10) were from areas outwith the main two cities (Glasgow and Edinburgh) and their extended catchment areas than were the perpetrators of assault on young offenders (27.3%, n=15) or victims of assault on young offenders (31.7%, n=20) [ $\chi^2 = 22.13$ , df = 4,  $p < 0.005$ ].

**Table 9.3 Differences Between Background Variables for Perpetrators of Prisoner Assault (Group 1), Perpetrators of Staff Assault (Group 2), & Victims of Prisoner Assault (Group 3) [All Young Offenders].**

Note: Figures only include remand and convicted prisoners for which information was available.

Variable	Category	Group 1 (n = 55)		Group 2 (n = 15)		Group 3 (n = 63)		DF	$\chi^2$
		N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>Status</b>	Remand	15	27.3	4	26.7	22	34.9	2	0.94
	Sentenced	40	72.7	11	73.3	41	65.1		
<b>Location</b>	East	3	5.5	0	0.0	15	23.8	4	16.91*
	West	37	67.3	6	40.0	28	44.4		
	Other	15	27.3	9	60.0	20	31.7		
<b>Occupation</b> <sup>32</sup>	Unemployed	49	90.7	10	76.9	56	91.8	2	2.68
	Employed	5	9.3	3	23.1	5	8.2		
<b>Category</b>	A&B	38	69.1	12	80.0	39	61.9	2	1.99
	C&D	17	30.9	3	20.0	24	38.1		
<b>Religion</b>	RC	17	30.9	4	26.7	17	27.9	4	1.44
	Protestant	27	49.1	7	46.6	26	42.6		
	Other/None	11	20.0	4	26.7	18	29.5		
<b>SF Suicidal</b>	No	48	87.3	10	66.7	49	77.8	2	3.73
	Yes	7	12.7	5	33.3	14	22.2		
<b>SF Violence</b>	No	46	83.6	13	86.7	57	90.5	2	1.24
	Yes	9	16.4	2	13.3	6	9.5		

\* p < 0.0005

**Key** (Figures are those pertaining to the prisoner at the time the assault took place)

<b>Status</b>	Remand or sentenced
<b>Location</b>	Area prisoner normally resides outside
<b>Occupation</b>	When convicted, was the prisoner in employment?
<b>Religion</b>	Type of religion held by prisoner
<b>Type</b>	Adult or Young Offender
<b>SF Suicidal</b>	Special features for attempting suicide
<b>SF Violence</b>	Special features for violent behaviour

<sup>32</sup> Variable unsuitable to Chi-Square analysis by virtue of more than 20% of cells having a score of less than five

The results therefore suggest that victims of assault on prisoners were more likely to come from Lothian and Fife than the other two groups. While perpetrators of assault on other prisoners were more likely to live in and around Glasgow. This may partly be due to the fact that perpetrators of assault on prisoners have more peers from which to draw support as this is by far the largest regional group in Scottish prisons. It may be for the opposite reason that those young offenders from Edinburgh and the East of Scotland were more likely to be victims of assault on young offenders.

Perpetrators of assault on staff were more likely to reside in areas outside the main conurbations in Scotland (e.g. Stirlingshire, Aberdeenshire, Perthshire, etc.) and it is only possible to speculate as to the reasons behind this finding. This result may reflect a desire on behalf of those committing the assaults to appear 'strong' in front of other young offenders. Such individuals may not have the 'back-up' from young offenders from their own area and therefore are reluctant to assault other young offenders. Consequently, to obtain credibility they decide to resort to assaulting staff as staff are not able to retaliate. Alternatively, the present finding may reflect a desire on behalf of certain young offenders to be moved from mainstream circulation to escape persecution from other victimising young offenders without appearing weak by asking to 'go on protection'. Another possible thesis is that staff may take part in 'teasing' of these inmates owing to the fact that they come from remote areas (see Chapter 5, Table 6.2). In response to such teasing these individuals may therefore be more likely to retaliate against staff comments<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> The above reasons are speculative and based on supposition. Further research is necessary before such hypotheses can be validated.

Among young offenders, no differences were observed between the three groups for the following variables: status (remand or convicted), security category, special features for suicide, and special features for violence. Insufficient data was available for analysis of the variables religion and employment status prior to imprisonment.

#### **Adult prisoners (Table 9.4)**

Regarding the home location of the adult prisoners, more victims of assault on prisoners were from the East of Scotland (25.4%, n=52), than perpetrators of assault on prisoners (7.5%, n=7) [ $\chi^2 = 68.73$ , df = 4,  $p < 0.0001$ ]. This result is similar to that amongst the young offenders and may be in response to the fact that there were less prisoners from the East of Scotland in prison from which to draw support. Furthermore, a small proportion of victims of assault (23.4%, n=48) came from outside the two main urban areas, in comparison with the perpetrators of assault on staff (34.4%, n=22) and perpetrators of prisoner assault (36.6%, n=34). This is surprising given the findings from the research conducted with young offenders (see Chapter 3), which suggests that victims of bullying come from areas outside the main population centres. This may be indicative of differences between bullying among young offenders and assault among adult prisoners in terms of victim typology. Alternatively, it may only reflect the typology of victims of assault who appear in the records, those who are assaulted with no recognition by staff may be those with a typology akin to the 'archetypal victim' (i.e. loner, low self-worth, few friends, etc.).

Regarding the status of the prisoner (convicted or remand) victims of assault on prisoners had a larger proportion on remand (23.6%, n=48) than either

perpetrators of assault on prisoners (9.5%, n=8) or perpetrators of assault on staff (15.0%, n=9) [ $\chi^2 = 8.45$ , df = 2,  $p < 0.05$ ]. The fact that more victims of assault on prisoners were on remand could be due to the fact that remand prisons are likely to house a larger number of individuals who are first offenders<sup>34</sup>.

More remand prisoners than convicted prisoners would therefore have characteristics that make them vulnerable to victimization (i.e. less friends in prison, inexperienced in regard to prison 'rules' and prisoner sub-culture). Furthermore, remand populations are highly transient as their periods of incarceration tend to be of a short-term nature. Therefore, remand prisons will have a more fluid prisoner hierarchy where challenges for position are made more regularly than in prisons housing convicted prisoners with more stable hierarchies. Moreover, owing to the greater diversity of charges in remand prisons in comparison with convicted prisons (e.g. once convicted, prisoners are categorised by offence type and allocated to prisons accordingly) remand prisoners with less 'serious' offences will mix with those with more 'serious' offences. Therefore, the remand population, in comparison to the convicted population, is more heterogeneous and potentially has more within group volatility. On the basis of such an analysis it would not be surprising to find a greater proliferation of fights and 'spontaneous' assaults, in remand prisons than in convicted prisons. Hence 'status' (i.e. remand or convicted) has a considerable influence on differences between the three groupings (perpetrators of assault on staff, victims of assault on prisoners and perpetrators of assault on other prisoners).

<sup>34</sup> It is important to note that differences may be due to alternative ways of reporting in remand institutions rather than inmate behaviour.

**Table 9.4 Differences Between Background Variables for Perpetrators of Prisoner Assault (Group 1), Perpetrators of Staff Assault (Group 2), & Victims of Prisoner Assault (Group 3) [All Adults].**

Note: Figures only include remand and convicted prisoners for which information was available.

Variable	Category	Group 1 (n = 93)		Group 2 (n = 64)		Group 3 (n = 205)		DF	$\chi^2$
		N	%	N	%	N	%		
<b>Status</b>	Sentenced	76	90.5	51	85.0	155	76.4	2	8.45*
	Remand	8	9.5	9	15.0	48	23.6		
<b>Location</b>	East	7	7.5	11	17.2	52	25.4	4	68.73**
	West	52	55.9	31	48.4	105	48.8		
	Other	34	36.6	22	34.4	48	23.4		
<b>Occupation</b>	Unemployed	74	94.9	51	89.5	150	83.3	2	6.83*
	Employed	4	5.1	6	10.5	30	16.7		
<b>Category</b>	A&B	78	89.7	48	85.7	125	67.6	2	19.2**
	C&D	9	10.3	8	14.3	60	32.4		
<b>Religion</b>	Catholic	35	39.3	21	33.3	63	32.1	4	1.6
	Protestant	41	46.1	32	50.8	98	50.0		
	Other/None	13	14.6	10	15.9	35	17.9		
<b>SF Suicidal</b>	No	80	86.0	45	70.3	181	88.3	2	12.27*
	Yes	13	14.0	19	29.7	24	11.7		
<b>SF Violence</b>	No	72	77.4	46	71.9	196	95.6	2	33.34*
	Yes	21	22.6	18	28.1	9	4.4		

\* p < 0.05 \*\*<0.0001

**Key** (The figures are those pertaining to the prisoner at the time the assault took place)

<b>Status</b>	Remand or sentenced
<b>Location</b>	Area prisoner normally resides outside
<b>Occupation</b>	When convicted, was the prisoner in employment?
<b>Religion</b>	Type of religion held by prisoner
<b>Type</b>	Adult or Young Offender
<b>SF Suicidal</b>	Special features for attempting suicide
<b>SF Violence</b>	Special features for violent behaviour

Analysis of prisoners' security categories revealed that adult perpetrators of assault on staff and prisoners, 85.7% (n=48) and 89.7% (n=78) respectively, had a higher proportion of A&B category prisoners than adult victims of assault on prisoners (67.6%, n=125). Conversely, victims of assault on prisoners had higher proportion of C&D category prisoners (32.4%, n=60) than perpetrators of assault on staff or prisoners, 14.3% (n=8) and 10.3% (n=9) respectively [ $\chi^2 = 19.2$ , df = 2,  $p < 0.0001$ ]. This may reflect a lack of willingness on behalf of those with a higher category to care about the consequences of committing an assault, namely the potential punishment i.e. loss of privileges in prison, such as open conditions. Whereas, C & D category prisoners may provide easier targets as they do not wish to jeopardise their privileged position by retaliating to an assault.

Among adult prisoners, perpetrators of assault on staff were more likely to have a special feature for suicidal behaviour<sup>35</sup> (29.7%, n=19), than either victims of assault on prisoners (11.7%, n=24) or perpetrators of assault on prisoners (14.0%, n=13) [ $\chi^2 = 12.27$ , df = 2,  $p < 0.005$ ]. This result was quite surprising as it was expected that the victims would exhibit this form of actual or potential self-injurious behaviour. One of the consequences of being identified as being 'at risk' of suicidal behaviour is removal from normal circulation and relocation in the prison hospital or in a 'safe cell'.

Previous research has shown that location on suicidal supervision may indirectly operate as a protection regime (Power & Spencer, 1987). On reflection, it is the adult perpetrators of assault on staff who perhaps appear fearful of their own

position in prison and wish out of mainstream life. This was shown by the fact they were less likely to come from Glasgow or Edinburgh and therefore were more likely to have less peers from which to draw support.

In addition, victims of assault on prisoners were less likely to have a special feature for violent behaviour<sup>35</sup> (4.4%, n=9) than either perpetrators of assault on prisoners (22.6%, n=21) or perpetrators of assault on staff (28.1%, n=18) [ $\chi^2 = 33.34$ , df = 2,  $p < 0.00001$ ]. This result is less surprising as it may be expected that prisoners exhibiting violent behaviour have a history of such behaviour.

Among adult prisoners, no differences were observed between the three groups for the variables religion and occupation.

#### Young offenders (Table 9.5)

Differences were found between groups on further background variables:

With regard to age ( $F[2, 130] = 5.28, p < .01$ ), young offender perpetrators of assault on staff were found to be older (mean=19.53 years) than young offender perpetrators of assault on young offenders (mean=18.45 years). This finding may not just reflect the fact that the perpetrators of assault on staff are older but that they maybe characterised by variables linked with the fact that they are older (i.e. spent longer in prison, been in prison more times, longer criminal history, more experience of prison life, etc.).

<sup>35</sup> Special features for suicidal behaviour are recorded when a prisoner is seen to be a suicide risk by staff on reception or at some point throughout their sentence, e.g. on completion of POS [prevention of suicide] forms

<sup>36</sup> Special features for violent behaviour are recorded on reception when the police provide a special risk form highlighting an individual's violent behaviour if he has a history of violence within the prison system.

While, there was no statistically significant difference between the groups regarding time spent in prison, the trend indicates that perpetrators of staff assault have on the whole been in prison longer (mean=5.44 months) than perpetrators of prisoner assault (mean=4.64 months). Indeed, if these prisoners who assault staff are more 'jail wise' this may be a reflection of their willingness to challenge and engage in disputatious behaviour with staff in order to achieve a goal (e.g. to appear 'strong' in front of other young offenders, to be allowed to change the time of a visit at short notice or to be removed from the mainstream). However, this conclusion remains speculative and as such must be treated with caution.

Young offender perpetrators of assault on staff were found to have more general discipline reports (mean=14.87) than victims of young offender assault (mean=5.86) [ $F[2, 130] = 4.89, p < .01$ ]. This would provide further support for the view posited in the previous paragraph that such individuals are liable to be unreasonable and contumacious when dealing with staff. In being belligerent with staff it may be that these young offenders become frustrated when responses given are not to their liking and an assault may be the culminating response. The younger offenders who wish to make a reputation for themselves may be more likely to come from Glasgow and be involved in gang related activities and fights with inmates from other areas. Therefore, these younger inmates may simply be carrying out 'orders' from the more experienced 'jail-wise' offenders who remain anonymous. Again, these conclusions are of a suppositional nature and therefore caution must be exercised.

**Table 9.5: Means and Standard Deviations for Background Variables Among Perpetrators of Prisoner Assault (Group 1), Staff Assault (Group 2), & Victims of Prisoner Assault (Group 3) [Young Offenders Only].**

	Group 1 (n=55)		Group 2 (n=15)		Group 3 (n=63)		DF	F	Scheffé*
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Length**	38.64	97.51	21.46	28.16	25.60	80.10	2, 94	0.26	
Residual**	8.51	16.50	15.52	20.51	26.12	96.47	2, 56	0.18	
Served**	4.64	5.33	5.44	7.38	4.22	7.10	2, 75	0.13	
Age	18.45	1.27	19.53	1.19	19.00	1.28	2, 129	5.28***	2-1
MRs	8.24	9.03	14.87	16.52	5.86	8.93	2, 129	4.89***	2-3
MRs Assault	0.38	0.70	0.53	0.74	0.26	0.44	2, 129	1.49	
MRs Fighting	0.55	0.94	0.47	0.83	0.39	0.58	2, 129	0.60	
SF Protection	0.04	0.19	0.07	0.26	0.05	0.21	2, 129	0.13	
SF Suicide	0.13	0.34	0.33	0.49	0.23	0.42	2, 129	1.90	
SF Assault	0.16	0.37	0.13	0.35	0.10	0.30	2, 129	0.57	
PS	4.78	5.20	2.87	2.80	3.98	5.10	2, 129	0.99	
PS Assault	0.42	0.79	0.47	1.06	0.39	0.58	2, 129	0.78	

\* Post-hoc Scheffé tests distinguished between the groups separated by a hyphen as significantly different from one another at the .05 level of significance

\*\* Data available for convicted prisoners only

\*\*\* p < 0.01

### **Key**

Age	Age of prisoner
MRs	Number of discipline reports in total for prisoner
MRs Assault	Number of discipline reports for assault
MRs Fighting	Number of discipline reports for fighting
PS	Number of previous sentences in prison
PS Assault	Number of previous sentences in prison for assault
SF Protection	Number of Special Features for Protection
SF Suicide	Number of Special Features for Suicidal Behaviour
SF Assault	Number of Special Features for Assultive Behaviour
Length	Length of Sentence
Residual	Time remaining of sentence
Served	Time served of sentence

No significant group differences were found for: length of sentence; time remaining of sentence; time served of present sentence; number of discipline reports for assault; number of discipline reports for fighting; number of special features for suicidal behaviour, number of special features for violence; number of previous sentences served, and number of previous sentences served for assault.

#### **Adult prisoners (Table 9.6)**

Differences were found between groups on the following variables:

Number of general discipline reports ( $F[2, 130] = 8.35, p < .01$ ), with victims of assault on prisoners having less discipline reports (mean=6.18), than either adult perpetrators of assault on prisoners (mean=14.08) or perpetrators of assault on staff (mean = 13.98). The result for adult prisoners seems to indicate that prisoners who are generally disruptive and confrontational regarding prison rules also tend to commit assault in prison.

Number of previous discipline reports for assault ( $F[2, 130] = 11.90, p < .00001$ ), with victims of assault on prisoners having fewer (mean=0.23) than either perpetrators of assault on prisoners (mean=0.82) or perpetrators of assault on staff (mean=1.06). Again, the literature suggests that prisoners engaging in assaultive behaviour have a history of such behaviour (Gaes & McGuire, 1985).

Number of discipline reports for fighting ( $F[2, 130] = 12.99, p < .00001$ ), with perpetrators of assault on prisoners having more (mean=0.62) than either victims of assault on prisoners (mean=0.18) or perpetrators of assault on staff (mean=0.25).

This result may suggest that individuals who perpetrate assaults on prisoners are more frequently involved in confrontational behaviour with other prisoners. Such actions may be performed in order to achieve or maintain status.

Special features for protection ( $F[2, 130] = 4.35, p < .05$ ) with perpetrators of assault on staff having more (mean=0.92) than victims of assault on prisoners (mean=0.13). This provides further support for the thesis that this group of prisoners cannot survive effectively in the mainstream and their frustrations may instead be brought to bear on staff, or their assaults may be a simple ploy to exit the mainstream.

Special features for violent behaviour ( $F[2, 130] = 17.53, p < .00001$ ), with victims of assault on prisoners having less (mean=0.05) than either perpetrators of assault on prisoners (mean=0.24) or perpetrators of assault on staff (mean=0.33). This may be expected given that archetypal victims tend not to exhibit aggressive behaviour and as such become prey for others.

Previous sentences served for assault ( $F[2, 130] = 9.46, p < .0001$ ), with victims of assault on prisoners (mean=0.46) having less than either perpetrators of assault on prisoners (mean=1.03) or perpetrators of assault on staff (mean=1.15). Again, this may be expected given that those committing violence are more likely to have a history of such behaviour.

No group differences were found for the variables: length of sentence; time remaining of sentence; time served of present sentence; age; special features for suicidal behaviour; and number of previous sentences served.

**Table 9.6: Means and Standard Deviations for Background Variables Among Perpetrators of Prisoner Assault (Group 1), Staff Assault (Group 2), & Victims of Prisoner Assault (Group 3) [Adult Prisoners Only].**

	Group 1 (n=93)		Group 2 (n=64)		Group 3 (n=201)		DF	F	Scheffé
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
<b>Length*</b>	161.72	167.47	89.92	101.14	110.49	146.29	2, 237	2.92	
<b>Residual*</b>	41.48	51.46	29.90	48.00	56.12	118.72	2, 218	1.12	
<b>Served*</b>	29.58	32.14	25.07	24.59	20.61	33.05	2, 258	1.23	
<b>Age</b>	28.98	8.10	29.25	6.36	28.52	6.35	2, 355	0.33	
<b>MRs</b>	14.08	25.47	13.98	16.65	6.18	13.71	2, 352	8.35**	3-1, 3-2
<b>MRs Assault</b>	0.82	1.80	1.06	2.16	0.23	0.56	2, 353	11.90**	3-1, 3-2
<b>MRs Fighting</b>	0.62	1.07	0.25	0.62	0.18	0.44	2, 353	12.99**	1-2, 1-3
<b>SF Protection</b>	0.39	0.20	0.92	0.29	0.13	0.11	2, 355	4.35**	2-3
<b>SF Suicide</b>	0.14	0.35	0.30	0.46	0.12	0.33	2, 355	6.08**	2-1, 2-3
<b>SF Assault</b>	0.23	0.42	0.28	0.45	0.05	0.21	2, 355	17.71**	3-1, 3-2
<b>PS</b>	4.77	5.36	5.19	6.77	3.83	6.46	2, 355	1.47	
<b>PS Assault</b>	1.03	1.71	1.15	1.79	0.46	0.93	2, 352	9.46**	3-1, 3-2

NB: Post-hoc Scheffé tests distinguished between the groups separated by a hyphen as being significantly different from one another at the .05 level of significance

\* Data available for convicted prisoners only

\*\* p < 0.05

**Key:**

<b>Age</b>	Age of prisoner
<b>MRs</b>	Number of discipline reports in total for prisoner
<b>MRs Assault</b>	Number of discipline reports for assault
<b>MRs Fighting</b>	Number of discipline reports for fighting
<b>PS</b>	Number of previous sentences in prison
<b>PS Assault</b>	Number of previous sentences in prison for assault
<b>SF Protection</b>	Number of Special Features for Protection
<b>SF Suicide</b>	Number of Special Features for Suicidal Behaviour
<b>SF Assault</b>	Number of Special Features for Assaultive Behaviour
<b>Length</b>	Length of Sentence
<b>Residual</b>	Time remaining of sentence
<b>Served</b>	Time served of sentence

#### **9.4.3 Multivariate Analyses from Young Offender Institutions**

In order to establish whether any variable or combination of variables could be used to predict group membership (young offender perpetrators of assault on prisoners, young offender perpetrators of assault against staff, and young offender victims of assault on prisoners) a stepwise discriminant function analysis was performed using eight predictor variables.

Predictor variables were chosen on the basis that they correlated with the grouping variable of whether prisoners were classified as young offender perpetrators of assault on prisoners, young offender perpetrators of assault on staff, or young offender victims of assault on prisoners.

Predictor variables included: number of discipline reports (DRs) for young offenders; number of assault discipline reports (ADRs) for young offenders; number of discipline reports for fighting (FDRs) for young offenders; previous convictions for assault for young offenders; special features for violent conduct; special features for protection; special features for suicidal behaviour and age.

Once cases were excluded owing to missing and outlying data, 62 victims of young offender assault, 55 perpetrators of young offender assault, and 15 perpetrators of staff assault, remained. Two discriminant functions were significant according to chi-square analysis<sup>37</sup>. Age primarily discriminated the young offender

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<sup>37</sup> The two functions accounted for 61% and 39% respectively of the between groups variability (see Table 9.7). A maximum significance level for inclusion of variables was set at .05. Six of the variables failed to meet this significance criterion for inclusion in the prediction equation (previous discipline reports for assault, previous discipline reports for fighting,

perpetrators of assault on staff from the young offender perpetrators of assault on prisoners. Young offenders who were identified as perpetrators of assault on staff (mean=19.53); were recorded as being older than the young offender perpetrators of assault on prisoners (mean=18.45). The young offender victims of assault on prisoners fell somewhere in-between (mean=19.00).

Having a discipline record primarily discriminated between the young offender victims of prisoner assault and the young offender perpetrators of assault on staff. Young offender victims of assault on prisoners were less likely to have a discipline record (mean=5.86) than the young offender perpetrators of assault on staff, (mean=14.87). The young offender perpetrators of assault on prisoners fell in-between the two groups (mean=8.24).

Therefore, the best predictor for discriminating between the young offender perpetrators of assault on staff and the other two groups was the age of the young offender. The best predictor for distinguishing between the young offender victims of assault on prisoners and young offender perpetrators of assault on staff was the young offender having a discipline record.

Results of the classification analysis (Table 9.7) revealed that 56.9% of the prisoners involved in records of assault could be accurately classified based on the two discriminant functions, compared with 53.9% who would be correctly classified by chance alone. While the classification rate of 56.9% is statistically significant it is nevertheless not much better than chance for the entire young offender group.

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previous sentences for assault, special features for violence, special features for suicide and special features for protection) and took no further part in the analysis.

Therefore any conclusions drawn from the results must be treated with caution. However, within the three young offender sub-groups differences emerged regarding accuracy of classification. The young offender victims of assault on prisoners were more likely to be correctly classified (72.6% correct classifications), than either perpetrators of assault on prisoners (50.9% correct classifications) or the perpetrators of assault on staff (13.3% correct classifications). When errors in classification were made, perpetrators of prisoner and assaults on staff were more often miss-classified as victims of assault on young offenders.

The results suggest that by using the information from the young offender's discipline record and his age, one can predict victims of assault on prisoners. However, the accuracy of such a procedure is reduced when comparing victims of assault on prisoners with perpetrators of assault on prisoners and perpetrators of assault on staff.

#### **9.4.4 Multivariate Analysis from Adult Prisons**

In order to establish whether any variable or combination of variables could be used to predict group membership in adult prisons (perpetrators of assault on prisoners, perpetrators of assault on staff, and victims of assault on prisoners) a stepwise discriminant function analysis was performed using eight variables.

Predictor variables were chosen on the basis that they correlated with the grouping variable of whether adult prisoners were classified as perpetrators of assault on prisoners, perpetrators of assault on staff, or victims of assault on prisoners.

**Table 9.7: Percentages of Cases Correctly Classified for Young Offender Perpetrators of Prisoner Assault (Group 1), Young Offender Perpetrators of Staff Assault (Group 2), & Young Offender Victims of Prisoner Assault (Group 3) Using Discriminant Function Analysis**

Group	No. of cases	Predicted group membership		
		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<b>Group 1</b>	55	28 50.9%	2 3.6%	25 45.4%
<b>Group 2</b>	15	4 26.7%	2 13.3%	9 60.0%
<b>Group 3</b>	62	16 25.8%	1 1.6%	45 72.6%
<b>% of cases correctly classified: 56.89</b>				

Total predicted percentage = 53.89%, and for each group = 1: 47%, 2 = 42%, 3 = 11%

Predictor variables included: number of discipline reports (DRs) for adult prisoners; number of assault discipline reports (ADRs) for adult prisoners; number of discipline reports for fighting (FDRs) for adult prisoners; previous convictions for assault for adult prisoners; special features for violent conduct; special features for protection; special features for suicidal behaviour; and age.

Once data were excluded as missing or as outliers, 198 victims of assault on prisoners, 92 perpetrators of assault on prisoners, and 62 perpetrators of assault on staff remained.

Three of the variables failed to meet the significance criterion for inclusion in the prediction equation (previous discipline reports, special features for protection, and age) and took no further part in the analysis.

Table 9.8 demonstrates that two discriminant functions were significant according to chi-square analysis<sup>38</sup>. Having special features for violence and previous discipline reports for assault primarily discriminated the victims of assault on prisoners from the perpetrators of assaults on staff and prisoners. The adult prisoners who were identified as victims of assault on prisoners (mean=0.05); were recorded as being less likely to have special features for violence than both the perpetrators of assault on prisoners (mean=0.23) and the perpetrators of assault on staff (mean=0.28). They were also less likely to have a discipline record for assault behaviour (mean=0.23), than both perpetrators of assault on prisoners (mean=0.82) and perpetrators of assault on staff (mean=1.06).

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<sup>38</sup> The two functions accounted for 78% and 22% respectively of the between groups variability

Also having discipline reports for fighting primarily discriminated the perpetrators of assault on prisoners from the perpetrators of assault on staff and the victims of assault on prisoners. Perpetrators of assault on prisoners were more likely to have a discipline record for fighting (mean=0.62) than both the perpetrators of assault on staff (mean=0.25) and the victims of assault on prisoners (mean=0.18).

Therefore, the best predictors for discriminating between the victims of assault on prisoners and the other two groups were special features for violence and previous discipline reports for assault. The best predictor for distinguishing the perpetrators of assault on prisoners from both the perpetrators of assault on staff and the victims of assault on prisoners was having a discipline record for fighting.

Results of the classification analysis (Table 9.9) revealed that 62.0% of the adult prisoners involved in records of assault could be accurately classified based on the two discriminant functions, compared with 41.6% who would be correctly classified by chance alone. The victims of assault on prisoners were more likely to be correctly classified (90.5% correct classifications), than the perpetrators of assault on staff (18.5% correct classifications) and the perpetrators of assault on prisoners (33.9% correct classifications). When errors in classification were made, perpetrators of assaults on prisoners and staff were more often miss-classified as victims of assault on prisoners. The results suggest that by using the information from the adult prisoner's discipline record regarding assault and fighting, and his special features for violence, one can predict victims of assault on prisoners with considerable accuracy, when compared with perpetrators of assault on staff and perpetrators of assault on prisoners.

**Table 9.8: Percentages of Cases Correctly Classified for Adult Perpetrators of Prisoner Assault (Group 1), Adult Perpetrators of Staff Assault (Group 2), & Adult Victims of Prisoner Assault (Group 3) Using Discriminant Function Analysis**

Group	No. of cases	Predicted group membership		
		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<b>Group 1</b>	92	17 18.5%	12 13.0%	63 68.5%
<b>Group 2</b>	62	6 9.7%	21 33.9%	35 56.5%
<b>Group 3</b>	201	8 4.0%	11 5.5%	182 90.5%
<b>% of cases correctly classified: 61.97</b>				

Total predicted percentage = 41.59%, and for each group = 1: 47%, 2 = 42%, 3 = 11%

## **9.5 Discussion**

The analyses of associations between groupings and background factors for young offenders revealed that victims of assault on prisoners were more likely than the other two groups (perpetrators of assault on prisoners and staff) to come from East Central Scotland. Analysis also revealed that young offender victims were less likely to have been incarcerated for a violent offence than the other two groups. The fact that victims might be more likely to come from a particular area has been highlighted before (Biggam & Power, 1997) and may be a reflection of the gang culture operating within Young Offender Institutions in Scotland. This may be akin to the gang culture evident in other prison systems, such as North American prisons where the gang culture tends to operate along racial lines (Bartollas & Sieverdes, 1981; Bowker, 1980). As racial divisions are not evident in Scotland to anywhere near the same extent as in North America, racial groupings may instead be replaced by regional ones. There are fewer young offenders from East Central Scotland than from West Central Scotland. Therefore, young offenders from East Central Scotland may be prone to come off worse in altercations with young offenders from West Central Scotland who may have 'back-up' from others in their wing. Furthermore, the fact that victims of assault on young offenders were less likely to have been convicted of a violent crime may indicate that they are generally less aggressive than the other two groups. This was also borne out by the findings regarding bullying among young offenders in Chapter 3 of the present thesis.

Young offender perpetrators of assault on staff were shown to be more likely to come from areas outside of the two main population centres in Scotland (Glasgow & Edinburgh), were older, had an extensive discipline record, and were more likely

to have been incarcerated for a violent offence. This may suggest that these young offenders are what is colloquially known as 'jail wise', with a history of violence within establishments. However, they may not be part of established gang culture in prisons. Therefore, these prisoners may believe there is a need to assault staff in order to gain kudos in the eyes of other offenders without risking prisoner confrontation. Alternatively, staff may be assaulted in order that the prisoner perpetrator is removed from normal circulation. This being especially likely if perpetrators of assault on staff are loners, para-suicidal or subjected to bullying by other prisoners. This finding is akin to those of studies examining assault in adult prisons (Bennett, 1975; Myers & Levy, 1978). However, other studies have shown no relationship between the tendency to assault others in prison and having a violent criminal history (Porporino, 1986; Wright, 1991). Therefore, factors elicited by the present study may not generalise well to other prison populations and vice versa.

The profile for young offender perpetrators of assault on staff, described above, was found to differ from that of young offender perpetrators of assault on prisoners. The perpetrators of assault on prisoners were found to be younger than their staff assaulting counterparts, and also were more likely to originate from West Central Scotland (Glasgow/Strathclyde). This seems to indicate that among young offenders at least, the background typologies of perpetrators of assault on staff and perpetrators of assault on prisoners may differ. The following speculative theory may help to explain such differences. The younger offender from Glasgow may perceive himself to be in an environment where gang related hierarchies are already established. Therefore, in order to defend or improve his position within the hierarchy he assumes that he has to engage in conflict with rival or competing prisoners. Whereas, the older prisoner from a less commonly represented area might

exhibit aggressive behaviour toward staff in response to stress and frustration brought about from being in a position of weakness in comparison with other prisoners. On the other hand, he may wish to be relocated to avoid trouble from other prisoners.

There is a paucity of literature examining perpetrators of assault on staff compared with perpetrators of assault on prisoners. However, the current exploratory study suggests that these individuals may have different characteristics and exhibit especial types of associated behaviours. As a result, this study may be a useful springboard for further research examining such differences.

The findings of the current study suggest that adult victims of assault on prisoners are less violent in prison and have less of a history of violence than the other two groups. Interestingly, adult prisoner assault victims were less likely to go on protection than the other two groups. This may be because many adult victims of assault do not perceive themselves as 'fragile' and 'weak' in comparison with other adult prisoners. This indicates that the roles of victim and perpetrator may be more interchangeable for adults involved in assault than is the case for young offenders involved in bullying. In Young Offender Institutions, bullying may be perceived by a victim as potentially unending with no other option for coping or avoiding the perpetrator apart from seeking 'protection'. In an adult context, the victims of assault may be more likely to see 'the score' as 'settled' after any confrontation with another inmate. A victim in such a situation may therefore be less fearful of continuing or ongoing harassment.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> This argument is supported by results from qualitative interviews with young offenders (Chapter 6).

In addition, the fact that a larger proportion of adult victims of assault on prisoners were on remand than was the case in the other two groups is likely to be a spurious finding as remand prisoners do not in general mix with convicted prisoners. One would therefore expect equal proportions of perpetrators and victims to be on remand. This spurious finding may be due to the fact that remand prisoners who are victims are less willing to identify the perpetrators to the prison authorities than convicted inmates. This could be a consequence of the fact that remand prisoners are more likely to be first offenders and therefore are more frightened of the potential repercussions. However, this supposition has not been borne out by the research to date.

Analysis of adult perpetrators of assault on staff yielded characteristics that contravene the current profile of a 'prisoner who perpetrates assault' in the research. These prisoners conformed to established thought regarding the fact that they had recognised criminal histories linked with violent behaviour. Also, they were more likely to be from a higher security category (A & B) and were more likely to have a history of violent behaviour in prison. However, perpetrators of assault on staff were likely to manifest potential or actual suicidal behaviours and to have this brought to the attention of staff in the prison. Furthermore, they were likely to have been on 'protection' before appearing on an assault incident form. This is a surprising result considering that such factors are normally representative of 'victims' within penal establishments (Biggam & Power, 1997; Howard League, 1993). This anomalous finding seems to suggest that while perpetrators of assault on staff and prisoners were similar, in that they both manifested violent behaviour, the motivations behind their actions may have been completely different.

Those prisoners who had been identified as being 'at risk' of suicidal behaviour in prison may be characterised as 'poor copers' and 'loners', who are incapable of mixing with other prisoners and have difficulty solving social problems (Biggam & Power, 1997). These factors may generally be indicative of increased psychological disturbance in this group of individuals. It is the above traits that may result in these individuals not integrating well into prisoner gang culture, having few peers to act as 'back up' and being subjected to bullying by other prisoners. Despite their history of violent behaviour directed at others, perpetrators of assault on staff may also fear conflict with other prisoners. Consequently, these prisoners may direct their aggressive impulses onto staff in order to gain 'kudos' or in an attempt to get moved to another hall in the same prison or to another prison altogether. If they cannot direct their aggression against staff, or believe they have run out of other options, the violent behaviour may be instead channelled against themselves and result in self-injurious or suicidal behaviour.

Adult perpetrators of assault on prisoners tended to conform to the views expressed in the literature that they have extensive histories of criminal conduct; are violent and aggressive inside prison; have a recalcitrant nature inside prison manifested through the collation of general discipline reports and are from a higher prison security category [A or B] (Bennett, 1975; Bowker, 1980; Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Myers & Levy, 1978).

The results of the discriminant function analysis for young offenders indicated the principal discriminating variable was age. Young offender perpetrators of assaults on prisoners were more likely to be older than the young offender perpetrators of assaults on staff. This may be indicative of the need among

the younger offenders to assert themselves physically in order to gain an elevated position within the young offender hierarchy. Although previous researchers in this field have provided consistent evidence to support the fact that perpetrators of assault on prisoners tend to be young adults (Myers & Levy, 1978; Porporino, 1986, Porporino et al., 1987; Reid et al., 1985 [a][b]; Wright, 1991). This evidence has largely examined adult penal establishments and overlooked Young Offender Institutions. Therefore, the current study is unique in that it has shown there to be age differences among perpetrators and victims of assault within a population of Scottish young offenders.

The additional discriminating variable concerned an inmate's likelihood of having a discipline record. The fact that young offender perpetrators of assault on staff were likely to have a discipline record may further reflect the points made previously regarding their desire to manipulate the system in an attempt to move out of the mainstream or in an attempt to gain kudos in the eyes of the other prisoners in their hall. Alternatively, it may also reflect the lack of willingness on the part of victims of assault on prisoners to get into trouble with the prison authorities. Indeed, their apparent desire to adhere to prison rules may be one reason why they become targets for assault.

The results of the discriminant function analysis concerning assault in adult prisons can be evaluated in light of previous studies in psychiatric and prison environments. First, the present results indicate that prisoner assault victims had less discipline reports for assault and less special features for violent behaviour than either prisoner assault perpetrators or perpetrators of assault on staff. The fact that victims of prisoner assault were distinguished from perpetrators regarding previous

violent behaviour in prison is perhaps not surprising. The literature tends to infer that those individuals with a history of violent behaviour both inside and outside prisons and psychiatric institutions are those most likely to assault others while incarcerated (Bennett, 1975; Myers & Levy, 1978; Yesavage, 1983). Second, prisoner assault perpetrators were more likely to have a discipline record for fighting than both the prisoner assault victims and the perpetrators of assault on staff. This may be a reflection of the fact that these prisoners associate with gang culture more than prisoners from the other two groups, therefore involvement in fights with individuals from other gangs is likely (Bowker, 1980). It may be the case that these fights either end with assaults or are misinterpreted by staff as assaults.

The results from the present study must be treated with care owing to the following weaknesses in data collection and analysis. The first concerns the quality of data from prisoner records. The input of such data may be more a reflection of officer reporting behaviour than of actual prisoner behaviour. In previous studies officer perception of violent incidents has been shown to differ from prisoner perceptions (Beck, 1994). This may be accounted for in future research by providing more than one method of obtaining data (e.g. interviews or focus groups).

Also, as the victims and perpetrators were not all matched, owing to the high proportion of 'unknown' perpetrators. This made comparisons between individuals in the same incidents difficult. As a result, it was not possible to isolate variables pertaining to particular incidents. Furthermore, information regarding staff victims of assault by inmates was not available. Therefore, only perpetrators of assault on staff could be compared with victims and perpetrators of assault.

In addition, problems exist when attempting to identify and/or predict group membership based on the data presented. While, 57% of the young offender sample could be correctly classified into the three target groups, 43% were not classified accurately. This is not much better than would have been achieved by chance alone, 54%. However, for adult prisoners 62% were classified accurately. This rate of classification was considerably better than chance levels at 42%. Nevertheless, when used in isolation information obtained from incident reports for assault may be insufficient to bring about an accurate prediction of group membership.

However, on a more positive note when looking at specific sub-groups it is of importance to recognise that among young offender victims of prisoner assault 73% were correctly classified compared with 43% at chance alone. Among adult victims of prisoner assault, 91% were correctly classified compared with 47% by chance alone. Therefore, it is possible to say that using the variables under consideration the victims of prisoner assault were more easily distinguished from the other two groups. This finding may have ramifications for the assessment of 'risk' prior to individuals becoming victims when inside prison. Further study is required to examine whether preventative measures (e.g. assertiveness training and social skills training) might lower an individuals 'risk' of being assaulted prison.

To conclude, the results show that certain background characteristics drawn from prisoner records can discriminate between adult and young offender groups. The results may be particularly encouraging for distinguishing victims from the other groups in the future. However, background characteristics only represent a small part of the whole picture regarding assault behaviour in Scottish penal establishments. The ethos of the regime, attitudes of the officers and other factors

may be of importance in determining who become victims of prisoner assaults, who become perpetrators of prisoner assaults and who become perpetrators of staff assaults.

## **CHAPTER 10**

**MAIN FINDINGS, PRACTICAL  
IMPLICATIONS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE  
RESEARCH**

## **Chapter 10**

### **Main Findings, Practical Implications and Recommendations for Future Research**

The present thesis aimed to study the nature, extent and correlates of bullying in Young Offender Institutions. Furthermore, the thesis attempted to compare assaultive behaviour in adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions. It was thought from the outset that a range of: data collection methods, measures of attitudes and experiences, and subject groups would facilitate a more accurate assessment of such problems. Seven cross-sectional studies comprised the present thesis.

The purpose of the current chapter is to discuss the salient findings from the studies incorporating the thesis. The strengths and limitations of each study are highlighted and future work that might be pursued most productively is suggested. In addition, the different ways the studies' have advanced prison victimization research as a whole are identified. The current chapter also makes an effort to highlight practical implications of findings for the identification and management of victimization within Scottish prisons and Young Offender Institutions.

Specifically, the thesis was conducted to: (a) examine the aetiology, circumstances surrounding and consequences of bullying in Young Offender Institutions and assault in adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions, (b) fill some of the gaps left by previous research into bullying and assault in penal

environments, (c) address some of the problems inherent with previous studies of bullying and assault in penal environments, (d) examine the type and quality of information obtained from different methods of data collection, (e) investigate the extent to which it may be possible to predict who are 'perpetrators' and 'victims' of bullying and assault in penal settings using a range of variables shown previously to be related to such behaviours.

Information was gathered using an assortment of data gathering techniques including, questionnaires; standardised measures of social background, intelligence and personality; focus groups; examination of official records held in penal establishments and examination of official records held on the centralised computer database. All young offenders, adult prisoners and prison staff who took part in the studies were volunteers and no incentives were offered to encourage their participation.

The studies using questionnaires in Chapters 3 and 4 aimed to examine the nature and extent of bullying in Scottish Young Offender Institutions and set out to overcome the problems inherent with previous research. Thus, an attempt was made to sample the entire populations of young offenders and staff in Scottish Young Offender Institutions. Information was obtained from all types of establishment, including those holding remand and convicted inmates and those holding high and low security category inmates. Therefore, any conclusions derived about bullying hopefully can be considered reliable due to the representative nature of the samples involved.

Results from the questionnaires distributed to young offenders revealed that victims and bullies generally conformed to the typologies hitherto presented in the literature (Beck, 1992; Beck, 1994; Shields & Simourd, 1991; McGurk & McDougall, 1991). Moreover, levels of reported bullying were comparable with studies using analogous populations from English Young Offender Institutions (Beck, 1994). Although staff viewed bullying as more of a problem than did the young offenders both groups were remarkably similar in their perceptions of the factors identifying inmate victims and bullies. This enhances the validity of the findings and is potentially of importance if risk/needs assessment typologies are to be investigated in the future.

Although these questionnaire based studies generated representative information on the nature and extent of bullying, they did not generate information on the aetiology, circumstances surrounding and consequences of bullying. No information was provided regarding the personalities and backgrounds of inmates involved in bullying. Further research could therefore be directed towards investigating these factors using interview based data collection methods. Furthermore, future bullying research in Young Offender Institutions may benefit from deconstructing bullying into the various types (e.g. name calling, threats, taunting, etc.) and examining each behaviour separately, rather than being restricted to an overly prescriptive definition of bullying or no definition at all.

While the current thesis was designed to examine bullying among young offenders, the fact that 12% of staff respondents reported having been bullied by other staff and/or inmates may also warrant further research attention.

Relatively high response rates and relatively high levels of self-reported bullying among staff and young offenders were evident from the two questionnaire studies. This may reflect a desire on the part of inmates and staff to air their views on this issue. Indeed, the introduction of new anti-bullying initiatives in establishments at the time of the studies may have contributed to the young offenders becoming more confident in raising the issue. Therefore, instead of simply reflecting a decrease in bullying behaviours the results may reflect a successful policy of encouraging inmates to express themselves. These points should be borne in mind when attempting to assess the effectiveness of any new anti-bullying initiatives in the future.

The inmate questionnaires revealed that inmates who bullied others were more inclined to have histories of criminal behaviours than victims or other inmates. Such individuals may therefore be required to be monitored more closely by staff, particularly if they are supported by a significant peer group. It also follows that it may be pertinent for prison managers to channel their efforts into preventing the assemblage of known associates within certain halls or wings. The questionnaire based studies also provided information about the places where bullying was most likely to occur (e.g. corridors, during recreation when staff are not present, etc). It may therefore be appropriate for the Scottish Prison Service to incorporate such information into future staff training, anti-bullying initiatives and the design of new prison buildings.

It is encouraging that a significantly high proportion of inmates and staff recognised bullying among young offenders in Scottish Young Offender Institutions to be a problem worthy of attention by the authorities. Previous studies have

recognised that a crucial factor in the success of any initiative within an establishment is the level of staff awareness that a problem exists (Hall & Baker, 1973). However, the questionnaire studies incorporated within the present thesis identified a significant proportion of young offenders and staff who expressed the view that 'nothing can be done to prevent bullying'. Future prison service initiatives might focus on changing the attitudes of these inmates and staff in this regard.

Chapter 5 of the thesis aimed to examine how bullying is manifested in the official discipline records of five Young Offender Institutions in Scotland and appears to be one of the few studies from the literature that has attempted to measure 'hidden' or 'covert' levels of bullying. When the effects of the introduction of an anti-bullying initiative were examined 'covert' and 'overt' representations of bullying responded in different ways. The 'overt' levels were shown to decrease while the 'covert' levels were shown to increase. However, any change appeared ephemeral as the figures returned to levels similar to those prior to the introduction of the initiative. It is important to acknowledge that when investigating temporal changes in this way it may be difficult to attribute causation. Indeed, in the study using official records, changes may be a result of inmate behaviour. However, such changes could equally have occurred in response to staff reporting behaviour. Further research would be advised to investigate the impact of any anti-bullying initiative taking into account the behaviours of both staff and inmates.

Previous studies using official prison records have concentrated on examining the more severe forms of victimization, such as assault and its relationship with crowding in North American prisons. Chapter 5 of the present thesis was designed to address this deficiency. Information gained from the study using official

discipline reports in the current thesis was both scarce and dubious in validity owing to the inherent weaknesses in the method used and the potential ambiguity according to the rate adopted. This makes the records in their current form a weak indicator of inmate bullying behaviour. However, the records do serve to highlight that a problem exists in Scottish Young Offender Institutions and that the introduction of an anti-bullying initiative may have effected how the behaviour manifested itself. Rates may indeed be higher at certain institutions than at others, but this must be borne out by further investigation using complementary methods of data gathering. Numerous researchers in the field of prisons research have also argued for the use of a compendium of methods of data gathering. The rationale behind doing so being to gain a more accurate assessment of the nature and extent of victimization (Caroll, 1977; Connell & Farrington, 1996; Dumond, 1992).

In order to acquire accurate information regarding the possible effects of the introduction of an anti-bullying initiative a longer period than that examined in the current study should be adopted. Furthermore, if used to assess anti-bullying initiatives in the future, such indices must be monitored consistently both before and after implementation. This issue is of importance given that the three month periods examined in the present thesis may have been insufficient to accurately reflect behaviours occurring over a whole year. It may be that events other than the introduction of an anti-bullying initiative could have had a disproportionate bearing on figures for Glenochil. However, as other factors were not recorded at the time they could not be accounted for reliably in the present study.

What is more, discipline reports are only one type of official record collated within Scottish Young Offender Institutions. Other types of records currently being

kept by the Scottish Prison Service, such as self-harm, absconds, etc. may also be related to the level of bullying. These records could be monitored alongside official discipline reports in future studies to examine the extent to which they correlate. Such records could then be evaluated alongside other indices of bullying, such as inmate self-report, to see the extent to which findings are similar or different.

At the time of the present study, there were no official standardised means in place within Scottish Young Offender Institutions of recording the extent and type of bullying/victimization behaviour occurring among inmates. Therefore, consideration should be given to the introduction of a standardised measure of such behaviours across all establishments. A model for such a system is currently operating in English & Welsh Young Offender Institutions (Home Office, 1993). The implementation of a systematic and consistent method of recording bullying should be a priority given that such behaviours are notoriously difficult to assess (Bowker, 1980; Toch, 1994). Information from bullying records could prove invaluable to prison authorities wanting to identify and monitor bullies and victims on reception into establishments. It may also be useful in determining the relative success or otherwise of future anti-bullying initiatives. Consideration could be given to the use of a computerised database, such as the Scottish Prison Service Information System, to actualise this suggestion.

While acknowledging the limitations of the discipline reports as regards the reliability and validity of recording data relevant to bullying behaviours, it was apparent from the current research that such behaviour occurs at problematic levels. Therefore, there is a need for further development of anti-bullying initiatives in Scottish Young Offender Institutions. Recognition should be made of the finding

showing that such initiatives may influence 'overt' and 'covert' bullying behaviours in different ways. Steps can therefore be taken to ensure that both 'covert' and 'overt' types of bullying are managed. Staff can monitor the more 'covert' forms of bullying by using 'subtle indications that an inmate is being picked on' (O'Donnell & Edgar, 1996, p87), observing exclusion operating in the social context (e.g. at recreation) or noting the theft of personal property (e.g. phonecards).

The development of an accreditation formula, similar to that outlined in a document produced by the HM Prison Service for England & Wales (1996/7), may ensure that future structured interventions and programmes to counter bullying are comprehensively and accurately assessed. Monitoring levels of bullying may be particularly important given the results from the study examining the impact of an anti-bullying initiative at Glenochil in Chapter 5. It is therefore important that managers of Young Offender Institutions foster enthusiasm for new initiatives. Failure to ensure that motivated staff are consistent in their support for anti-bullying initiatives may be to the detriment of the success of such initiatives.

In Chapter 6 an attempt was made to understand in more depth the factors that may influence bullying behaviour among a population of adolescent young offenders using focus groups. Prior to the present thesis, no other published studies in penal settings had attempted to use focus groups to obtain qualitative data about bullying. The main areas of enquiry in Chapter 6 centred on the quality and novelty of information that might be obtained using focus groups and how results might compare with those obtained using other methods, such as questionnaires and official records. The results showed that focus groups supplied information that was both comparable and supplementary to that generated by questionnaires and official

records. Indeed, the major benefit gained from adopting focus groups was the generation of additional information. Further to the generation of original information, the focus groups facilitated for the researcher an insight into the dynamics of the group and young offender sub-culture in general. This finding may be of particular importance given that the dynamics and individual appraisals of a situation may determine who fits where in bullying hierarchies (Farrington, 1993). This issue has not been considered in previous studies of bullying in British Young Offender Institutions (Adler, 1994; Beck, 1992; Beck, 1994).

However, the usefulness of focus groups in this thesis was limited by several factors. First, the sensitive nature of the topic under discussion meant that the young offenders were reluctant to acknowledge their involvement in bullying. Second, as adolescent males are generally eager to appear 'macho' in front of one another (Ball-Rokeach, 1973) this may have biased the responses in favour of those who do the bullying. Therefore, in relation to bullying, the focus groups only provide information that may be contaminated by social desirability, social norms and group dynamics.

A topic frequently talked about by focus group participants was bullying by staff on inmates. As limited research has been carried out on this topic the information received here provides a useful grounding for further work concerning this problem. However, focus groups may be more productive if used for similar research in the future if they incorporate homogeneous types of young offender within establishments, such as self-reported victims or self-acknowledged bullies. In such groups the participants may be more willing to talk about their experiences without the complicated dynamics present in groups of a more heterogeneous

nature. However, using focus groups as the sole data gathering method, particularly on a population of young offenders, may be unwise owing to the weaknesses discussed earlier. Researchers should therefore be aware of these problems when considering using focus groups to examine such a sensitive topic as bullying.

The fact that young offenders alluded to the public humiliation of other inmates at night in the focus groups has implications for future intervention. It was evident from the results that active attempts need to be made on the part of prison authorities to stamp out and quell verbally threatening behaviour. While accepting that it may be difficult to stop young offenders making verbal threats against other inmates, owing to the lack of manpower at night, it should be given priority for the following reasons. If verbal threats are allowed to continue under the auspices of staff at night, or indeed at any time, it may perpetuate a belief throughout an establishment that such behaviour is condoned, or even accepted. As staff numbers are low at night, efforts could be made on the part of night shift staff to share their knowledge about individuals who verbally abuse other inmates in order that day staff can challenge these inmates about their behaviours.

In contrast to the qualitative study in Chapter 6, Chapter 7 utilised standardised measures to assess inmates social background, personality and intelligence characteristics. The study revealed that victims were shown to have lower self-esteem than bullies or other inmates. The question as to whether low self-esteem and other similar personality traits actually lead to inmates being bullied or whether low self-esteem is a consequence of the victimization is a topic of ongoing debate. To determine causation, future studies might employ a

longitudinal design in an effort to measure differences in self-esteem prior to, during and post incarceration.

Inmate personality factors, and in particular self-esteem, may have important implications for staff in penal settings. Studies have revealed that inmates labelled as 'victims' by staff can be placed in positions where they question their self-worth, which could lead to further erosion of their self-esteem (McGuire & Preistly, 1989). Therefore, it may be possible for prison staff to ensure that a victim's self-esteem is not further deprecated during incarceration. This could be achieved partly through increased numbers of personal officers trained in skills to deal with bullying and partly through victims attending appropriate cognitive skills programmes or social skills training. A recent research article examining ways to deal with aggressive inmates in Scottish prisons (Munro, 1995) also advocates the development and application of such programmes.

As well as measuring inmates' self-esteem the study in Chapter 7 also assessed elements of inmates' social backgrounds. The elements under consideration included criminal history, substance abuse history, family background, etc. In accordance with previous research conducted in penal settings (Shields & Simourd, 1991) the study found that bullies have more extensive criminal histories than other inmates. This result is consistent with a large body of literature from North America (Goetting & Howsen, 1986; Megargee & Bohn, 1979; Porporino, 1986) on intractable (i.e. those inmates appearing in the discipline reports), rather than bullying, inmates<sup>40</sup>. However, this result from the current study differs from previous research in two major ways. First, it was found in a

British rather than an American prison and second, it was derived from a standardised measure of inmates' risks/needs rather than ad hoc self-report or official prison records.

Although bullying proneness was difficult to identify in the current thesis, it was possible to conclude that certain types of inmate may present a greater risk than others. Devising methods to manage these individuals may perhaps be the most promising way of preventing bullying among young offenders in the long-term. In particular, reductions in bullying might be achieved if appropriate strategies are adopted in Young Offender Institutions to manage inmate sub-groups who are considered at risk of bullying others or at risk of being bullied themselves. However, while the present study was able to discriminate groups at better than 'chance' levels, the difference was not impressive. Consequently, there is a strong likelihood that staff could be misinformed if they were to base future interventions on this information alone.

If prison staff are to make informed decisions about an inmate's propensity to be a victim when incarcerated then further empirical research on bullying risk/needs assessment is required. Future research should take into account a wider range of factors to achieve more accurate typological differentiation. This is because, at best, inmate personality and background characteristics only represent a small part of the overall picture regarding bullying behaviour. The ethos of the institution's regime, the attitudes of the prison officers and many other factors may also be of importance in determining whether or not individuals are involved in such behaviour (Rice, 1989).

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<sup>40</sup> It should be noted that the intractable inmate and the bullying inmate need not necessarily

Concern regarding bullying in Scottish Young Offender Institutions is matched by concern regarding assaults in both adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions (HMCIP report, 1996). Hence Chapter 8 was a preliminary attempt to investigate if and how assaults might differ between the two types of establishment (adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions) in Scotland. Results revealed that the typologies of assaults in adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions differed considerably. This has been shown to be the case in previous studies in North America (Bowker, 1980) and England & Wales (Boucher, 1996). However, this is the first time such a study has been conducted in a Scottish penal context.

Results showed that in Young Offender Institutions, as opposed to adult prisons, the assaults were spontaneous in nature and resulted in injuries of a less severe nature. Whereas the assaults in adult prisons resulted in more severe injuries to the victims and involved planned intent on the part of the perpetrators.

These results may be occurring in response to the fact that young offenders have less well developed strategies for coping effectively with perceived threats than adult prisoners (Biggam & Power, 1997; Cairns et al., 1991). An adult prisoner would therefore recognise that he need not react immediately to a perceived threat or insults as better alternatives are available (Bowker, 1980; Toch, 1977). For instance, an adult prisoner may decide to exact revenge on another inmate at a time when prison staff are less likely to be observing, as he is less likely to be caught. This would lead to more assaults being 'planned' in adult prisons than is the case in Young Offender Institutions. Furthermore, an adult inmate may decide to gain

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be the same type of individual.

revenge on another inmate in a place where weapons are readily available, as by doing so it is possible to gain an advantage over the potential victim. This would lead to more severe injuries being sustained by victims in adult prisons than is the case in Young Offender Institutions victims.

However, it should be recognised that the reasons for the differences between the nature and typology of assaults in adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions supplied above remain conjecture until further studies can investigate inmate motivation in more detail.

The study detailed in Chapter 9 followed on from Chapter 8 by using both bivariate and multi-variate analyses to ascertain the variables of importance in distinguishing the groups involved in assaults in prisons. This procedure has been adopted by other studies in North America examining the same problem but as yet has not been used to any great extent in British studies. The exceptions being studies by O'Donnell & Edgar (1996) and O'Mahoney (1997), who used discriminant function analysis to examine groups involved in assaults in English prisons and an Irish prison respectively.

The results derived from the study outlined in Chapter 9 can be evaluated in light of previous studies in psychiatric and prison environments. The literature tends to infer that individuals with a history of violent behaviour both inside and outside prisons and psychiatric institutions are those most likely to assault others while incarcerated (Bennet, 1975; Myers & Levy, 1978; Yesavage, 1983). The results from Chapter 9 with adult prisoners produced similar findings.

In Chapter 9, when examining specific sub-groups (victims of inmate assault, perpetrators of inmate assault and perpetrators of assault on staff) analysis was able to discriminate the victims of inmate assault from the other groups to a highly acceptable degree. This was the case for both young offenders and adult prisoners. Previous studies have shown that the type of institutional regime, the type of service-wide policy, the types of individual and the amount of contact staff have with the residents are all influential in determining assault levels within any institution (Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Quinsey & Varney, 1977).

Although previous researchers in this field have provided consistent evidence to support the fact that perpetrators of assault on prisoners tend to be young adults (Myers & Levy, 1978; Porporino, 1986, Porporino et al., 1987; Reid et al., 1985 [a][b]; Wright, 1991) this research has largely examined differences within adult penal establishments and psychiatric institutions, and overlooked differences within Young Offender Institutions.

Chapter 9 of the current thesis identified that younger offenders who wish to make a 'reputation' for themselves in prison may be more likely to come from Glasgow and be involved in 'gang related' activities and fights with inmates from 'other areas'. This finding is contrary to the recent literature on urban gangs in the United States, which emphasises the prominent role of religion or race in determining gang membership (Sigler, 1995). In Scotland the strong link between regions and gang membership has been highlighted before (Patrick, 1973). Patrick described the sub-culture of Glasgow gangs and identified a "*willingness to resort to violence in a variety of situations*" and also noted that "*violence can become part of the lifestyle, the theme of solving difficult problems....*" (Patrick, 1973, p196). Within this sub-

culture the main objects valued by the adolescent gangs were territory and status, when it was the locality of where the boy lived that determined the gang he belonged to. While the current thesis has not examined the affiliation to regional groupings in detail, it did identify urban gang culture, and more specifically the degree to which it has taken hold within Scottish Prisons and Young Offender Institutions, as worthy of further in-depth research.

Caution must be exercised, however, in the interpretation of the results from Chapters 8 and 9 owing to the following weaknesses in data collection and analysis. The first concerns the quality of data from prisoner records. The input of such data may be more a reflection of officer reporting behaviour than of actual prisoner behaviour. In previous studies officer perceptions of violent incidents have been shown to differ from prisoner perceptions (Beck, 1994). Furthermore, the records examined often showed inconsistencies in terms of the quality and type of information recorded and this may have led to spurious differences between adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions and between assaults on staff and assaults on prisoners. While, a central data source is extremely useful for research purposes, the rigour with which data is recorded needs to be enhanced before results can be viewed as entirely valid and reliable. This may be accounted for in future research by providing more than one data source, hence the inclusion of qualitative and quantitative information from questionnaire and interviews in the present thesis.

In addition, problems exist when attempting to identify and/or predict group membership on the basis of the data presented. While, the percentage of correct predictions were greater than 'chance' levels in the studies, the margin of improvement over chance was small and as such further replication of the studies is

required with alternative measures of personality, intelligence and social background. In this way it will be possible to see whether the ability to predict group membership improves using additional measures. Therefore, there is a demand for sound longitudinal research incorporating a range of social, physical, and demographic factors to reveal whether the behaviour of perpetrators and victims changes over time and following multiple periods of incarceration. In so doing the predictive utility of pre and post-imprisonment characteristics of the individual prisoner in relation to different types and length of prison experience might assist researchers in achieving a practical and more appropriate typological differentiation.

The lack of strength of the prediction of assault groupings in the study in Chapter 9 may be a result of the lack of specificity of the definition of 'serious assault'. This applies not only to the SPS definition of 'serious assault' but is also an apparent problem in many of the other studies cited in Chapters 1 and 2. Other variables have been shown by studies in the past to be strongly related to assault rates, for example, staff work experience (Kratcoski, 1988). Within the context of the present research such variables, and others, may have been useful to record in order to obtain a more fulsome prediction of assault severity. Future research may therefore benefit from the recording of such variables.

The findings from the study in Chapter 9 of the present thesis may have ramifications for the assessment of an individual's 'risk' in terms of becoming either a victim or a perpetrator of assault. Results show that certain background characteristics drawn from prisoner records can discriminate between the three groups in both adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions. The results may be particularly encouraging for developing risk/need assessment measures pertinent to

violent behaviour within penal establishments. Indeed, with clinical predictions still inaccurate (Monahan, 1981) such actuarial prediction may improve predictive utility. However, the factors may not generalise from prison to prison, country to country, or indeed across time periods, and therefore research is required to keep abreast of factors that are situational, environmental, and time specific. The official records in Chapters 8 and 9 were therefore of limited use for research purposes. Indeed, the rigour with which data is recorded needs to be enhanced before results can be viewed as entirely valid and reliable. If staff can be encouraged to record information in a consistent and accurate manner such information will be invaluable for research purposes in the future.

Although the utility of prison records is limited, the results from Chapters 8 & 9 suggest that adult prisons may benefit from intervening with regard to planned and covert assaultive acts that tend to result in severe injury to the victim and often suggest the use of drugs. This is in line with the findings of Johnson & Farren (1996) and Shewan, Gemmel & Davies (1994) who found that adult prisoners in English prisons were commonly subjected to various forms of intimidation associated with drugs. Whereas, staff in Young Offender Institutions may be best advised to focus on spontaneous and overt assaultive acts, which tend to result in fights and less severe injury to the victim. Young Offender Institutions could therefore encourage young offenders with a history of spontaneous aggression to take part in programmes designed to manage their anger when faced with confrontational situations (Novaco, 1995; Tennenbaum, 1978). While, adult prisons could concentrate on ensuring those involved in subversive activities, such as the buying and selling of drugs, are monitored (Toch, 1989).

The remainder of the present chapter is dedicated to summarising how the thesis has contributed to the research area as a whole and identifying possible policy ramifications and implications for the Scottish Prison Service.

Prior to the current study, few studies had examined behaviours related to prisoner victimization in detail, therefore knowledge about the way inmates might conceptualise the problem was sparse. The current thesis was devised to address the above concern and has succeeded in enhancing the current research on prison victimization (see Chapters 1 & 2) in several important respects. An advantage of the present thesis is that it examined both severe and less severe types of victimization in detail within Scottish penal institutions. Previous literature has been restricted to examining severe violence among older prisoners in North American penal institutions. The current thesis was also one of the first studies to use two distinct methodological paradigms (i.e. quantitative and qualitative). In doing so, information has been provided on the concepts and issues surrounding victimisation as well as the incidence and frequency of variables and the relationships between them.

Previous studies tended to use only two methods of data collection, principally official records and questionnaires, to obtain information. The information gathered within the present thesis was representative of the populations studied as efforts were made to sample as many of the staff and inmates using alternative methods of data collection. Furthermore, all young offender establishments in Scotland were investigated within the thesis and information was obtained from all adult establishments in the form of records. In addition, the

different types of bullying (i.e. covert and overt) and the limitations of measuring victimization using official records were highlighted.

The thesis has added to the research in that it compared in detail the different types of establishment (i.e. adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions) concerning the causes, circumstances surrounding and consequences of victimization and found considerable differences in the ways assaults were manifested in the official records. Prior to the current thesis the literature was primarily descriptive, focusing on the incidence and nature of the problem in one or two penal establishments.

On the whole the current thesis has addressed some of the weaknesses and omissions in the current research on bullying/victimisation. However, the current thesis has identified that future research is still required on the psychological characteristics of bullies and victims, including the examination of helplessness, depression, stress and anxiety. Other possible areas highlighted by the present thesis as requiring further theoretical research include: problem solving, social skills and coping among groups of bullies, victims and those who are neither. In-depth qualitative study of the dynamics of bullying and gang membership in Scottish prisons were also highlighted as future research avenues. Moreover, accurate and detailed statistical analysis of the risk factors of being victimised or a victimiser when in prison is necessary given the problems with the data found by the present thesis (see Chapter 7).

There are several policy ramifications that logically follow from the findings of the present thesis. First, more consideration should be given to how offenders are

classified and assigned to different institutions and to areas within those institutions. Indeed, initiatives designed to target bullies and victims might be improved if they focus on those perceived to be 'at risk' on reception into prison. In this way it may be possible to target resources at those with greatest need (Cairns et al., 1991; Coyle, 1991).

Second, the question of low self-esteem as a cause or consequence of bullying discussed in Chapter 7 highlights the policy of segregating those inmates who present the greatest risk of being victimized. While this has clear advantages for the victim in terms of safety it also serves to label the individual as a victim and limits his opportunity to return to the mainstream population in the future. O'Donnell & Edgar (1996) actually criticise the use of segregation as a means to combat the problem of victimization. The main problem being that the distinction between victim and perpetrator is not always clear and that victims in one environment can become victimizers in another. This problem is also apparent in the identification and sanction of the perpetrators. While perpetrators can be removed from the mainstream it should be acknowledged that their behaviour is not likely to change without appropriate intervention. Therefore, perpetrators could be offered 'time-out' during which time their behaviour and attitudes are challenged using group or individual therapy. The aim being to eventually return the perpetrator to the mainstream rather than simply removing the problem elsewhere. Methods of dealing with bullying problems in-situ, whereby support and counselling are afforded to the victims within their environment and if anything it is the perpetrators who are withdrawn may send out a more appropriate message to staff and inmates that such behaviour is not acceptable (Loucks, 1997).

Third, as the results from this thesis demonstrate, it may be pertinent for prison managers to encourage staff to monitor the progress of anti-bullying initiatives using different indices in order that all the facets of behaviour (e.g. overt and covert) are assessed.

In order that progress can be made towards addressing victimization in Scottish penal establishments it may be necessary for the Scottish Prison Service to co-ordinate some of the findings within a national strategy. Indeed, within the literature on bullying in schools (see Chapter 1) there is an abundance of work calling for a 'whole school response' to bullying, whereby the culture of the school is gradually changed through education and policy. The principal tenet of such an approach being to "*challenge the negative perceptions of both pupils and staff*" (Tattum & Herdman, 1995, p45). Such challenges are designed to alter the beliefs that "everybody gets bullied" and "it's a part of growing up". The lead for altering such beliefs has come from education authorities through clearly defined policy and initiatives (Tattum & Herdman, 1995).

It may be fallacy to hope for prisons where victimization does not occur, however, school studies have already shown that through developing a policy whereby all involved are working against the tacit acceptance of the problem it is possible to make positive change to the lives of those who suffer regular bullying or assault (Byrne, 1987; Tattum & Herdman, 1995). Therefore, akin to the schools, a "whole service" approach is required within the Scottish Prison Service to address the problems of bullying and assault.

Results from the present thesis using self-report, discipline reports and group discussion may provide a useful starting point, or baseline measure, of the nature and extent of both bullying and assault in Scottish penal institutions. Further research can utilise this information to aid monitoring and evaluation of bullying type behaviours and thus aid policy decisions in the future. Indeed, for any anti-victimization strategy the focus on awareness and monitoring is a vital one, and this begins at 'induction' (Beck, 1992). At this point vulnerable and predatory inmates can be identified and an assessment of risk undertaken. The inmates can also be sent a clear message of the policy of the institution in relation to victimization and how that behaviour will be dealt with.

Although national policies are required in order to create effective channels of information in respect to victimization and to co-ordinate efforts to address the problem, the importance of tailoring specific strategies for different types of establishment cannot be overemphasised<sup>41</sup>. While an individual establishment's strategy must be tailored to the requirements of different populations and environments, it is possible to identify core elements of a good anti-victimization strategy: a) awareness among staff and inmates of the facets of a good anti-victimization strategy as it might operate in their own establishments, b) a need for staff to monitor the behaviours of inmates regularly and to do so using a range of indicators of victimization behaviours, c) identification of possible perpetrators and victims to be undertaken at the earliest available opportunity and such information to be communicated between staff, d) methods of intervention should be targeted at those individuals who are predicted perpetrators and victims and also those who are

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<sup>41</sup> The importance of specific strategies has been given particular impetus by the findings of the current thesis regarding the different manifestations of assault in adult and young offender establishments (see Chapters 8 & 9).

recognised perpetrators and victims, and e) regular and ongoing assessment of the efficacy of anti-bullying initiatives is essential and should be conducted at both a national and local level.

The above list is by no means exhaustive and elements may be added or detracted in the future as further research is conducted. Given the current paucity of empirical research on victimization in penal establishments in Britain, and particularly in Scotland, the current thesis has provided a strong framework for further detailed research on bullying and assault in the future.

In accordance with Section A7.4 of the *Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Stirling*, a candidate must state the status of work published, in press, or submitted for publication that is included in the thesis.

In accordance with this regulation there follows a list of published chapters and those in press.

**Published:**

**Chapter 3:**

Bullying Among Scottish Young Offenders: Inmates' Self-Reported Attitudes and Behaviour. Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 1997, Vol. 7, 209-218.

**Chapter 4:**

Comparison Between the Attitudes and Behaviour of Staff and Inmates Regarding Bullying in Scottish Young Offender Institutions. Prison Service Journal, March, 1998, No. 116, 22-25.

**Chapter 5:**

Problems Using Official Records from Young Offender Institutions as Indices of Bullying. International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 1997, 41 (2), 121-138.

**In Press:**

**Chapter 6:**

Self-Esteem and Family Background Factors in the Differentiation of Bullies, Victims, and Other Inmates in Scottish Young Offender Institutions. Criminal Justice and Behaviour.

**Submitted:**

**Chapter 8:**

Causes, Circumstances Surrounding and Consequences of Assaults in Prison: Adult Prisons Compared With Young Offender Institutions. International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology.

**Chapter 9:**

Comparison Between the Typologies of Adult Prisoners and Young Offenders Involved in Assaults. Journal of Interpersonal Violence.

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**APPENDIX I**

**COVERING LETTERS & CONSENT  
FORMS**

## **University of Stirling 'Bullying in Prison' Research Project: Polmont YOI Survey**

### **Introduction**

The University of Stirling is doing a survey is to find out prisoners' experiences and thoughts about the bullying problem in Polmont, such as, what form it takes, how much of a problem it is, and what can be done to prevent it.

We are interested in your views and your experiences.

Your involvement is voluntary and you do not have to take part.

BUT

Your views are important. If a large number of inmates fill in the questionnaire it will allow me to get a better idea about what prisoners are really thinking and experiencing.

The questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete.

We intend to ensure that all inmates at Scottish Young Offender Institutions receive a copy of the survey. There are no names attached, and we have no interest in identifying individuals. Only a researcher will see the completed questionnaire, and all information will be used in such a way that individuals cannot be identified.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. We hope you will now help us further by filling in the questionnaire.

Graham Dyson  
Kevin Power  
University of Stirling

## **STAFF SURVEY: BULLYING IN YOIs**

**The University of Stirling is doing research into bullying in Scottish Prisons. This survey is part of that research.**

The reason for the survey is to find out your experiences and thoughts about the bullying problem among prisoners within your institution and within Scottish YOIs in general. We are interested to know how bullying happens, how much goes on, and what you think could be done to prevent it.

We are also interested to know your views and your experiences.

Your involvement is voluntary and you do not have to take part

### **BUT**

Your views are important. If a large number of officers fill in the questionnaire it will allow us to get a better idea about what officers are really thinking and experiencing.

The questionnaire will take about 20 minutes to complete and has seven sections.

**NOTE: There are no names attached to the form and we will not identify individuals. Only research staff will see the completed questionnaire and all information will be used in such a way that prisoners cannot be identified.**

Thank you for taking the time to read this. We hope you will now help us further by filling in the questionnaire. Once you have completed the form could you place it in the box provided.

**Graham Dyson  
Kevin Power  
University of Stirling**

## **INMATE INTERVIEW: BULLYING IN YOIs**

You have been asked to take part in a study being carried out by Stirling University looking at bullying in Scottish prisons. We are interested in finding out about any thoughts or experiences you may have had. We also aim to assess peoples' ability to solve certain problems that they may come across in real life and how past experiences may influence their present behaviour.

During the course of the interview you will be asked a series of questions which will take approximately an hour of your time.

**All information you give will remain confidential** and you will not be identified in any publication about the research. As a result there will be no feedback on individual results to yourself or to any member of the prison staff.

If you do decide to participate in this study, you can withdraw at any time and for any reason. If you decide to withdraw, your questionnaire and interview will be destroyed and will not be included in the final analysis of the data from this study.

Participation or non-participation in the study will have no effect upon your current position in the prison.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope you will now help us further by taking part in the study.

**Graham Dyson  
Kevin Power  
University of Stirling**

**I HAVE READ THE INFORMATION AND CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY**

**Signed.....**

**Date .....**

## **APPENDIX II**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS ON BULLYING**

## **Section 1 : BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In this section we would like to ask you a few questions about yourself. Please answer all questions either by ticking the appropriate box, or filling in the space.

1 Your age \_\_\_\_ (years)

2 Location : Allocation       'C' Wing        
                                  North Wing       South Wing        
                                  East Wing       West Wing     

3 Current Offence(s) :

4 How long is your present sentence ?

\_\_\_\_ (years) \_\_\_\_ (months)

HMP / WLT

5 Roughly, how much longer do you have to serve of this sentence?

\_\_\_\_ (years) \_\_\_\_ (months)

6 Roughly, how many times have you been in prison before ?

7 If you were to add up all the previous sentences you have served,  
about how long have you spent in prison in total ?

\_\_\_\_ yrs \_\_\_\_ mths

8 Please indicate which of the following YO institutions you have served time in :

Longriggend            Glenochil        
Polmont            Dumfries        
Castle Huntly     

## Section 2 : YOUR VIEWS ON BULLYING BETWEEN INMATES AT POLMONT

In this section we would like to ask you generally about the bullying problem between inmates at Polmont. Please answer all questions by ticking or filling in the appropriate box.

9 Do you think there is more or less bullying between inmates at Polmont than at other YOIs ?

Much more  No difference  Much less  Don't know

10 Which 3 of the following do you think are the most common types of bullying between inmates at Polmont ? (Please tick only 3)

Taxing            Threats       Name calling   
Physical attack (punching, kicking)        
Untrue rumours       Destroying others' property   
Forcing an inmate to do something (eg, bring in drugs)   
Other            (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

11 Which 3 of the following do you think are the most common places for bullying between inmates to occur at Polmont ?  
**(Please tick only 3)**

- |                    |                          |                |                          |        |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|
| Reception area     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hall/dormitory | <input type="checkbox"/> |        |                          |
| PE Class           | <input type="checkbox"/> |                |                          |        |                          |
| Workshop/workparty | <input type="checkbox"/> | Association    | <input type="checkbox"/> |        |                          |
| Visit area         | <input type="checkbox"/> |                |                          |        |                          |
| Showers            | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dining area    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Stairs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other              | <input type="checkbox"/> | (please state) |                          |        |                          |

12 Which 3 of the following do you think most makes an inmate more likely to be bullied at Polmont ?**(Please tick only 3)**

- |                    |                          |                     |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Small build        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Younger             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Odd looking        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                     |                          |
| Unusual behaviour  | <input type="checkbox"/> | First offender      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Area they are from | <input type="checkbox"/> | Race/colour         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Religion           | <input type="checkbox"/> |                     |                          |
| Type of offence    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Knowing few inmates | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other  (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

- 13 Which 3 of the following do you think most makes an inmate more likely to bully at Polmont ? (**Please tick only 3**)

Type of offence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Race/colour	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowing a lot of inmates	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Large build	<input type="checkbox"/>	Older	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aggressive behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Area they are from	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having a long criminal record	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> (please state)	

### **Section 3 : EXPERIENCE OF SEEING BULLYING BETWEEN INMATES AT POLMONT**

In this section I would like to ask you whether you have seen bullying between inmates at Polmont and what you have seen. Please answer all questions by ticking or filling in the appropriate box.

- 14 Have you seen bullying between inmates going on at Polmont ?

Yes  No  (If No, go to question 20)

- 15 If Yes, how often ?

Every day  Most days   
1-2 days per week

Once a week  Less than once a week

- 16 If Yes, how many bullies were usually involved ?

One  Two  More than two

- 17 If Yes, what type of bullying was it ? (you can tick more than 1 box)

Untrue rumours  Destroying others' property   
Taxing  Threats  Name calling   
Forcing an inmate to do something (eg bring in drugs)   
Physical attack (punching, kicking)   
Other  (please state)

18 If Yes, where did it occur ? (you can tick more than 1 box)

Showers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dining Area	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stairs	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Reception area	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hall/dormitory	<input type="checkbox"/>
PE class	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Workshop / workparty	<input type="checkbox"/>	Canteen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Association	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Visit area	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please state)	

19 If Yes, did you do anything about it?

Yes

↓

If Yes, what did you do ?

---

---

No

↓

If No, why not ?

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**Section 4 : EXPERIENCE OF BEING BULLIED BY OTHER INMATES AT POLMONT**

In this section we would like to find out whether or not you have been bullied by other inmates at Polmont, and your experience as a victim. Please answer all questions by ticking or filling in the appropriate box.

20 Have you ever been bullied by other inmates during this sentence at Polmont ?

Yes            No     (Go to question 30)  
↓

21 If Yes, how often ?

Every day       Most days   
1-2 Days per week

Once a week       Less than once a week

22 If Yes, how many inmates were usually involved ?

One            Two            More than two

23 If Yes, what type of bullying was it ? (you can tick more than 1 box)

Taxing       Threats

Forcing an inmate to do something (eg bring in drugs)

Destroying others property

Physical attack (punching, kicking)

Untrue rumours       Name calling

Other       (please state)

24 If Yes, where did it occur ? (You can tick more than 1 box)

- Reception area  Dining Area   
Stairs  Association   
Workshop / workparty  Visit area   
  
Canteen  Hall/dormitory   
PE class   
  
Showers  Other  (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

25 Do you think the bully / bullies who bullied you are also bullying others ?

Yes  No  Don't know

↓

( If No or Don't know, go to question 27)

26 If Yes, how many others ?

1-5  6-10  More than 10

27 What do you think makes you into a victim at Polmont ?

28 Did you do anything to attempt to stop the bullying ?

Yes   
↓

If Yes, what did you do?

No   
↓

If No, why not ?

29 If Yes, did this action solve the problem ?

Yes  No  (If No, go to question 30)

↓  
If Yes, how did it help?

#### **Section 6: EXPERIENCE OF BEING BULLIED BY STAFF AT POLMONT**

In this section we would like to find out if you have been bullied by staff at Polmont and your experiences as a victim. Please answer all questions by ticking or filling in the appropriate box.

30. Have you ever been bullied by a member of staff during your recent sentence at Polmont ?

Yes  No  (If No, go to question 35)

↓  
31. If Yes, how often ?

Every day  Most days   
1-2 Days per week

Once a week  Less than once a week

32 If Yes, how many staff were usually involved?

One  Two  More than two

33 If Yes, what type of bullying was is ? (you can tick more than one box )

Threats  Physical attack (punching, kicking)

Helping inmates bully other inmates

Untrue rumours  Name calling

Other  (please state)

34 If Yes, where did it occur ? (You can tick more than 1 box)

- Workshop / workparty  Association   
Canteen
- Reception area  Hall/dormitory   
PE class
- Showers  Dining Area   
Visit area
- Stairs  Other  (please state)

**Section 7 : EXPERIENCE AS A BULLY AT POLMONT**

In this section, we would like to find out if you have bullied other inmates at Polmont, and your experiences as a bully.

35 Have you ever bullied other inmates during this sentence at Polmont ?

Yes  No  (If No, go to question 40)

↓  
36 If Yes, how often ?

Every day  Most days   
1-2 Days per week

Once a week  Less than once a week

37 If Yes, how many other inmates were usually with you when you bullied ?

One other inmate  Two other inmates or more

No other inmates (alone)

38 If Yes, what type of bullying was it? (you can tick more than 1 box)

Name calling  Physical attack (punching, kicking)

Untrue rumours  Destroying others property

Taxing  Threats

Forcing an inmate to do something (eg bring in drugs)

Other  Please state \_\_\_\_\_

39 If Yes how many individuals have you bullied while at Polmont?

1-5  6-10  More than 10

#### CHANGES

In addition we would like to find out what changes could be made to prevent further incidents of bullying. Please include as many suggestions as you wish.

If you were the Director of Justice in Scotland what changes would you implement prevent bullying?

38 If Yes, what type of bullying was it? (you can tick more than 1 box)

Name calling  Physical attack (punching, kicking)

Untrue rumours  Destroying others property

Taxing  Threats

Forcing an inmate to do something (eg bring in drugs)

Other  (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

39 If Yes, how many individuals have you bullied while at Polmont?

1-5  6-10  More than 10

### Section 8 : CHANGES

In this section we would like to find out what changes you would like to see made to prevent bullying at Polmont. Please make as many suggestions as you wish.

40 If you were the Governor in charge of Polmont, what changes would you make to prevent bullying?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you again for filling in this questionnaire. Once  
you have completed the form place it in the envelope  
provided and seal it.

## **APPENDIX III**

### **QUESTIONNNAIRE FOR STAFF ON BULLYING**

## **SECTION 1: YOUR VIEWS ON BULLYING BETWEEN PRISONERS AT THIS INSTITUTION**

In this section we would like to ask you generally about the bullying problem **between prisoners** at this institution. Please answer all questions by ticking or filling in the appropriate box/es.

1 Do you think bullying between prisoners is a problem at Scottish YOIs ?

Yes  No

2 Do you think bullying is a problem at this institution ?

Yes  No

3 Do you think there is more or less bullying at your institution than other YOIs ?

More  Less  No Difference

4 Which of the following do you think are the most common types of bullying between prisoners at your institution ? (You may tick more than one box)

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Destroying others property.....                                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Threats.....   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Untrue rumours.....  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Taxing.....  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Name calling.....  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Physical attack (punching, kicking).....                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Forcing an prisoner to do something (e.g. bring in drugs)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Making an prisoner hold something for another prisoner.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other  (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

5 Which of the following do you think are the most common places for bullying between prisoners to occur at your institution ? (You may tick more than one box)

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Visit area.....             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Corridors.....              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Showers.....                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dining area.....            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Stairs.....                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Segregation block.....      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Canteen.....                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reception area.....         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hall/dormitory.....         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PE class.....               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PE shower area.....         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Workshop/work party.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Association/recreation..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other  (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6 Which of the following do you think are most likely to determine whether an prisoner gets bullied at this institution ? (You may tick more than one box)

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Area they are from.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Race/colour.....           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Religion.....              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Type of offence.....       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Knowing few prisoners..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Small build.....           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Younger.....               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Odd looking.....           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unusual behaviour.....     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| First offender.....        | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other  (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7 Which of the following do you think are most likely to determine whether an prisoner bullies other prisoners at this institution ? (You may tick more than one box)

- |                                    |                          |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Older.....                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Aggressive behaviour.....          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Area they are from.....            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Having a long criminal record..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Type of offence.....               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Knowing a lot of prisoners.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Religion.....                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Large build.....                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other  (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 2: EXPERIENCE OF SEEING BULLYING BETWEEN PRISONERS AT YOUR INSTITUTION

In this section we would like to ask you whether you have seen bullying between prisoners at this institution and what you have seen. Please answer all questions by ticking or filling in the appropriate box/es.

8 Have you seen bullying between prisoners going on at your institution ?

Yes  No  (If No go to Q.14)

9 If yes, how often ?

Every day  Most days  1-2 days per week

Less than once a week

10 If yes, how many bullies were usually involved ?

One  Two  More than two

11 If yes , what type of bullying was it ? (you may tick more than one box)

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Name calling.....  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Forcing an prisoner to do something (e.g. bring in drugs)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Physical attack.....   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Untrue rumours.....  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Destroying others' property.....                               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Taxing.....  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Threats.....   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Making an prisoner hold something for another prisoner.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other  (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

12 If yes, where did it happen ? (you may tick more than one box)

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Visit area.....             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Corridors.....              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Showers.....                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dining area.....            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Stairs.....                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Segregation block.....      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Canteen.....                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reception area.....         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hall/dormitory.....         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PE class.....               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PE shower area.....         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Workshop/work party.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Association/recreation..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other  (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

13 If yes, did you do anything about it ?

Yes   
↓

If yes, what did you do ?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

No   
↓

If no, why not ?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **SECTION 3: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF BULLYING**

**14 Have you ever been bullied by another member of staff ?**

Yes     

No       (If No go to q.15)



If yes, please explain incident (if more than one then explain the most recent)

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---

**15 Have you ever bullied another member of staff ?**

Yes     

No       (If No go to q. 16)



If yes, please explain the incident (if more than one then explain the most recent)

---

---

---

**16 Have you ever been bullied by an prisoner or group of prisoners ?**

Yes     



No       (If No go to q.17)

If yes, please explain the incident (if more than one then explain the most recent)

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---

---

---

---

## **SECTION 4 : CHANGES**

In this section we would like to find out what changes **YOU** would like to see made to prevent bullying at this institution. Please make as many suggestions as you wish.

17 What changes would you make to combat bullying at this institution if given the opportunity.

---

---

---

---

---

18 What would you like to see happening to the victims of bullying in order to stop them getting bullied (if mentioned in q.17 then go to q. 19) ?

---

---

---

---

19 What would you like to see happening to the bullies in order to stop them bullying (if mentioned in q.17 then go to q.20) ?

---

---

---

---

## **SECTION 5: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**Please note that the following section will NOT be used to identify individuals in any way and will only be seen by researchers.**

In this section we would like to ask you a few questions about yourself.  
Please answer all questions either by ticking the appropriate box, or filling in the space.

20 How old are you ? \_\_\_\_\_ (years)

21 Sex : Male  Female

22 What grade officer are you (if not an officer then state your role in the prison)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

23 Location (hall/wing) (If less than 2 weeks spent at most recent location then give previous location) :  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

24 How long have you been in the SPS \_\_\_\_\_ (years) \_\_\_\_\_ (months)

25 How long have you spent working at this YOI ? \_\_\_\_\_ (years) \_\_\_\_\_ (months)

26 Please indicate which prisons you have worked in before ? (please tick as appropriate)

Longriggend  Dumfries  Glenochil  Polmont

Castle Huntly  Other YOI's elsewhere  Adult institution/s

## **SECTION 6: EXPERIENCES OF BEING IN PRISON**

In this section we would like to ask you some general questions about your experiences in THIS prison. Please answer all questions by ticking the appropriate box

27 How well would you say that you get on with the following groups ?

	<b>Very Badly</b>	<b>Quite Badly</b>	<b>O.K.</b>	<b>Quite Well</b>	<b>Very Well</b>	<b>Not Relevant</b>
Young offenders in your hall	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Young offenders in the prison generally	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Young offenders who bully	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Young offenders who are victims of bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Officers in your hall	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Officers in the prison generally	<input type="checkbox"/>					

28 How would you describe the atmosphere in each of the following:-

	Very Relaxed	Fairly Relaxed	Neither Relaxed Nor Tense	Fairly Tense	Very Tense
The institution generally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The reception	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your hall/wing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshop or work party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PE Classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visit area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP IN FILLING OUT THIS  
QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE COULD YOU NOW PLACE THE  
COMPLETED FORM IN THE BOX PROVIDED

## **APPENDIX IV**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS**

**(For standardised measures used see  
Appendices VI to IX)**

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF INTERVIEW: \_\_\_\_\_

1 AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ (years)

2 LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

3 HEIGHT (APPROX.): \_\_\_\_\_

4 WEIGHT (APPROX.): \_\_\_\_\_

5 CURRENT  
OFFENCE/S: \_\_\_\_\_

6 AREA (TOWN/CITY) YOU ARE FROM:  
\_\_\_\_\_

7 LENGTH OF  
SENTENCE: \_\_\_\_\_ (years) \_\_\_\_\_ (months)

8 ROUGHLY, HOW MUCH LONGER DO YOU HAVE TO SERVE OF THIS  
SENTENCE ?:  
\_\_\_\_\_ (years) \_\_\_\_\_ (months)

9 ROUGHLY, HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU BEEN IN PRISON BEFORE  
?  
\_\_\_\_\_

10 IF YOU WERE TO ADD UP ALL THE PREVIOUS SENTENCES YOU  
HAVE SERVED, ABOUT HOW LONG HAVE YOU SPENT IN PRISON IN  
TOTAL ?  
\_\_\_\_\_ (years) \_\_\_\_\_ (months)

## **APPENDIX V**

### **GUIDELINES FOR TOPICS COVERED IN FOCUS GROUPS**

**NB: Prompts for each topic are given in the points 1.1 to 2.4 below.**

**TOPIC 1:- BULLYING BETWEEN PRISONERS**

- 1.1 Is bullying among prisoners a problem in this institution/in institutions in general ?
- 1.2 What type of prisoner becomes a victim of bullying ?
- 1.3 What type of prisoner becomes a bully ?
- 1.4 What types of bullying are in evidence at the institution/in YOIs in general ?
- 1.5 Where is the bullying being carried out ?

**TOPIC 2:- COMBATING BULLYING AMONG PRISONERS**

- 1.6 What do you think could be done by the prison management to stop bullying occurring at your institution/in general?
- 1.7 If you were being bullied what would **you** do to stop it happening again ?
- 1.8 What can the staff do to help stop bullying occurring ?
- 1.9 What measures are in place at the moment to combat bullying in this prison?

**TOPIC 3:- BULLYING BY STAFF ON PRISONERS**

- 1.9 Is bullying by staff on prisoners a problem at this institution/in general ?
- 2.0 What types of bullying by staff on prisoners is in evidence at this institution/in general ?
- 2.1 How do you think bullying by staff on prisoners can be stopped/reduced ?

**TOPIC 4:- THE PRISON ENVIRONMENT IN GENERAL AND ITS  
RELATIONSHIP TO THE BULLYING PROBLEM**

- 2.2 Do you feel safe in all areas within this prison ?
- 2.3 How would you describe prisoners' relationship with the staff at your institution ?
- 2.4 What is it about this prison that helps the bullies carry out the bullying without getting caught?

## **APPENDIX VI**

**PRISONER LOCUS OF CONTROL  
SCALE**  
**(FROM PUGH, 1992)**

**This is a short procedure designed to determine your attitude to life in prison.  
Please could you tick either 'agree' or 'disagree' for all of the statements below.**

	AGREE	DISAGREE
1 Rehabilitation is possible for me this prison	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Getting released has little to do with my behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 A change in security or custody level depends mostly on the things I do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 There is a lot I can do to avoid getting in fights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 It seems no matter how hard I try the system won't give an inch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 The prison has total control over me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 The way prison staff treat me depends on how I act	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 I am almost certain that I can progress through the system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 There is really no way I can relate to officers most of the time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 I can take pretty good care of myself in prison	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 I can use almost any program to my advantage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 Prison officers determine what I get or don't get	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13 Getting remission has more to do with luck than anything else	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14 I can't get prison officials to notice when I do good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	AGREE	DISAGREE
15 The administration should listen to the ideas of inmates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 I can't really influence what the other inmates think of me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17 I can get along with almost anyone in prison	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18 Violence in prison cannot be avoided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19 Even in prison I can get the respect that I deserve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 It makes little sense to plan in prison as you never know what will happen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 Most of what happens to me in prison is out of my hands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22 Even in jail I can choose whether to act on how I feel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23 I can still remain involved with my family and friends while in prison	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24 Only the administration can solve the problems that exist in prison	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## **APPENDIX VII**

### **10 ITEM SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY ROSENBERG (1965)**

**This is a short questionnaire to measure thoughts about yourself. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement by ticking the appropriate box.**

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
On the whole I am satisfied with myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At times I think that I am no good at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel I have a number of good qualities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am able to do things as well as most people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel I do not have much to be proud of	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I certainly feel useless at times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel I'm a person of worth, at least equal with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I wish I could have more respect for myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I take a positive attitude toward myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## **APPENDIX VIII**

### **THE YOUNG OFFENDER LEVEL OF SERVICE INVENTORY (YO-LSI) \* (SHIELDS & SIMOURD, 1991)**

\* Modified in order to be relevant to a Scottish young offender population.

In this section I would like to ask you a series of questions about yourself and your past experiences in general. I would stress that this information will remain confidential and will only be seen by myself. In no way will it be used to identify you.

1 Were you ever arrested under the age of 16 ?

Yes   
↓

No

age (years) = \_\_\_\_\_

2 Have you any charges pending - having been laid against you while you were on probation, remand, or while incarcerated ?

Yes

No

3 Have you ever been charged or convicted of :-

- |                                  |                          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Shoplifting/stealing             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vandalism/mischief               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Breaking & Entering              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Assault & Violence               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Armed Robbery                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Breach of probation/open custody | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sexual Offence/misconduct        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Theft                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Possession of stolen goods       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Forgery/fraud                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4 Do you smoke tobacco (cigarettes) ?

Yes

No

5 Have you ever used illicit drugs (cannabis, heroin, cocaine, tems, jellies, LSD) ?

Yes

No

6 Did you use Cannabis regularly outside prison?

Yes

No

7 Do you, or did you, use any other drugs regularly ?

Yes   
↓

No

What type/s ? \_\_\_\_\_

8 Have you ever been charged or convicted of possession or trafficking drugs ?

Yes

No

9 How much alcohol would you say you consumed per week when outside (roughly) ? (1/2 pint = 1 unit)

---

10 When you were outside did the use of alcohol and other drugs interfere with how you normally functioned on a day to day basis ?

Yes   
↓

No

11 Did you commit any crimes in order to satisfy your craving for drugs/alcohol ?

---

Yes   
↓

No

12 When you committed the crime/s were you under the influence of alcohol or drugs ?

Yes   
↓

No

13 When you were not at school did you spend time hanging around on the street ?

---

Yes   
↓

No

14 Think back to your last year in school, did you ever truant ?

Yes        
↓

No     

15 Were you ever put back a year at school ?

Yes        
↓

No     

16 How would you describe your school achievement ?

Poor        
↓

Good     

17 Think back to your last year in school. How was your behaviour in class ?

Poor        
↓

Good     

18 Were you ever expelled or suspended from school ?

Yes        
↓

No     

19 How would you describe your relationships with people your age at school in your last year ?

Poor        
↓

Good     

20 How would you describe your relationships with your teachers at school in your last year ?

Poor        
↓

Good

21 Outside prison have you ever been employed ?

Yes   
↓

No

---

22 Have you ever been fired ?

Yes   
↓

No

---

23 Do you receive help from the social services (social work dept.) outside ?

Yes   
↓

No

---

24 Do you receive any help from the benefit office outside (unemployment benefit, housing benefit)

Yes   
↓

No

---

25 Would you describe your family background as stable or unstable ?

Stable   
↓

Unstable

---

26 How would you describe your relations with your mother (step) ?

Poor   
↓

Good

---

27 How would you describe your relations with your father (step) ?

Poor   
↓

Good

28 How would you describe your relations with your brothers and sisters, if any ?

Poor        
↓

Good     

29 How would you describe the supervision and care you received from your parents when you were young ?

Poor        
↓

Good     

30 Have you ever been in a group home (List D school) ?

Yes        
↓

No     

31 When outside, how much time would you say that you spent at home ?

A lot        
↓

A little     

32 Does your mother, father or any of your brothers and sisters have a criminal record ?

es        
↓

No     

33 Does your mother, father or any of your brothers and sisters have a history of mental illness ?

Yes        
↓

No     

34 Have your mother, father or any of your brothers and sisters abused drugs or alcohol ?

Yes        
↓

No

35 Have your mother, father or any of your brothers and sisters been physically abused ?

Yes  No   
↓

---

36 Have you ever been abused sexually ?

Yes  No   
↓

---

37 Are any of your brothers and sisters in a group home (List D home) ?

Yes  No   
↓

---

38 When you were outside prison would you say that on the whole you could have made better use of your time ?

Yes  No   
↓

---

39 When outside do you have any personal interests (hobbies, clubs,) ?

Yes  No   
↓

---

40 Would you say that you are a loner outside ?

Yes  No   
↓

---

41 When you are outside prison have you got acquaintances (people you don't know so well) with a criminal record ?

Yes  No   
↓

---

42 When you are outside prison, have you got friends with a criminal record ?

Yes        
↓

No     

43 When you are outside prison have you got acquaintances (people you don't know so well) without a criminal record ?

Yes        
↓

No     

44 When you are outside prison have you got friends without a criminal record ?

Yes        
↓

No     

45 Within the people that you know outside prison are there a number outside your age group ?

Yes        
↓

No     

46 Would you say that you have a strong allegiance to (strong ties with) those friends with a criminal record you have on the outside ?

Yes        
↓

No     

47 Have you had any sexual experience ?

Yes        
↓

No       (GO TO Q.50)

48 Would you describe yourself as promiscuous (do you sleep around) ?

Yes        
↓

No

49 Do you make sure you use a contraceptive or does it not bother you one way or the other ?

Doesn't bother me

Always use it



50 Have you had any children ?

Yes   
↓

No

51 Outside prison do you live at home with your parents/guardian ?

Yes   
↓

No

52 Outside prison do you live in what would be termed low quality housing ?

Yes   
↓

No

53 How many times would you say you have changed your address (outside) in the last year ?

54 Outside prison would you say that you lived in an area where there is a lot of crime ?

Yes   
↓

No

55 Have you ever seen a psychologist or psychiatrist for treatment ?

Yes   
↓

No

56 Have you ever attempted suicide ?

Yes   
↓

No

57 On the whole, what is your attitude toward crime and delinquency on the outside ?

Unacceptable   
↓

Acceptable

58 On the whole, what is your attitude toward this sentence ?

Want to get my head down out of trouble

I don't care if I cause, or get into, trouble   
↓

59 Have you got any tattoos ?

Yes   
↓

No

60 What are your plans for the future, if you have any ?

61 Do you intend to continue crime when you get out ?

Yes   
↓

No

62 Has it been recommended by anyone that you have any further psychological treatment in the future ?

Yes   
↓

No

Suspected intellectual disorder:-

Yes  No

Belligerent during interview:-

Yes  No

## **APPENDIX IX**

**NATIONAL ADULT READING TEST  
(NART)  
(NELSON & WILLISON, 1991)**

The NART word card is given to the subject. The tester has the NART answer sheet on which he records the errors made. The following instructions are given:

*"I want you to read slowly down this list of words and the number of errors made is recorded. After each word please wait until I say 'next' before reading the next word. I must warn you that there are many words that you probably won't recognise, in fact most people don't know them, so just have a guess at these, o.k.? Go ahead."*

## NART WORD CARD:

CHORD	SUPERFLUOUS
ACHE	SIMILE
DEPOT	BANAL
AISLE	QUADRUPED
BOUQUET	CELLIST
PSALM	FACADE
CAPON	ZEALOT
DENY	DRACHM
NAUSEA	AEON
DEBT	PLACEBO
COURTEOUS	ABSTEMIOUS
RAREFY	DETENTE
EQUIVOCAL	IDYLL
NAIVE	PUERPERAL
CATACOMB	AVER
GAOLED	GAUCHE
THYME	TOPIARY
HEIR	LEVIATHAN
RADIX	BEATIFY
ASSIGNATE	PRELATE
HIATUS	SIDEREAL
SUBTLE	DEMESNE
PROCREATE	SYNCOPE
GIST	LABILE
GOUGE	CAMPANILE