

How Female Correctional Officers
Influence the Security of an Institution

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Abstract

This thesis examines the influence that female correctional officers have on the security of an institution. Using data from the 2005 *Census of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities*, different tests were run to test my three hypotheses. First, I hypothesized that lower security-level institutions will employ a higher percent of female correctional officers. This hypothesis was not confirmed based on the data and tests run. My second hypothesis was institutions employing a greater percent of female correctional officers will have a higher disciplinary reporting rate than institutions employing a lower percent of female correctional officers. This hypothesis was supported by the data from the census and the tests run. Third, I hypothesized that the greater the percent of female correctional officers working in an institution, the more violence will be present in that facility. This hypothesis was not supported by the data. This research is important because more and more women are becoming correctional officers with many leading the way for new policies and training protocols. It is time research is done in this area of study to discern the influence, good and bad, females correctional officers have on the institutions in which they work and improve upon morale and training for all correctional officers in an institution.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Tables.....	vi
Chapter I Introduction.....	1
Chapter II Literature Review.....	5
Negative Impact.....	6
Neutral Impact.....	11
Positive Impact.....	13
Chapter III Hypotheses.....	17
Chapter IV Methodology.....	19
Chapter V Results.....	22
Chapter VI Discussion.....	25
References.....	28

List of Tables

Table 1. Comparison Among Studies Conducted in Literature Review

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Table 3. Pearson's Correlations

Table 4. Regression Table

Chapter I

Introduction

Women began working outside of the home at an increasing rate during World War II when they had to fill the jobs left vacant by the men away at war (Morton, 1991). When the war was over and the men returned home, many women were displaced back into the role of homemaker and wife. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, laws were passed to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex or race, among other privileged classes, when hiring. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, more specifically Title VII of that act, prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, sex, or national origin. The Equal Opportunity Act of 1972 extended this protection to most public and private employers. Additionally, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act was passed in 1978 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, and requires employers who provide employment benefits to treat pregnancy like any other short-term disability.

In addition to laws being passed leveling the playing field for women and minorities, there were also many court cases decided during this time. Prior to the 1960s, the courts took a hands off approach to prison affairs. After this time, the courts took on many issues within institutions. The first case on female employment in correctional facilities was decided in 1974—*Reynolds v. Wise*. A Texas district court ruled that women could be excluded from working in men's prison dorms to accommodate inmate privacy concerns. This was not discrimination against the female correctional officers working there. A few years later in 1982, *Hardin v. Stynchcomb* required the use of privacy screens to allow increased career opportunities for women in men's prison dorms. Additional cases have been decided regarding inmates' expectation of privacy limiting it further as a condition of imprisonment, thereby increasing

opportunities for women to work in male institutions. *Hudson v. Palmer*, a Supreme Court case decided in 1984, dealt with cell searches and decided inmates had no expectation of privacy in their cells.

Dothard v. Rawlinson (1977) was the first court case involving women as correctional officers to reach the Supreme Court. It involved the Alabama Department of Corrections' exclusion of women as correctional officers in male institutions that involved inmate contact. The Supreme Court agreed with the Alabama Department of Corrections but made it clear it applied only to the specific situation in Alabama. The situation was very violent and uproarious and the Court decided women should not work in that very brutal environment.

Next was *Percy v. Allen*, decided in 1982 in the Maine Supreme Court. The Court ruled that selective job assignments had to be at least considered before women could be excluded from most positions in a male institution. *Grummets v. Rushen* (9th Cir., 1985), arguably one of the leading cases dealing with female correctional officers, decided women could work in a high security prison in California (San Quentin) even though there were possibilities of the observation of nude inmates in the shower or bathroom areas. The court further ruled female correctional officers could perform pat searches of male inmates. *Timm v. Gunter* (8th Cir., 1990) also approved casual observation and pat searches of male inmates by female officers.

As evidenced in the court cases, women often face many challenging obstacles unique to the male dominated environment of the correctional facility. In addition to those mentioned, there are difficulties with male co-workers: they think females are not as strong and/or competent as their male counterparts, male correctional officers feel it is acceptable to make sexual jokes or blatantly harass females sexually, and there is an unwillingness to help new female correctional

officers learn and do the job right (Crouch, 1985). Not fitting into a male dominated environment has the potential to decrease advancement opportunities for these women.

Research on how the presence of female correctional officers affects the security of those male dominated institutions may have important implications. If the female correctional officers improve security, then policies, procedures, and training should incorporate the unique attitudes and behaviors that females bring to the correctional setting. On the other hand, if females have a negative influence, then policy, procedures and training programs should be implemented to change the female correctional officers' ways of doing their jobs or perhaps females should be removed from male facilities altogether.

This paper will examine how women influence security in the correctional facilities where they work using data from the 2005 *Census of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities*. I frame my hypotheses in terms of the negative perception of female correctional officers that shaped the literature on the topic in its early years:

1. The lower the security level of the institution, the greater the percent of female correctional officers employed.
2. The greater the percent of female correctional officers employed, the higher the level of disciplinary reporting.
3. The greater the percent of female correctional officers employed, the greater the level of prison violence.

I chose to frame these hypotheses in a way negative toward woman. As we shall see in the next chapter, the academic literature has moved from a negative stance toward a positive one about the role of women in correctional settings. However, in practice many of the negative perceptions remain. I have worked in a men's maximum security institution in Ohio as both a

correctional officer and a correctional lieutenant. I have observed firsthand how women are treated as well as how women interact with the inmates and their male peers in this environment. I wanted to look at empirical data and disprove the widely dispersed negative connotations.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits employment discrimination based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, and national origin (www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/titlevii.cfm). Eight years later, Congress amended Title VII by passing the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 (EEO) to improve the effectiveness of the Civil Rights Act. Federal, state and local governments were no longer exempt from Title VII and were held to the strict hiring practices previously reserved for their private sector peers. This revision had a huge impact on corrections. Women now had a right to work in male institutions and could not be discriminated against in the hiring process. Prior to EEO, women could be discriminated against in the hiring process with no repercussions.

Research into how women were received and treated as well as how well they worked in male institutions didn't begin until the 1980s after implementation of the EEO requirements. I personally identified sixteen studies on the topic between 1981 and 2012 summarized in Table 1. Many studies explored several dimensions of women's activities, but each study as a whole could be classified as negative, neutral, or positive based on the impact that female correctional officers were believed to have in male facilities. Negative-impact studies assumed that correctional officers must be strong physically and mentally. Following well known cultural stereotypes, the requisite characteristics of a good correctional officer were regarded as traits of men. In these studies, women were naturally incapable of doing the job unless they adopted the characteristics of men, a hard task contrary to the female disposition. At the other extreme, positive-impact studies regarded women as bringing a unique set of attitudes and skills that improved the climate of the facility, e.g., women might be more inclined to resolve disputes

using conflict-resolution techniques than the threat of force. In the middle, neutral-impact studies either saw no effect (positive or negative) from the presence of female officers or regarded any negative impact as balanced by positive factors.

This approach to the literature yields a clear pattern with only minor exceptions. The influx of women correctional officers in male institutions was initially greeted with much resistance from male staff and inmates, but the perception of women improved over time. This change in perception is described at length in the section to follow. The literature review is broken down into three sections: the negative-impact literature (predominately from the early to mid-1980s), the neutral-impact literature (appearing in the late 1980s and continuing through the early 2000s), and the positive-impact literature (current research).

Negative Impact

The first five studies on the topic of women in male correctional facilities were published between 1981 and 1985 and took a negative view of the presence of females. Bowersox (1981) applied the concept of social responsibility to how male correctional officers felt the need to protect their female counterparts. Social responsibility was defined as “altruistic behavior in terms of a cultural norm prescribing that an individual should help those who are dependent upon him” (p. 493). Existing role stereotypes at this time depicted women as incompetent, dependent, and docile. Bowersox found that perceived female vulnerability originated in the social responsibility norm. Male correctional officers perceived male prisons as male “territory” and felt responsible if a woman were assaulted in their “territory” (p. 498). Male correctional officers preserved the sex-role stereotypes of vulnerability through a desire to shield women from assault. Female correctional officers, by contrast, found this stereotype unsubstantiated.

Owens (1985) examined changes in traditional guard culture as a result of EEO. It was found veteran employees felt new officers lacked basic skills and did not meet minimum performance guidelines. Female guards were seen as weak and not belonging in a male institution. Male guards felt they were compromising their own security if a female guard got into trouble because they felt compelled to act to save the female guard as part of a chivalrous code. Officers had to be tough to work in a male prison and ladies should never act this way. Veteran male officers also felt that females would “promote on their backs,” i.e., sleep their way to the top (p.157).

Jurik (1985) examined the barriers confronting women employed as correctional officers in men’s prisons. Jurik interviewed female and male correctional officers to first identify the organizational problems that had thwarted correctional reform and reinforced staff suspicion about the competence of female officers and second to describe the barriers to advancement opportunities for female correctional officers. She found many male officers believed women were much more likely to get hurt or form emotional attachments to the male inmates. They also believed women were more “mentally weak” (p.379) than their male counterparts and would crack under the mental strain of institutional conditions. There were no incentives for cooperation or communication to or about female officers to management or anyone else. Women lacked pre-employment experience and generally had no military experience; they relied on on-the-job training from male officers, most of whom did not want them there. Women were mainly put in control centers and non-contact posts which severely limited their advancement opportunities. Jurik went on to state the sexist attitudes of individuals had more to do with the response to the working conditions rather than the result of prior gender-role socialization outside the work environment.

In a second article, Jurik (1988) expanded on previous work to identify three important components of work performance. First was establishing authority with inmates. Second was developing some degree of rapport with one's co-workers. Finally, female employees needed to develop a sponsorial relationship with one or more supervisors. Women reported working mail and property rooms, opening doors, and clerical work much more frequently than their male co-workers, which made it extremely difficult to achieve satisfactory work performance. Jurik went on to develop five strategies women could utilize to avoid role traps and stereotypes and improve work performance. Foremost, the women had to project a professional image by observing the rules and regulations. Second, women had to demonstrate unique skills such as investigatory skills and de-escalation techniques. After that, they needed to emphasize a team approach: Females should not pick fights with inmates but be quick to jump in and have officers' backs (especially male officers) who are involved in altercations with inmates. Fourth, Jurik recommended using humor as a distancing device—if a male officer is making sexual innuendos or crude jokes female officers are expected to just laugh it off and not let them see it is bothersome. Finally, sponsorship should be used to enhance positive visibility. Women should gain favor and be noticed by a trusted supervisor; though this is a fine line and could be mistakenly perceived by others as trying to sleep her way to the top.

Crouch's 1985 review of the literature consolidated the negative perceptions of the early research by examining three issues related to female correctional officers: (1) the demands of security work, (2) difficulties in relating to male co-workers, and (3) occupational socialization and advancement. Each of these points is discussed in detail here. With regard to security work, Crouch thought correctional officers had three sets of responsibilities, whether they were male or female: (1) carrying out routine housekeeping and logistical duties, (2) establishing and

maintaining personal authority in relations with inmates, and (3) handling inmate confrontations and physical violence. With the first two sets of responsibilities, women fared well: Only 16 percent of the responding inmates found that the presence of women affected their privacy, and while some inmates were annoyed by the presence of women officers, most were in favor of, or at worst neutral, towards them. Furthermore, nearly 90 percent of inmate respondents felt women were not easier to manipulate or intimidate than male guards. Positively, it was found the presence of female officers could have a normalizing effect on the prison world and that female correctional officers could promote better dress and behavior. For Crouch, the problems with women in male prisons surfaced with the third set of responsibilities—handling inmate confrontations and physical violence. Even though it was found actual physical assaults on women in federal institutions were rare, Crouch remained concerned that women in general had less brute strength than their male counterparts so if they were assaulted they could be less able to defend themselves and face a greater chance of injury.

On the second issue Crouch found women were not fitting in to the male dominated culture. Male officer attitudes towards inmates tended to become tougher and more punitive over time, which may not be the case with female officers. Many female officers had a hard time finding good role models as there were relatively few seasoned veteran female officers to emulate and they were usually low in rank.

Finally, occupational socialization and advancement were evaluated closely. Women were less likely to have the political and social connections most men do with other men in positions of authority. These men in authoritative positions were the ones responsible for evaluating the female officers' performance and recommending promotions. As a result, women

were less likely to get a promotion over one of the supervisor's friends and would thus be forced into staying in the general ranks or taking a clerical position.

Over time, two additional negative-impact studies would be published out of sequence with the broader pattern. Britton (1997) used Acker's theory of gendered organization to frame an analysis of the ways in which policies and practices in a men's and women's prison reflect and reproduce gendered inequalities. Acker's key concept of "gendered organizational logic"(p. 797) is offered as a working definition in this study, i.e., the way in which officer training and assignments assume a male worker and benefit male officers working in men's institutions. Following Acker, Britton found support for three hypotheses: First, gendered organizational logic benefited male workers; second, gendered organizational logic depended on the underlying assumption that workers were male, even if not explicitly stated; finally, skills that were perceived as unique to men became more valued in the organization. Training was clearly geared to benefit male officers working in male institutions and men were perceived by supervisors, co-workers, administrators and themselves as more capable of doing their jobs. This study is mostly negative; it is worth noting because it seems out of place for the time frame in which it was conducted.

The only anomalous negative-impact study of recent years is a publication by Gordon, Prolux, and Grant (2012). They found female officers demonstrated a higher level of perceived fear and risk of inmate-precipitated and staff-precipitated victimization. Most studies before this one concentrated on perceptions of dangerousness, safety concerns, or the level of disciplinary reporting while this study focused on the officers' fear of victimization and perceived risk of victimization. The most pertinent finding was that females showed a higher level of perceived fear and risk of inmate-precipitated victimization and staff-precipitated victimization compared

to males. This finding is important because perceptions of danger and risk in the workplace may lead to high levels of stress, job dissatisfaction, and higher than normal staff turnover rates.

These results have a negative connotation because it can be argued that women who have higher perceptions of dangers and risk in the workplace can be looked down upon by their male cohorts who believe they are overly scared, which could affect their job performance.

Neutral Impact

The largest numbers of studies in the literature are neutral. In other words, women are regarded as neither better nor worse than men in performing their roles in a prison. This position reigned supreme for a 20-year period from 1986 to 2005.

Zimmer (1986) proposed a typology of how female correctional officers adapt to working in male institutions. She developed the following three roles based on the investigation and observations she made in her research. First, there was the institutional role—women who try to perform the job like the male officers. Second was the modified role—women accept protection from male officers and settle for women's slots (namely control centers and non-contact posts). Finally, she identified a group of innovators—women who typically perform like a man but can make other positive contributions. Echoes of objections to women in male prisons from the negative-impact arguments earlier in the decade are present with the modified role, but the other two types of adaptation put women in a more positive light than had been previously seen in the literature.

Crouch, whose 1985 review consolidated the negative-impact position, would himself soften his stance in a co-authored article with Alpert (Alpert & Crouch, 1991). They surveyed male and female prisoners and officers in a large county jail and specifically examined cross-gender supervision situations; e.g., male prisoners who were nude or using the toilet. The results

of the survey indicated the prisoners were more likely than the officers to expect cross-gender supervision would promote complaints, security problems, and violence. Also, most officers of both sexes expected similar negative consequences while supervising male prisoners. Alpert and Crouch concluded the potential benefits of general supervision of one sex by another may outweigh the various costs but the costs of supervision of more private matters, such as being nude or using the toilet may outweigh the potential benefits of a more normalized environment.

Cheeseman, Mullings, and Marquat (2001) examined the impact of female correctional officers on various custody levels of male inmates and inmates' perceptions of correctional officer job performance and utilized seventeen measures of female job performance in self-report surveys. The findings indicated male officers and medium and maximum security inmates had positive impressions of the ability of female officers to do a satisfactory job in a male institution. However, minimum-security inmates felt female correctional officers did a more inferior job than their male counterparts.

Hemmens, Stohr, Schoeler, and Miller (2002) administered an ethics and role questionnaire in 1998 and 1999 to five institutions in a rural mountain state. The authors found the perception of female staff was generally positive. The type of institution and gender and military service composition influences the perception of female correctional officers. They suggested correctional administrators might want to look at military service and attitudes toward women stemming from the military experience. More research could be beneficial in that area to try to change perceptions of female correctional officers.

Carlson, Thomas, and Anson (2004) explored the similarities and differences between men and women correctional officers in an all-male and all-female prison in a Midwestern state and found that differences between female and male correctional officers were outweighed by

their similarities. While there were those who questioned the female officer's abilities, overall acceptance of the females by their male counterparts in both the male and female prison was high.

Positive Impact

Positive-impact studies are more scattered in the literature. During the neutral-impact period in the late 1980s through the early 2000s, two studies by Jenne and Kersting (1996; 1998) were noteworthy positive exceptions to the time. In their first study the duo looked at aggression levels of women correctional officers in male prisons and found that both male and female officers responded similarly to inmate situations and used strategies other than physical force to gain compliance from inmates (Jenne & Kersting, 1996). They were concerned with the controversy that women may be judged not as capable as their male counterparts due to their perceived inability to handle volatile inmate situations. It is considered common knowledge that women will respond differently than men in violent confrontations. The authors pointed out previous research has found that police women often respond to similar types of dangerous situations as their male cohorts and any existing gender differences regarding aggression disappear in these instances.

The authors used 11 of 16 items on the Critical Incidents Scale first developed by Crouch and Alpert (1982) to compose an aggression scale. Respondents' scores on the aggression scale were 2.16 for women and 2.27 for men, suggesting men and women rate similarly on aggression and that neither is very aggressive. After conducting follow-up interviews it would appear that the lack of confidence in female officers could be the result of inadequate training of all officers and not necessarily the inability of the female officers to respond with the needed aggression in certain violent encounters.

Jenne and Kersting (1998) revisited the topic of gender in the correctional setting when they teamed up again to look at reciprocity (operationalized as the reported tendency to overlook minor rule infractions) differences between male and female correctional officers. They used the Critical Incidents Scale designed by Crouch and Alpert again, using the four incidents that addressed minor rule violations to see if there were any differences on how correctional officers of opposite genders would respond. As in the study on aggression, the means for women and men (1.35 and 1.30 respectively) on minor infractions were almost identical showing little difference in response. Even more important to this current evaluation, the authors found no difference existed between the male and female correctional officers on whether or not they would write a disciplinary report for a minor rule infraction. The correctional officer's attitude about control was a predictor of whether or not a disciplinary report would be written. A more interesting fact found was the type of facility where the officer worked predicted the writing of a disciplinary report.

Two of the most recent positive-impact studies reflect a change in the acceptance of women in prisons. Female correctional officers in the late 2000s have more longevity than their predecessors. They have established careers in this field and are facing fewer obstacles than those that came before them in the workforce and have even more promotional opportunities. Females are starting to be judged on their abilities rather than their gender as noted in the following study.

Tewksbury and Collins (2006) examined stress levels among correctional officers, paying particular attention to differences among the sexes. Their study discovered three significant findings. First, results indicated that there were no differences in men's and women's responses and only three variables (job title, height, and having minor children) predicted any differences

in staff responses. Second, although female correctional officers reported a higher degree of job related stress than their male counterparts, job stress is not related to likelihood of aggressive responses. Finally, the researchers pointed out the introduction of female correctional officers into male prisons is viewed as a positive and beneficial move. This is likely because of several factors: The presence of women in a male institution has the effect of making the environment more like the outside world; women are known to rely more heavily on verbal skills thereby reducing the need for physical force to manage inmate behavior; and female correctional officers have a higher degree of satisfaction and sense of personal achievement than male correctional officers. The findings showed perceived level of aggressiveness reported by staff members by sex to the scaled dependent variable of aggression yields no statistically significant differences in the mean response of male and female correctional officers at the different institutions.

Tewksbury and Collins recommended policies and procedures take into account these three variables when they are written and reviewed and training also be based around these differences.

Murphy, Rhodes, and Taxman (2011) examined the use of contingency management in justice settings and compared the attitudes of different types of workers in the justice system as well as looked at differences in attitudes among the genders of workers. Contingency management creates a system where rewards are used as incentives to stop the influence of drugs or other negative behavior. Abstaining from drug use or other negative behaviors becomes more attractive because of the rewards associated with it. A survey was created to gauge the attitudes of different workers in the criminal justice system and took into account gender differences in the attitudes of these workers. Results of the administered survey showed that female justice workers and those who were not probation officers were more accepting of material rewards than

their counterparts. The fact that female justice workers were more accepting than their male counterparts is relevant to the research in this evaluation.

The most significant finding in regard to the content of this research is gender was a significant influence on attitudes toward incentives, with women having more positive attitudes than men toward the incentives. Could it be that women have a more caring and sensitive attitude when it comes to male inmates as well? This raises questions and concerns about how that might affect the safety and security of institutions where women work.

Chapter III

Hypotheses

The literature review shows a progression in the conclusions of research from negative-impact studies prior to 1986 to positive-impact studies after 2005 with only a few exceptions to the general trend. In spite of the changes in the perception about the role of women in male prisons, an essential question remains unanswered: Does the presence of female correctional officers make prisons less safe? Consistently researchers have relied on surveys and interviews to get *perceptions* of how well women were doing but rarely checked operational statistics that measured the impact of the presence of females on prison safety. As Table 1 shows, researchers have relied extensively on surveys, interviews, and anecdotes to tap into these perceptions, but rarely paid any attention to actual incidents of violence, even though such data is available.

This thesis corrects this gap in the literature. I go back to the initial starting point of the literature in the early 1980s and use the perspectives of women at the time to form three hypotheses:

H₁: The lower the security level of the institution, the greater the percent of female correctional officers employed. With women being viewed as weaker than their male counterparts and less physically capable (Crouch, 1985), it follows that women would be more likely to work in lower security level institutions that house less violent offenders. Less violent offenders are more likely to have less disciplinary infractions and want to do their time as smoothly as possible. This population is less likely to have violent altercations that would require staff response. Women would be more likely to be employed at institutions where these offenders reside rather than in institutions where offenders who require brute strength to break up violent altercations reside.

H₂: The greater the percent of female correctional officers employed, the higher the level of disciplinary reporting. Disciplinary reports are defined as both major and minor infractions inmates commit within the institutions. Women have fewer opportunities for advancement (Crouch, 1985); therefore, they feel they have to follow the rules and enforce regulations more so than their male cohorts. This is why disciplinary reports will be more plentiful in institutions with more female correctional officers.

H₃: The greater the percent of female correctional officers employed, the greater the level of prison violence. If the negative impact of the early literature is true, this hypothesis will be proven correct. Again, with women being viewed as less physically capable by earlier authors, especially Crouch, one would expect prison violence to be greater since the inmates would see these weak women and be more inclined to engage in prison violence (inmate on inmate and inmate on staff assault as well as major events) because it would be easier to get away with prison violence and be harder to stop with these weak women on watch. Having worked in a maximum security institution with plenty of female correctional officers who can handle themselves, I am especially hopeful to prove this hypothesis unfounded.

Chapter IV

Methodology

Data from the 2005 *Census of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities* was utilized to look at how female correctional officers influence the security of the facilities where they work. The census has been used in a number of studies to assess how institutional characteristics are associated with levels of prison violence (Die, 2010; Huey & Mcnulty, 2005; Makarios & Maahs, 2012; McCorkle, Miethe, & Drass, 1995; Steiner, 2009; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2013; Wooldredge & Steiner, 2009). To the knowledge of this author, this data source has never been used to study the effects of women correctional officers.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) conducts this census every five to seven years of all state, federal, and private institutions as well as several community-based correctional facilities. Jails, which usually house individuals for a period of less than one year or during the pretrial period, are not included in the census. The public-use data set contains data gathered from 1,821 facilities in the United States. The BJS has a copy of the survey posted on its website (<http://www.bjs.gov>), and for those wanting more information about the variables; the codebook can be found online at <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NACJD>.

The original 1,821 facilities were reduced to 825 for this analysis. The first exclusion criterion was whether the facility self-identified from a list of activities “general adult population confinement” as the function affecting the largest portion of the inmate population. A facility was removed from this study if it self-identified any of the other functions as primary: alcohol/drug treatment, reception/diagnosis/classification, medical treatment/hospitalization, mental health/psychiatric, community corrections/work release/prerelease, boot camps, return to

custody, youthful offenders, geriatric care, or other. This criterion reduced the number of facilities to 1,070.

The second exclusion criterion involves the gender of inmates. Limiting adult correctional facilities to male-only sites cuts the pool of observations to 904. Finally, the removal of sites with missing data results in the final number of 825 prisons.

Variables and Analytic Strategy

Descriptive statistics for the variables used in this analysis are displayed in Table 2. The percent of correctional officers female working in an institution was chosen as the dependent variable when examining where female correctional officers will be employed (H_I). This variable becomes independent when examining the misconduct data (disciplinary reports, assaults, and major events). This variable is calculated from the survey as the number of female correctional officers in a facility as a percent of the total number of correctional officers employed at the facility. The percent of correctional officers female was transformed using its natural logarithm because of skewness to the right. The mean percent of correctional officers female was 21.74 and the transformed value has a mean of 4.37.

Prison misconduct includes disciplinary reports and measures of prison violence. Disciplinary reports include both major and minor infractions inmates commit within the institutions. The number of disciplinary reports is expressed as a rate per 1,000 inmates. Prison violence was operationalized using three different rates: the number of inmate-on-inmate assaults (“inmate assaults”) per 1,000 inmates, the number of inmate-on-staff assaults (“staff assaults”) per 1,000 inmates, and the number of major events per 1,000. Inmate assaults include inmate precipitated physical assaults resulting in death, serious injury, or involving a weapon, or sexual assault. Staff assaults are the before listed actions upon a staff member. Major events

collapsed into a single category relatively rare events—escapes, loss of control of a facility, hunger strikes, work slowdowns, or significant institutional property damage.

The prison misconduct variables were also transformed due to skewness. There was an average of 967.38 disciplinary reports per 1,000 inmates per facility with the mean of the square-root transformation being 27.07. The staff-assault rate was 5.37 per facility with a transformed mean of .92. Inmate assaults had a mean rate 18.59 per 1,000 inmates per facility and mean of 3.18 transformed. There was an average of 3.48 major events per 1,000 inmates and the transformed mean was .70.

The control variables chosen to compare to this dependent variable were the number of inmates, the security level of those inmates (maximum, medium, and minimum), and the type of facility (private, federal, and state). The number of inmates is a measure of the size of the facility and was logged due to skewness—it had a mean of 1112.36 per facility, and the mean of the logged distribution was 6.69. Security level and facility ownership are important variables of interest in the current analysis of prison structure (e.g., Makarios & Maahs, 2012). Maximum-security (including supermax) accounted for 29 % of the institutions while 41% were medium security and 30% were minimum security. The means of facility ownership show that 9% of institutions were federal, 85% state, and 7% private (greater than 100% due to rounding).

Chapter V

Results

Bivariate correlations and linear regressions were run to show correlation between the variables and how they affect one another. The percent female security variable along with the violence variables and type of institutions variables were examined to see how they affect one another. The results are found in this chapter.

Bivariate Correlations

The results of the bivariate correlations can be found in Table 3. The first column reports Pearson's correlations with the dependent variable percent of correctional officers female. Hypothesis #1—the lower security level institutions will employ a higher percentage of correctional officers female— was not supported with the bivariate correlation. In fact, the opposite was true: Minimum security level institutions were actually less likely to employ female correctional officers ($r = -.106$, $p < .05$) than maximum and medium security institutions ($r = .077$, $p > .10$ and $r = .027$, $p > .10$ respectively). Among control variables, the percent of correctional officers female is positively correlated with the size of the inmate population ($r = .015$, $p < .001$) and private-prison ownership ($r = .222$, $p < .001$) and decreases in the federal prison system ($r = -.206$, $p < .001$).

The second column includes the results for Hypothesis #2—institutions employing a higher percentage of female correctional officers will have more disciplinary reports. This hypothesis was supported, though the positive relationship between female correctional officers and disciplinary reporting was weak ($r = .150$, $p < .001$). With regard to control variables, more disciplinary reports were written at institutions with more inmates ($r = .162$, $p < .001$), more disciplinary reports were written at maximum and medium security institutions ($r = .207$, $p < .001$).

and $r=.027$ respectively) than at their minimum security counterparts ($r = -.235$, $p<.001$). Less disciplinary reports are written at private and federal institutions ($r=-.051$, $r=-.306$, $p<.001$) than at state institutions ($r=.279$, $p<.001$).

The remaining three columns contain the results for Hypothesis #3, the lower the percent of female correctional officers, the less violence will be present in that facility. This hypothesis was not supported because none of the correlations with percent of correctional officers female were statistically significant.

There were, however, significant factors related to the control variables when testing the third hypothesis. With regard to staff assaults, the more inmates housed at an institution, the more likely there would be a staff assault ($r = .090$, $p<.01$), and there are more staff assaults at a maximum security institution ($r = .279$, $p<.001$) than there are at a minimum or medium security facility ($r = -.054$, $r=-.220$, $p<.001$ respectively). Staff assaults were less likely to occur at private and federal institutions ($r=-.039$ and $r=-.055$) than at state institutions ($r=.070$, $p<.05$).

The more inmates housed in an institution, the more likely there would be an inmate on inmate assault ($r = .209$, $p<.001$). Again, there is a greater likelihood of maximum and medium security inmates ($r = .167$, $p<.001$ and $r = .105$, $p<.01$) assaulting each other than their minimum security ($r= -.280$, $p<.001$) counterparts at other institutions. There is a lesser chance of inmate on inmate assaults in a private facility ($r=-.032$) than in a federal or state institution ($r=.010$ and $r=.014$).

The number of major events decreased as the number of inmates increases ($r =-.087$, $p<.05$). The levels of this type of violence are lowest in maximum-security facilities ($r=-.048$). The major event rate is highest among private institutions ($r=.042$).

Linear Regression Results

Linear regression results can be found in Table 4. The first column is the test of Hypothesis #1. Contrary to expectations, there were no statistically significant differences between medium and minimum facilities with maximum. The number of inmates was a positive value ($\beta = .160$, $p < .001$). Private facilities were used as a reference variable for the type of institution and it was found lower percents of female correctional officers were working in federal ($\beta = -.456$, $p < .001$) and state facilities ($\beta = -.309$, $p < .001$).

The second column tests Hypothesis #2 on disciplinary reporting. Female correctional officers wrote more disciplinary reports than their male counterparts ($\beta = .068$, $p < .05$). There were more inmates on staff assaults ($\beta = .015$). Disciplinary reporting is also positively related to the size of the prison ($\beta = .119$, $p < .05$). The highest levels of reporting are also present in maximum-security facilities, a conclusion derived from the negative association with medium ($\beta = -.101$, $p < .01$) and minimum-security facilities ($\beta = -.195$, $p < .001$). Disciplinary reporting is lowest in federal prisons ($\beta = -.218$, $p < .001$).

With regard to prison violence, there is no significant relationship between prison violence (staff assaults, inmate assaults, and major events) and the percent of correctional officers female. These findings contradict Hypothesis #3. With regard to control variables, the only significant variables associated with prison violence were security-level variables. With staff assaults, maximum -security prisons have higher assault rates, as indicated by the negative association with medium ($\beta = -.249$, $p < .001$) and minimum-security facilities ($\beta = -.381$, $p < .001$). With inmate assaults, only minimum-security facilities show a negative correlation ($\beta = -.270$, $p < .001$). There is no significant explanatory power between security level and major event rates. Prison ownership is not significant in any of the violence categories.

Chapter VI

Discussion

Only one of the three negative-impact hypotheses was supported. Female correctional officers write more disciplinary reports than their male counterparts proving the second hypothesis. There was no support for the idea that a higher percent of females are hired by minimum-security facilities (Hypothesis #1) or that the presence of female officers makes a prison more violent (Hypothesis #3).

An advantage to the data used in this study is it is in a sense objective. It is based on facts and data collected from the institutions and is not based on opinion or feelings, the latter being a problem with most studies on women in prisons. At the same time, there are concerns of underreporting by the institutions in the census to hide potential management problems.

Yet another concern is the difference between macro versus micro studies. A macro study would allow the reader to see if there is an effect but a more micro approach would allow the reasons for the effect to be discerned. The reasons could start to be understood better and more readily with a micro study of the why the outcomes happened and what caused them to happen.

The inability to tap into micro-level data affects this study in two ways. First, there is an assumption that the association between disciplinary reporting and the percent correctional officers female reflects the presence of a particular coping strategy—following the rules—used by women to avoid criticism and prove their worth in a male dominated environment or if the mere presence of women is likely to trigger certain types of violations. For example, in the Ohio Administrative Code listed under institutional rules (<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/5120-9>) there is a segment in the inmate rules of conduct bans masturbation and other lewd behavior, a provision commonly known as Rule 14. Women in male institutions are much more likely to have to write

Rule 14 violations than their male counterparts because most male inmates are more likely to exhibit this type of behavior in the presence of female correctional officers. A macro level study cannot begin to discern whether the reason female correctional officers write more tickets is due to a coping strategy or whether there are just more violations due to the gender of the correctional officer regarding certain rules. It would take a micro level study to delve deeper into the reasons.

Second, we do not know if the lack of relationships between prison violence and percent female reflects gender-based differences in the use of force when dealing with inmates by women than are used by men. Women are generally regarded as more emotional beings. They are characterized as using more interpersonal communication skills while their male cohorts may be more inclined to use brute strength and intimidation to gain control of a situation. This might help or hinder female correctional officers depending on the situation and what is happening at the time. There may be a need to use brute force and strength to deal with certain situations while emotions and communication could diffuse others. Macro level data would not be able to explain the reasons behind using one technique or another.

Not having hypotheses #1 and #3 substantiated, orientation and training of new officers should be geared toward both male and female correctional officers as equally as possible. Interpersonal communication skills have to be improved upon as well as self-defense classes to protect officers of both genders from being hurt in their day to day duties. Training must accentuate the positives from both genders while trying to suppress the negatives that can arise without the proper instruction. A balance has to be reached to ensure the safety and security of institutions so those correctional officers protecting the public, themselves, inmates, and state property can go home without harm at the end of their shift.

Women have come a long way as evidenced in the positive change in the literature from the 1980s until now. Women had no right to work in male institutions prior to the 1970s but through hard work and hard fought battles in courts of law, women are and will continue to be an integral part of the male adult correctional system. Women are gaining the respect they deserve and proving themselves to be as competent as their male cohorts through studies and research conducted present day. Hopefully the *Census of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities* will be utilized further to show how female correctional officers are not detrimental in male institutions and are as capable of working and promoting in these institutions as their male counterparts.

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Table 1

Comparison Among Studies Conducted in Literature Review

Author	Source of Data	Type of Assessment	Findings
Bowersox (1981)	Missouri DOC Institutions	Questionnaire	Negative: Men enacted social responsibility norm
Owens (1985)	San Quentin	Interviews/Observations	Negative: Men felt compelled to save female officers
Jurik (1985)	Western US State DOC	Interviews/Questionnaire/ Historical Data	Negative: Women were more “mentally weak” than men
Crouch (1985)	Available empirical and anecdotal date	Review of Studies	Negative: Women were inferior when carrying out three broad dimensions of guard work
Zimmer (1986)	NY and RI state prisons	Interviews/Observations	Neutral: Female officers develop three work roles in corrections
Jurik (1988)	Western State DOC	Interviews/Observations/Survey	Neutral: Three components of work performance and five strategies women use to avoid role traps

Table 1 (Continued)

Comparison Among Studies Conducted in Literature Review

Author	Source of Data	Type of Assessment	Findings
Alpert & Crouch (1991)	Orange County (Florida) Jail	Survey	Neutral: Cross gender supervision would promote complaints
Jenne & Kersting (1996)	6 male penitentiaries in a NE state DOC	Questionnaire/Interviews	Positive: Women respond similarly to their male counterparts in dangerous situations
Britton (1997)	Men's and Women's Prison in a SW state	Interviews	Negative: "Gendered organizational logic" is present in the correctional setting
Jenne & Kersting (1998)	6 Male Prisons in a NE state DOC	Questionnaire/Interviews	Positive: Little difference in aggression response between men and women
Cheeseman et al. (2001)	4 maximum security prison units in TX	Survey	Neutral: Positive view of female officers by male officers and maximum security inmates; negative view by minimum security inmates

Table 1 (Continued)

Comparison Among Studies Conducted in Literature Review

Author	Source of Data	Type of Assessment	Findings
Hemmens et al. (2002)	Multiple Institutions	Questionnaire	Neutral: Gender and military service composition affect perception of female officers
Carlson et al. (2004)	An all men's and all women's prison in a Midwestern state	Survey	Neutral: Overall acceptance of female officers by male cohorts
Tewksbury, et al. (2006)	Kentucky DOC (6 medium security prisons)	Survey	Positive: No significant difference in response for male and female officers
Murphy et al. (2011)	Staff from the judiciary, U.S. probation, Federal Defenders' Offices, U.S. Attorneys' Offices, and treatment/counseling providers	Survey	Positive: Female workers were more accepting of contingency management
Gordon, et al. (2012)	Adult State Facilities	Survey	Negative: Females show a higher perceived fear and risk of harm

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Error	Standard Deviation
% Security Staff Female			
Untransformed	21.74	.50	14.21
Square root transformation	4.37	.06	1.62
Disciplinary reports per 1,000 inmates			
Untransformed	967.38	33.94	974.93
Square root transformation	27.07	.53	15.32
Staff assaults per 1,000 inmates			
Untransformed	5.37	1.70	48.93
Square root transformation	.92	.07	2.13
Inmate assaults per 1,000 inmates			
Untransformed	18.59	1.91	54.85
Square root transformation	3.18	.10	2.91
Major events per 1,000 inmates			
Untransformed	3.48	.91	26.11
Square root transformation	.70	.06	1.73
Number of Inmates			
Untransformed	1112.36	26.59	763.86
Logarithmic transformation	6.69	.03	.96
Facility Ownership			
Federal Institutions	.09	.01	.28
State Institutions	.85	.01	.36
Private Institutions	.07	.01	.25
Security Level			
Maximum	.29	.02	.45
Medium	.41	.02	.49
Minimum	.30	.02	.46

Table 3

Pearson's Correlations

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables				
	% Female	Disciplinary Reports	Staff Assaults	Inmate Assaults	Major Events
Number of inmates	.015***	.162***	.090**	.209***	-.087***
Security Level					
Maximum	.077	.207***	.279***	.167***	-.048
Medium	.027	.027	-.054	.105**	-.047
Minimum	-.106*	-.235***	-.220***	-.280***	.099**
Ownership					
Private	.222***	-.051	-.039	-.032	.042
Federal	-.206***	-.306***	-.055	.010	-.002
State	.014	.279***	.070*	.014	-.027
% Female		.150***	.045	.039	-.016

Note: ^tp<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 4

Regression Table

Variables	% Female β	Disciplinary reports β	Staff Assaults β	Inmate Assaults β	Major Events β
Number of inmates	.160***	.119*	-.054	.078	-.052
Security Level					
(reference = Maximum)					
Medium	-.048	-.101**	-.249***	-.057	-.003
Minimum	-.051	-.195***	-.381***	-.270***	.066
Ownership					
(reference = Private)					
Federal	-.456***	-.218***	-.021	.027	-.044
State	-.310***	.107*	-.003	.014	-.059
%female		.068*	.015	.006	-.009
R ²	.117***	.170***	.094***	.086***	.013 ^t

Note: ^tp<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001