

Juvenile Delinquency and Victimization

A Theoretical Typology

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It is a widely voiced notion that juvenile delinquency and victimization co-occur extensively in the youth population, in particular because delinquent youth engage in risky activities. But theory from the bullying and traumatic stress literatures suggests that there may be additional pathways by which delinquency and victimization are connected. This analysis looks for possible subtypes of delinquents and victims consistent with such pathways. Using the Developmental Victimization Survey, a national sample of 1,000 youth aged 10 to 17 were interviewed over the phone. Support emerges for three distinct types of delinquent-victims, who are termed bully-victims, delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, and property delinquent-victims. There is also evidence for substantial groups of youth who are primarily delinquent but not seriously victimized, as well as youth who are primarily victimized but not delinquent.

Keywords: *bully-victims; abuse; Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire; JVQ*

A variety of studies have noted a strong association between juvenile victimization and juvenile delinquency. Some interpreters of this association have gone so far to argue that juvenile victims and delinquents are largely overlapping populations, with most victims engaging in delinquency and vice versa (Lauritsen, Laub, & Sampson, 1992; Lauritsen, Sampson, & Laub, 1991; Singer, 1986).

The most common explanation in criminology for this association and overlap is the notion that delinquency-prone youth put themselves at considerable risk for victimization because of their risky activities. Among the activities

frequently cited are: associating with other violent or criminally inclined persons, engaging in aggressive or provocative behavior that invites retaliation, using substances that impair judgment and self-protective capacities, staying out late, frequenting dangerous locales, and forfeiting through behavior and attitude the protective shield of law enforcement, authorities, or supervisory adults (Lauritsen et al., 1991, 1992). This account makes good sense, has empirical support, and seems to apply to what is known about the activities of gang members and other seriously delinquent youth. However, this provides only a partial inventory of the relationship between victimization and delinquent behavior and fails to account for the circumstances of a variety of youth.

First, the account ignores an important group of youth: those who are victims but not delinquents, and for whom delinquent or risky activity plays little or no role in their victimization. Victims of parental child abuse may fall into this category. Such children are targeted for reasons unrelated to their engaging in delinquent behavior. Moreover, even among children victimized by peers, there appear to be a substantial number of nondelinquent victims. The literature on bullying, for example, describes a group of chronically bullied children who are characterized by a pervasively submissive behavioral style, who suffer victimization without any provocation or retaliation (Dodge, Coie, Pettit, & Price, 1990; Olweus, 1978, 2000). Because much of the research on the victimization-delinquency link concerns teenagers, some of these pure victim types may be younger and may have been ignored, and the degree of association exaggerated or misinterpreted. Such nondelinquent victims may be more common among girls, who have lower rates of criminal behavior (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999).

Second, the emphasis on the victim-delinquency association has obscured the question of whether there are delinquents who are not victims. In the bullying literature, observers describe a category of bullies, nonvictimized aggressors who display more organized and goal-oriented aggressive behavior, using aggression as an instrumental strategy and a way to achieve peer domination (Dodge et al., 1990; Olweus, 1978, 2000), and who appear to deter or avoid any assaults or victimizations. Although it may be hard for aggressive children to dissuade all retaliation, it is likely that among younger children and maybe among teens as well, some bullies and delinquents escape for long periods without victimization.

Third, the conventional account in criminology about the victimization-delinquency overlap highlights only a limited set of mechanisms to explain the connection. These mechanisms emphasize risky behavior, draw primarily from routine activity theory, and suggest to some extent that the delinquency

proclivity precedes the victimization (Lauritsen et al., 1991, 1992). Routine activity theory is a criminological theory that explains victimization as being a function of whom people associate with, where they live, and where they spend their time (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Miethe & Meier, 1994).

A variety of other mechanisms are worth considering and have support in the literature. For example, research based on traumatic stress and general strain theories suggest that childhood victimization can lead to deviant activities including violence, substance abuse, delinquency, and peer aggression (Briere, Woo, McRae, Foltz, & Sitzman, 1997; Haapasalo & Tremblay, 1994; Howes & Eldredge, 1985; Malinosky-Rummell & Hansen, 1993; Windle & Mason, 2004). Traumatic stress theory suggests that trauma creates a heightened sensitivity to threat, leading to a hostile attribution bias, impaired social competence, and increased aggressive behaviors (Chemtob, Roitblat, Hamada, Carlson, & Twentyman, 1988; Hartman & Burgess, 1993). Trauma can also create intolerable emotions and memories, which drugs, dangerous activities, and aggression may represent efforts to control (Clark, Lesnick, & Hegedus, 1997; Steward, 1996). General strain theory also posits that crime and delinquency are ways of coping with aversive relationships and negative life events like victimization (Agnew, 1997) or as a method to prevent further victimization (Singer, 1986). Although these theories and their related findings tend to emphasize child maltreatment and sexual abuse in conjunction with delinquency (Egeland, Yates, Appleyard, & van Dulmen, 2002), exposure to other kinds of violence and victimization have also been discussed (Singer, 1986; Wood, Foy, Goguen, Pynoos, & James, 2002).

Another account of the delinquency-victim overlap comes from the literature on bullying. In addition to the groups of nonaggressive victims and non-victimized aggressives, the bullying literature describes a group of so-called bully-victims who suffer abuse and ostracism but also lash out against others. The bullying researchers see them as a group of children with dysregulated emotional patterns, irritable, and easily angered, who seem to provoke others even in situations in which they are at a likely disadvantage (Olweus, 1978, 2000; Schwartz, Proctor, & Chien, 2001). These traumatic stress, general strain, and bullying concepts suggest that the relationship between victimization and delinquent behavior could be more complex than the conventional account, and that there may be a variety of different groups who become delinquent victims through several different pathways.

Using guidance from the above described literatures, this article is an exploratory effort to identify distinct subgroups at the intersection of victimized

and delinquent youth. We anticipated that we could find delinquent-victim subgroups of youth who were distinct from one another. Drawing on the bullying literature concept of the bully-victim, we thought one such overlap group would appear to engage in aggressive behavior while at the same time suffering physical victimization. Drawing on the traumatic stress model, we looked to confirm another somewhat distinct group whose delinquencies seem to be primarily a reaction to the trauma of sexual abuse and child maltreatment. In addition, we anticipated to find subgroups of youth who had been victimized but had engaged in normative or no delinquency acts, and subgroups who engaged in delinquency but who had been targets of minor or no victimization.

Method

Participants

Participants for this study were a subsample of individuals who participated in the Developmental Victimization Survey (DVS). The DVS assessed the victimization experiences of a nationally representative sample of 2,030 children between the ages of 2 and 17 years. Because the focus of this study is on delinquency and victimization, and younger children engage in relatively little delinquency, only the self-reported data from the children between the ages of 10 and 17 was used. A detailed description of the data collection procedures can be found in Finkelhor, Hamby, Ormrod, and Turner (2005).

The data analysis sample consisted of 1,000 participants, although 6 individuals could not be categorized into the typology due to missing data, leaving the final sample to be 994. The average age was 13.77 years, with 49.2% of the sample being girls. Participants were primarily Caucasian (79%), with 10% African American, 8% Latinos, and 3% Other.

Measures

Demographic questionnaire. Background information on child and household characteristics, including child age, gender, ethnicity and race, family structure, measures of socioeconomic status (SES), and the character of residential locale, was obtained in an initial parental interview.

Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (JVQ). The JVQ is an instrument developed by Hamby, Finkelhor, Ormrod, and Turner (2004) that allows for a comprehensive evaluation of childhood victimization. The instrument

covers five general areas of victimization: conventional crime, child maltreatment, peer and sibling victimization, sexual assault, and witnessing and indirect victimization, which are assessed by asking about 34 forms of offenses, which are the screener questions asking whether the event occurred in the past year. Each screener has follow-up questions asking about the perpetrator(s), weapon use, and injury. The JVQ has shown acceptable psychometric properties with an alpha of .80 and test-retest reliability Kappa for the child self-report version being .63 (Finkelhor, Hamby, et al., 2005). Validity has been supported by moderate correlations between victimization and trauma symptoms (Finkelhor, Hamby, et al., 2005).

Frequency of Delinquency Behavior (FDB). The FDB, originally developed by Loeber and Dishion (1983), is a measure of self-reported delinquency behavior. The scale was adapted for this study from its most recently published format (Dahlberg, Toal, & Behrens, 1998). The form used asked participants only whether they had committed the delinquency listed in the past year, rather than how often they had done each delinquent behavior. Hence, this modified version does not measure frequency, solely occurrence. Furthermore, the version used in this study removed certain questions and combined others.¹ The original FDB has shown adequate test-retest reliability of .71 (1-year interval) and moderate correlations with peer-nominated aggression (Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1987).

Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children (TSCC). The TSCC (Briere, 1996b) is a measure that assesses posttraumatic and trauma related symptomatology in children and adolescents. It has been normed for use with children between the ages of 8 and 17. The TSCC consist of 54 items which provide two validity scales and six clinical scales (Briere, 1996b). For the purposes of this study, only the anger, depression, and anxiety scales were used. The TSCC has been shown to be reliable, with alphas above .80 for all but the sexual concerns subscale (Briere, 1996a, 1996b). Convergent and predictive validity has also been found with traumatized and nontraumatized children and adolescents (Briere, 1996a, 1996b). In our sample, alphas for anger, depression, and anxiety were .87, .82, and .75, respectively.

Lifetime adversity. Cumulative adversity in childhood was assessed by a comprehensive measure that includes 15 nonviolent traumatic events and chronic stressors (Turner & Butler, 2003). The instrument counts stressors that had occurred or were present at least once in the respondent's lifetime. Items included: (a) nonvictimization traumas such as serious illnesses, accidents, and parent imprisonment; and (b) more chronic adversities, like

parental arguing or family financial difficulties. A summary count of total exposure in the past year constituted the total adversity score. Higher scores indicate greater exposure to different forms of adversity.

Procedure

The interviews with parents and youth were conducted over the phone by a survey research firm specially trained to talk with children. A short interview was conducted with an adult caregiver (usually a parent) to obtain family demographic information. One child was randomly selected from all eligible children living in a household by choosing the child with the most recent birthday. If the selected child was 10 to 17 years old, the main interview was conducted with the child. If the selected child was 2 to 9 years old, the interview was conducted with the caregiver. All the children in this particular analysis were interviewed directly because the sample consists solely of children between the ages of 10 and 17.

In the case of a child interview, consent was obtained from the parent and the child. Respondents were promised complete confidentiality, and were paid \$10 for their participation. Participants who disclosed a situation of serious threat or ongoing victimization were recontacted by a clinician trained in telephone crisis counseling, whose responsibility was to stay in contact with the respondent until the situation was resolved or brought to the attention of appropriate authorities. All procedures were authorized by the Institutional Review Board of the University of New Hampshire.

Typology and Analysis Strategy

In the interest of conceptual clarity, we defined the subgroups in terms of key characteristics suggested by the literature. The distinctness of the subgroups was explored by comparing them on a variety of other indicators. Table 1 shows the conceptual categories and defining criteria.

From previous analyses of the DVS victimization data, it has been determined that one of the best measures of victimization intensity is the number of different JVQ screeners endorsed. Although a simple screener sum does not take account of repeated victimizations of the same type, our analyses have suggested that factoring in repeated victimizations and other aspects of victimization severity does not produce substantively different results in the identification of highly victimized youth (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007). Because the JVQ includes many common kinds of victimizations (such as being hit by a sibling or having property stolen) and the mean number of

Table 1
Typology Groups Delinquency and Victimization Criteria

	Name	Delinquency Criteria	Victimization Criteria
Delinquent-victims	Bully-victim	Any interpersonal violence or weapon carrying	≥ 3 violent victimizations
	Property delinquent-victim	Property delinquency, no interpersonal violence	≥ 3 victimizations
	Delinquent sex/maltreatment-victim	≥ 2 delinquencies	Any sexual victimizations or child maltreatment
Primarily delinquents	Assaulter	Any interpersonal violence or weapon carrying	< 3 violent victimizations
	Property delinquent	Property delinquency, no interpersonal violence	< 3 victimizations
Primarily victims	Nondelinquent sex/maltreatment-victim	< 2 delinquencies	Any sexual victimizations or child maltreatment
	Mild delinquency-victim	No violent and no property delinquency	≥ 3 victimizations
None	Mild delinquency-nonvictim	No violent and no property delinquency	< 3 victimizations

victimization screeners endorsed in the past year is 2.98, we set the criterion for victimized youth at 3 or more victimizations. Thus, the category of non-victimized youth was those who suffered 2 or fewer victimizations.

From the literature on delinquency, we deemed it important to distinguish among types of delinquent behavior. The items in our delinquency measure could be clearly differentiated into those that involved violent behavior (assaults and weapon carrying), those that involved property delinquency (breaking something, stealing from a store), those that involved drug and alcohol use (drinking, smoking pot), and minor delinquency (truancy, cheating on tests). We decided to treat violent and property delinquents as two separate groups, and treat those involved in substance use or minor forms of rule-violating behavior as mild delinquents. As with victimization,

delinquent youth for some of the categories were those above the mean on delinquency (two or more types of delinquent acts). Given the inclusion of relatively minor and perhaps normative delinquent acts in the FDB, we felt that using the mean split would adequately identify youth without any or only minor delinquency.

Delinquent-Victims

We first defined three groups of the youth who fell into the delinquent-victim overlap category. Bully-victims, consistent with the descriptions from the literature, were defined as youth who in the past year engaged in violent, interpersonal acts or weapon carrying and who also experienced a high level of violent victimization. We also defined another group of delinquent and highly victimized youth, the property delinquent-victims, whose delinquencies were solely in the property crime domain. Along the lines of the trauma response literature, we defined a group termed delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, who had experienced sexual victimization or a form of child maltreatment and had engaged in an above average level of delinquency.

Primarily Delinquent

In contrast to these three groups of delinquent-victims, we also categorized some youth as primarily delinquent, that is, they had violent or property delinquencies with a low rate of victimizations. We subdivided them into assaulters who had engaged in at least in one violent delinquency (but had little or no victimization) and property delinquents, those who had engaged in at least one property delinquency but no violent delinquency and little or no victimization.

Primarily Victims

We also defined two groups who were primarily victims but not delinquents. These were the mild delinquency-victims, who had above average levels of victimization but no property or violent delinquency. Based on the victimization literature suggesting special consequences among youth who experienced sexual victimization and child maltreatment, we also defined a group of nondelinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, youth who had experienced a sexual victimization or a form of child maltreatment but only had a low level of delinquency.

Grouping Criteria

Using these criteria, there were cases of youth who met criteria for more than one group. We assigned them group membership based on the following hierarchy: bully-victims, delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, assaulters, nondelinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, property delinquent-victims, property delinquents, mild delinquency-victims, and mild delinquency-nonvictims. The criteria for this order was established by examining the overlap between groups, and, for the individuals who were in both groups, determining which group they were most similar to based on demographic characteristics. Of the main delinquent-victim groups, 56 participants met criteria for bully-victim and delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, and 36 participants met criteria for both delinquent sex/maltreatment and property delinquent-victims.

Analysis Plan

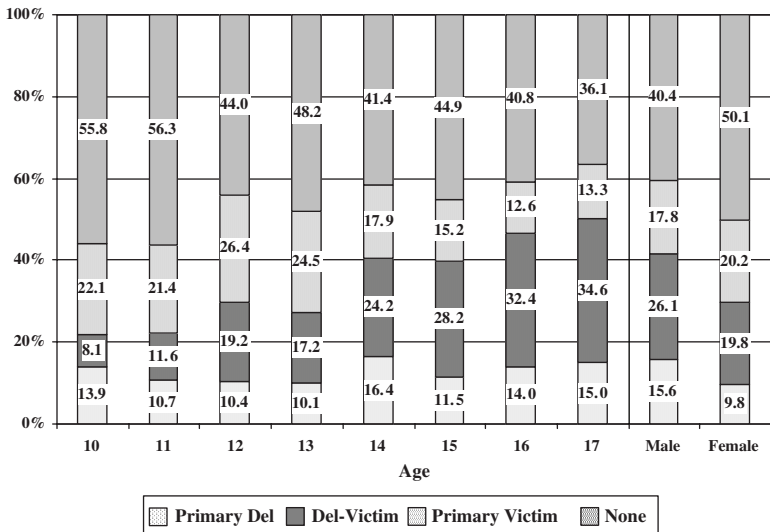
Correlational analyses were conducted to examine the overall relationship between victimization and delinquency. Once all participants had been classified into the typology groups, analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to compare the groups on demographic characteristics (e.g., age, SES). Also, analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) were conducted to compare the groups on psychopathology, delinquency scores, victimization scores, and other variables of interest, while controlling for age and SES. Because this was an exploratory analysis, we chose to report all differences at the .05 level, although there are a considerable number of comparisons. Readers should keep in mind that this does increase the risk of Type I error.

Results

Coexistence of Delinquency and Victimization

The strong relationship between victimization and delinquency is seen in the correlation between total number of different types of victimization and total number of endorsed delinquent acts, $r = .52, p < .001$. Figure 1 graphically presents this overlap, distinguishing between males and females. The figure highlights the higher delinquency score for males, which is significantly different when controlling for age and SES, $F(1, 995) = 6.22, p < .02$. Specifically, 41.7% of males have engaged in delinquent acts as opposed to 29.6% of females.

Figure 1
Victimization-Delinquency Co-occurrence by Age and Gender



Age and Victimization-Delinquency Overlap

In examining how these subgroups differ across age, data are presented in Figure 1 that show the percentage of children who were in the delinquent-victim overlapping category versus those who were primarily victims or primarily delinquents. The data appear to show that the percentage of children who are delinquent-victims tends to increase among older children, with a substantial rise between ages 13 to 14.

Typology Group Differences

Results for the 994 individuals who were categorized will first be presented by looking at the differences between the delinquent-victim groups (see Table 2) and then comparing groups that developed from a common criterion (see Table 3). We will highlight differences based on theoretical expectations regarding the group characteristics. Except when making demographic comparisons, all ANOVA analyses controlled for age and SES. It should also be noted that some of the significant results are an

Table 2
Delinquent-Victims Groups Comparison

Variable	Bully-Victims (a)	Property Delinquent-Victims (b)	Delinquent Sex/Maltreatment-Victims (c)
Age	14.2 ^c	14.3	15.1 ^a
Gender (% female)	26 ^c	38 ^c	62 ^{a,b}
Socioeconomic status (z score)	-0.17	-0.19	0.03
Total victimization screeners	8.2 ^{b,c}	4.7 ^{a,c}	5.5 ^{a,b}
Physical assault (% yes)	100 ^{b,c}	84 ^a	69 ^a
Sexual victimization (% yes)	36 ^{b,c}	0 ^{a,c}	59 ^{a,b}
Maltreatment (% yes)	39 ^b	0 ^{a,c}	63 ^{a,b}
Property victimization (% yes)	74 ^c	75 ^c	53 ^{a,b}
Witness victimization (% yes)	90 ^c	81	79 ^a
Perpetrator type			
Any adult in the family (% yes)	30.8 ^{b,c}	3.1 ^{a,c}	44.1 ^{a,b}
Any adult outside the family (% yes)	47.1 ^b	15.6 ^{a,c}	41.9 ^b
Any peer in the family (% yes)	45.2	53.1	38.7
Any peer outside the family (% yes)	96.2	96.9	91.4
Total adversity	5.2 ^{b,c}	4.4 ^a	4.8 ^a
Delinquency score	5.1 ^{b,c}	2.6 ^{a,c}	4.2 ^{a,b}
Violent (% yes)	100 ^{b,c}	0 ^{a,c}	29 ^{a,b}
Drugs/Alcohol (% yes)	47 ^c	31 ^c	69 ^{a,b}
Minor (% yes)	70 ^c	61 ^c	86 ^{a,b}
Property (% yes)	62 ^b	100 ^{a,c}	56 ^b
Anger	8.7 ^{b,c}	5.4 ^a	6.7 ^a
Depression	5.3 ^b	3.8 ^{a,c}	6.0 ^b
Anxiety	5.6	5.3	5.7

Note: Superscript value is significantly different from value in the column identified by that superscript (a, b, c) at $p < .05$.

artifact of the categorization criteria (e.g., total victimization difference between bully-victims and assaulters because they are in part defined by victimization). Additionally, given that some categories were not mutually exclusive (e.g., types of victimization or delinquency), totals do not always add to 100%.

Delinquency-Victim Groups Analyses

Because a key issue for this article was whether we could identify distinct subgroups among delinquent-victims, the comparisons here focus on differences among bully-victims, property delinquents-victims, and delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims. The first group, bully-victims, made up about 10% of

Table 3
Sample Descriptives

Variable	Physically Assaulting Delinquents		Sexually Assaulted/ Maltreated Victims			
	Bully-Victims	Assaulters	Delinquent Sex/ Maltreatment-Victims	Delinquent Sex/ Maltreatment-Victims	Property Delinquents	Property Violation Victims
Total <i>n</i>	104	85	93	79	32	42
Age	14.2	13.7	15.1	13.2***	14.3	14.4
Gender (% female)	26	33	62	61	48	38
Socioeconomic status (<i>z</i> score)	-0.17	-0.05	0.03	-0.05	-0.19	0.28*
Total victimization screeners	8.2	2.7***	5.5	5.1	4.7	1.0***
Physical assault (% yes)	100	65***	69	71	84	21***
Sexual victimization (% yes)	36	4***	59	44*	0	0
Maltreatment (% yes)	39	2***	63	72	0	0
Property victimization (% yes)	74	35***	53	48	75	17***
Witness victimization (% yes)	90	57***	79	65*	81	26***
Total adversity	5.2	3.5***	4.8	4.1*	4.4	3.4
Delinquency score	5.1	2.7***	4.2	0.4***	2.6	2.3
Violent (% yes)	100	100	29	0***	0	0
Drugs/alcohol (% yes)	47	25**	69	5***	31	24
Minor (% yes)	70	41***	86	17***	61	44
Property (% yes)	62	31***	56	15***	100	100
Anger	8.7	4.6***	6.7	3.5***	5.4	3.1**
Depression	5.3	3.3***	6.0	3.7***	3.8	2.5
Anxiety	5.6	3.8***	5.7	4.1**	5.3	3.5*

Note: Comparisons are between the two groups within each category (e.g., the two groups under physically assaulting delinquents, bully-victims and assaulters, are compared to each other).
p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

the sample and 45% of delinquent-victims. In terms of demographics, bully-victims were significantly younger than delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims (14.2 vs. 15.1 years), although about the same age as property delinquent-victims (14.3 years). Bully-victims were predominantly male (74%), as was the case with property delinquent-victims (62%) but different from delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims (62% female). Total victimization was also unique for bully-victims, as they had significantly higher scores than delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims and property delinquent-victims. Bully-victims also had more victimization at the hands of adults than property delinquent-victims, inside and outside the family, but were less likely to have an adult, in-family perpetrator than delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims. Bully-victims were also uniquely high in their total delinquency score, which was significantly higher than delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, $F(1, 983) = 23.65, p < .001$, and property delinquent-victims, $F(1, 983) = 16.89, p < .001$. Bully-victims also had the highest adversity scores compared to delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, $F(1, 984) = 4.10, p < .05$, and property delinquent-victims, $F(1, 984) = 5.63, p < .02$. Bully-victims' anger scores were significantly higher than delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, $F(1, 982) = 16.91, p < .001$, and property delinquent-victims, $F(1, 982) = 22.32, p < .001$. Bully-victims were significantly higher on depression than property delinquent-victims, $F(1, 982) = 6.15, p < .02$, but not delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, $F(1, 982) = 2.78, ns$. Bully-victims did not significantly differ from the other two groups on anxiety. Bully-victims, in sum, were unique from the two other delinquent-victim groups in their high level of victimization, delinquency, adversity, and anger scores.

Of the three groups, delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims were the oldest, which was significantly different than bully-victims, $F(1, 986) = 8.19, p < .01$, but not property delinquent-victims, $F(1, 986) = 3.11, ns$. Delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims made up 9.4% of the sample and 41.5% of the delinquent-victims. In contrast to the other two groups, delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims were predominantly female (62%). Total victimization for delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims was significantly higher than property delinquent-victims, $F(1, 984) = 4.27, p < .04$, and significantly lower than bully-victims. Although nearly all the delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims had some peer victimization, they were also the group with the highest rate of victimization at the hands of adult family members. Similarly, in total delinquency, delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims were significantly higher than property delinquent-victims, $F(1, 983) = 16.89, p < .001$, and significantly lower than bully-victims (see F values in previous paragraph). Delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims had approximately the same level of adversity as property delinquent-victims, with

both groups being significantly lower than bully-victims. The key difference for delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims was that they had the highest level of depression, which was significantly different from property delinquent-victims, $F(1, 982) = 13.01, p < .001$, and higher, but not significantly so, than bully-victims, $F(1, 982) = 2.78, ns$. It is of note that the delinquent group had elevated rates of drugs/alcohol delinquency (69%) and minor delinquency (86%). In sum, the characterization of delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims is as older, female, and more depressed, with delinquency and victimization levels lower than the bully-victims and higher than the property delinquent-victims, and the highest level of in-family adult perpetrators.

The property delinquent-victims were the smallest of the delinquent-victim groups, making up 14.0% of the delinquent-victims and 3.2% of the sample. The group was predominantly male, did not differ in age from bully-victims, and was marginally younger than delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims. This group had the lowest level of adult perpetrators in comparison to the other delinquent-victim groups. The defining characteristic of property delinquent-victims is that they had the least victimization, delinquency, and adult perpetrators in comparison to the other delinquent-victim groups. They exhibited the lowest level of anger, depression, and anxiety in comparison to the other two groups.

Physically Assaulting Delinquents: Bully-Victims and Assaulters

Both bully-victims and assaulters tended to be male (74% and 67%, respectively), as physical aggression is more often perpetrated by males (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). The groups did not significantly differ on age or SES.

Although victimization is in part how the groups were defined, bully-victims had a significantly higher number of total victimization screeners ($p < .001$) than assaulters and a notably higher rate of witnessed (90% vs. 57%, respectively), $\chi^2(4, N = 189) = 28.79, p < .001$, and property victimization (74% vs. 35%, respectively), $\chi^2(4, N = 189) = 28.58, p < .001$. Also, bully-victims had significantly higher adversity scores ($M = 5.24, SD = 2.17$) than assaulters ($M = 3.49, SD = 2.41$), $p < .001$. In examining psychological distress, bully-victims were significantly higher than assaulters on the anger, depression, and anxiety (all pairwise $ps < .001$). Furthermore, bully-victims ($M = 5.12, SD = 3.76$) had significantly higher levels of total delinquency than assaulters ($M = 2.73, SD = 2.35$), $p < .001$.

Sexually Assaulted or Maltreated Victims: Delinquent and Nondelinquent Sex/Maltreatment–Victims

Females predominated in both groups, and there was little difference in SES. In regard to age, delinquent sex/maltreatment–victims ($M = 15.09$, $SD = 1.83$) were significantly older than nondelinquent sex/maltreatment–victims ($M = 13.22$, $SD = 2.07$). This may be an indication that the reactivity to sexual abuse or maltreatment has a developmental component, in that victims are initially nondelinquent but then, as they become older, begin to have delinquent behavior as part of their reactivity.

Victimization data indicates that both groups had approximately the same number of total victimizations with an average of 5.5 victimizations for the delinquent group and 5.1 for the nondelinquent group. The slightly higher adversity score for the delinquent group was not significantly different than that of the nondelinquent group (4.8 vs. 4.1, respectively). Due to the defining criteria that distinguish the two groups, the elevated delinquency rate for the delinquent group is expected. Delinquent sex/maltreatment–victims had higher levels of psychological distress than nondelinquent sex/maltreatment–victims. The delinquent group had significantly higher scores in anger, depression, and anxiety than the nondelinquent group (all $ps < .001$).

Property Violation: Property Delinquent–Victims and Property Delinquents

The delinquent–victims and delinquents did not differ significantly on age (14.3 years vs. 14.4 years, respectively). The property delinquent–victims had more males (62%) than the property delinquents (52%), although the difference was not significant. The most notable demographic difference was that the property delinquent–victims' SES was significantly lower than the property delinquents' (-0.19 vs. 0.28 , $p < .05$).

Given the grouping criteria, the higher rate of victimization for property delinquent–victims is expected. However, it is notable that property delinquent–victims had elevated rates of property and witnessing victimization. The groups did not significantly differ on their delinquency scores, and the difference in adversity scores between property delinquent–victims ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 2.25$) and property delinquents ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.86$) was not significant. Looking at psychological distress, property delinquent–victims had significantly higher levels of anger (5.38 vs. 3.07) and anxiety (5.34 vs. 3.49) than property delinquents, with all $ps < .02$. However, the difference in depression (3.78 vs. 2.45) was not significant.

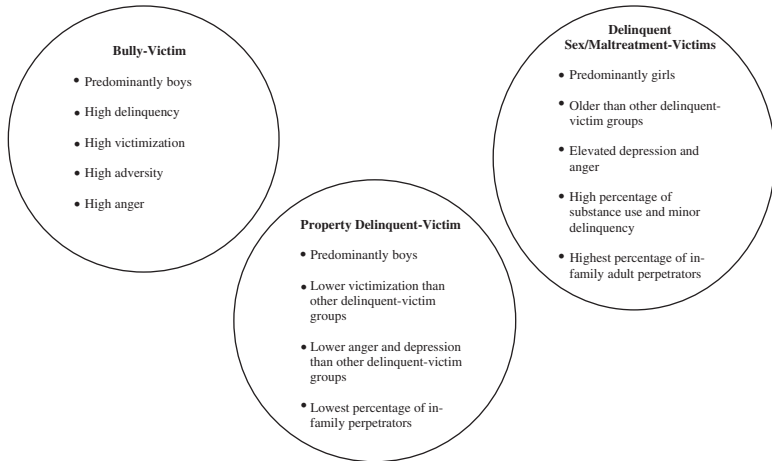
Mild Delinquency: Mild Delinquency–Victims and Mild Delinquency–Nonvictims

The mild delinquency–nonvictims make up approximately 45% of the classified individuals. Otherwise, there are no notable demographic differences between the victims and nonvictims, with both groups having approximately the same age (13.4 years and 13.5 years, respectively) and gender distribution (46% female vs. 55% female, respectively), and a non-significant difference in SES. As established by the definition of the groups, mild delinquency–victims had a higher level of total victimization than nonvictims. Total delinquency rates were low for both groups, with participants in these groups averaging less than one type of delinquent act. There was a significant difference in adversity scores, with mild delinquency–victims ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.91$) being significantly higher than mild delinquency–nonvictims ($M = 2.30$, $SD = 1.61$), $F(1, 984) = 47.14$, $p < .001$. As is the case with most of the other groups, the key difference is psychological distress. The mild delinquency–victims group had significantly higher scores for anger (3.2 vs. 1.9), depression (3.1 vs. 1.8), and anxiety (3.5 vs. 2.2) than the nonvictim group (all $ps < .001$).

Discussion

This analysis of youth in a nationally representative sample with high levels of both victimization and delinquent behavior confirms the possibility that there are subtypes within this delinquent-victim group. The groups that we have labeled bully-victims, delinquent sex/maltreatment–victims, and property delinquent–victims did appear to be distinct on conceptually important dimensions (see Figure 2). Bully-victims were predominantly boys with very high levels of delinquency, victimization, adversity, and anger. These characteristics are consistent with the description of bully-victims as emotionally and behaviorally dysregulated children. Delinquent sex/maltreatment–victims were predominantly girls, older than other delinquent-victims, with particularly elevated levels of depression, but also considerable anger and anxiety, whose delinquency was primarily in the areas of substance use and minor delinquency. This group also had the highest percentage of adult perpetrators inside the family, in addition to a high rate of victimization by peers, as was the case with all delinquent-victim groups. These characteristics are consistent with the description of young people who engage in delinquency because of the effects of sexual

Figure 2
Delinquent-Victim Groups' Key Characteristics



abuse and maltreatment. Our analysis identified a third group of delinquent-victims, whose delinquency was entirely in the domain of property crimes. They had lower levels of victimization, delinquency, anger, depression, and perpetrators from within the family than the other delinquent-victim groups. Because of the lower psychological distress than other delinquent-victims, this group's victimization and delinquency may be a result of risky environments rather than intrapersonal distress.

The existence of these three groups is consistent with the strains of theory presented concerning victimization and delinquency, such as the high occurrence of substance abuse in delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, which is in line with some of the trauma-based models. However, group uniqueness should not be overemphasized, as the groups were theoretically derived so as to emphasize their uniqueness with some youth falling into multiple groups. Also, the characterization of these groups along certain dimensions, such as gender, should not be overly reified. Although in the minority, a quarter of the bully-victims were girls and more than a third of the delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims were boys. In addition, it should not be assumed that sexual victimization or child maltreatment plays a role only in the delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims group. For example, 36% of the bully-victims had been sexually victimized, and

39% had experienced child maltreatment. Many may have experienced additional sexual victimization and maltreatment at earlier times in their life, although it should also not be assumed, as some of the literature does, that it is primarily much earlier childhood sexual victimization and maltreatment that connect to delinquency. In the current study, these victimizations co-occurred with delinquency in the same year. Furthermore, all of the groups had a high percentage of peer perpetrators from outside their family, indicating that all of these groups experience peer victimization, in addition to any adult perpetration that is differentially represented across the groups.

Findings from this study challenge a prevalent assumption in the delinquency literature that delinquents and victims are almost entirely overlapping groups. In contrast to such an idea, the study identified substantial groups of violent and property delinquents who had very modest victimization profiles, and groups of victims who had only committed minor forms of delinquency. The primarily delinquent group, who had little victimization, constituted 12% of the whole sample, and the primarily victim group, with only minor delinquency, constituted 19% of the sample. Together, these nonoverlap groups actually comprised somewhat more youth than the overlap delinquent-victims, who account for 23% of the whole sample. Although the delinquent-victim group as we defined it is a minority of all victims and delinquents together, the relative proportions do shift with age, showing that there is a developmental component in the delinquency-victimization overlap (see Figure 1). Although the proportion of delinquent victims generally rises with age, there is a particularly large increase between ages 13 and 14. This increase is primarily the result of a disproportional jump in delinquency among victims between the 2 years, not a change in the proportion of victimization among delinquents.

The increasing proportion of delinquent victims with age clearly suggests that some of the youth identified as part of nonoverlap groups could be on a developmental trajectory that may lead to a more serious, delinquent-victim group membership at a later point. The overall low average age of the non-delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims group (13.2 years) is particularly noteworthy. Some of the youth in this group may be headed for membership in the delinquent group (average age 15.1 years) once they become involved in more delinquent activities.

The move into delinquency and victimization is also important because it appears associated with a worsening of mental health. It is interesting to note that almost all mental health symptoms were higher for delinquent-victims than they were for those who were primarily delinquent without victimization or primarily victims without serious delinquency. In particular, the assaulters,

a group who were not heavily victimized, were substantially less angry, depressed, and anxious than the bully-victims, the group who was assaultive and victimized. Similarly, those who were victims of sex abuse or child maltreatment but not engaged in delinquent activities, the nondelinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, were significantly less angry, depressed, and anxious than the delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, their peers who were also engaged in delinquent activities. This indicates that the combination of victimization and delinquency is clearly a marker for those with greater mental health problems.

Several features of our findings are consistent with the likelihood that far more youth victimization precedes delinquency rather than vice versa. First, in general, delinquency overall has a later onset than victimization, and expands more rapidly in later years. Second, the theory and characteristics of the delinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, and particularly the role of child maltreatment, also suggests that for this group victimization precedes delinquency. Third, the age sequencing makes it appear particularly plausible that some nondelinquent sex/maltreatment-victims, who were victimized but not delinquent when they were younger, start to engage in delinquent behavior as they grow older.

Interesting as these findings are, this typology and its findings should be regarded as exploratory. The groups were conceptually derived with a limited number of independent indicators on which to validate them. Furthermore, the available data were categorical, indicating the presence or absence of an event rather than its severity (e.g., did/did not assault another person rather than how many times that was done). Also, the data obtained were from the past year; hence, any developmental argument is based on comparisons across age groups. Ideally, longitudinal data would need to be used to better explore developmental factors. The data for this study are all self-report, making them susceptible to issues of social desirability and response sets. This is a national sample with relatively small representation of types of more severe delinquency, victimization, or mental health problems that would show up in agency or clinical samples of delinquents and victims. Furthermore, the fact that the study was conducted by telephone interview makes it possible that high-risk groups without phone access might be underrepresented, such as homeless individuals or those with more transient lifestyles.

Future research should apply the typology to other samples with more detailed information on victimization, delinquency, and development, including the use of independent observations. Also, cluster analytic techniques with a different type of data may help provide validation and adaptations to this typology. Although there are limitations for this research, we

believe that the development of this typology provides a springboard for future directions in studying the co-existence of victimization and delinquency.

Note

1. For a copy of the version used in this study, contact Carlos A. Cuevas, College of Criminal Justice, Northeastern University, 204 Churchill Hall, 360 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115.

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