DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 222 834 CG 016 302

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TITLE Assessing the Relationship of Adult Criminal Careers to Juvenile Careers: A Summary.
INSTITUTION Iowa Univ., Iowa City.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Dept. of Justice/LEAA), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Jun 82
GRANT 79-JN-AX-0010
NOTE 23p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adults; Behavior Change; *Behavior Patterns; Cohort Analysis; *Crime; *Delinquent Behavior; Delinquent Rehabilitation; *High Risk Persons; Juvenile Courts; Predictive Validity; *Predictor Variables; School Role

ABSTRACT

Much of the concern with juvenile delinquency has been based on the premise that delinquent behavior leads to adult crime. Police and court records of three cohorts comprised of 6,127 persons were analyzed. The most prevalent pattern of delinquent behavior was one of declining seriousness and discontinuation after the teenage period. With few exceptions, intervention by the agencies of social control did not play even a moderate role in decreasing the seriousness of adult controls. It was apparent that police contacts and more serious contacts had their highest incidence in the inner city. While removal from the community may appear to be a solution, the records show that most juveniles and adults will return and must be integrated into the community. (JAC)

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U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

ED222834

Assessing the Relationship of Adult Criminal Careers to Juvenile Careers:

A Summary

Lyle W. Shannon
Director

June 1982

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CG 016302

Prepared under Grant No. 79-JN-AX-0010 to the University of Iowa from the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U. S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the U. S. Department of Justice.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Much of the concern about juvenile delinquency has been based on the premise that it leads to adult crime. Although a variety of analytical techniques and measures of continuity and seriousness of careers have generated and conclusion that there is some relationship between juvenile delinquency and adult criminality, the relationship is not sufficient to permit prediction from juvenile misbehavior of who will become adult criminals. Furthermore, to the extent that a relationship exists it may be explained by the operation of the juvenile and adult justice systems as well as by continuities in the behavior of juveniles.

Most of the findings described or referred to in this summary are unique only in that they are based on an analysis of police and court records of three birth cohorts comprised of 6,127 persons, male and female. Of these, 4,079 persons had essentially continuous residence in Racine from at least the age of 6 through the age of 32 for those born in 1942, through 25 for those born in 1949, and through 21 for those born in 1955.

The most prevalent pattern of delinquent behavior is one of declining seriousness and discontinuation after the teen-age period. The few who continue to have police contacts with an increase in seriousness (and finally a decline) are those who become well known to the adult justice system and thus create the impression of continuity and increasing seriousness in delinquent and criminal careers. It is this relatively small group of "hard core" continuers on whom attention should be focused by the juvenile and adult justice systems.

In a high risk group composed of that 11.7 percent of the 1942 cohort who were socialized in the inner city and its interstitial areas and had continuous careers before 18, 53.3 percent had high seriousness scores after 18. No other area and no other continuity type had even close to 50 percent with high seriousness scores after 18. Findings were similar for the 1949 and 1955 cohorts. As promising as this sounds, one must look at the total picture. While 43.8 percent of the inner city group with continous career contacts before 18 and high later seriousness scores committed at least one felony after 18, they comprise only 25 percent of the persons in the 1942 cohort with felony contacts and only 29 percent and 22 percent of these persons in the 1949 and 1955 cohorts. Other felony offenders are spread throughout the community, some of whom never had a police contact before the age of 18.

In every other manner in which the data have been examined there is a high degree of concentration, i.e., there are certain categories of persons who have a high probability of having serious careers that include felonies, but

there is also a high degree of dispersion in that people scattered throughout the community who either had no juvenile record or only had intermittent contacts for minor offenses ultimately are charged with serious offenses by law enforcement agencies. Because they do not have extensive records as juveniles there is no basis for predicting their later criminal behavior. Knowing that a high percent of those from a high risk group will have serious offenses as adults is not the same as predicting who in a total cohort will have serious offenses as an adult.

Although it is apparent that many persons who have frequent contacts and numerous referrals as juveniles will continue to have them, is this a characteristic of the persons or a matter of responses by authorities to prior behavior--resulting in fulfillment of the prophecy regardless of how the individual behaves in the future? Does early identification and intervention effectively deter juveniles from further misbehavior or does it insure that they will continuously be identified as miscreants?

What we found, in a variety of analyses and with considerable regularity, was an increase in frequency and seriousness of misbehavior in the periods following those in which sanctions were administered. This was more the case for males than females but the best that could be said is that sanctions have a benign effect on the females. The extent to which continued police contacts are a response to sanctions and not an extension of a pattern of misbehavior is yet to be determined, but the data made us wonder. With few exceptions, intervention by the agencies of social control do not play even a moderate role in decreasing the seriousness of adult controls.

Interviews with persons from the 1942 and 1949 cohorts were valuable in enabling us to see how persons from these cohorts viewed themselves and how their reports of their own misbehavior related to their official records. When official contact records and self-report measures were combined, well over 90 percent of each cohort's males had engaged in youthful misbehavior, followed by 65 percent to 70 percent of the females. Of those who had been both stopped by the police and done things for which they could have been caught but were not, only 5.3 percent of the 1942 cohort and 8.1 percent of the 1949 cohort had a felony-level police contact after that age. Furthermore, most of those who were not caught stated that they had appraised their behavior and ceased to engage in the acts which either got them or could have gotten them into trouble--less than 8 percent stopped because they feared getting caught.

The juvenile court will deal with a certain proportion of these juveniles and court effectiveness involves an understanding of the life experiences that have brought them to court. While removal from the community may appear to be the solution, the record shows that most juveniles and adults will return. So, the ultimate question is not one of how to most expeditiously remove miscreants from the community but how to integrate them into the larger social system so that their talents will be employed in socially constructive ways. This should be our major concern, for if it is not the cost will become increasingly higher, postponed only to future generations.

INTRODUCTION

Much of the concern with juvenile delinquency in the United States and other parts of the world has been based on the premise that it leads to adult crime. Although a variety of analytical techniques and measures of continuity and seriousness of careers have generated the conclusion that there is some relationship between juvenile delinquency and adult criminality, the relationship is not sufficient to permit prediction of adult criminality from juvenile delinquency. Furthermore, to the extent that a relationship exists it may be explained by the operation of the juvenile and adult justice systems as well as by continuities in the behavior of persons. While those who are involved in the expenditure of vast sums of money for intervention find this difficult to accept, it is unrealistic to posit juvenile delinquency as the precursor to adult crime and continue to intervene as though the facts were different from what they are.

Most of the findings described or referred to in this paper are consistent with those which have been published by other sociologists. They are unique only in that they are based on an analysis of three birth cohorts.

THE DATA AND SOME INITIAL CONCERNS

The three birth cohorts (1942, 1949, and 1955) are comprised of 6,127 persons, male and female, of whom 4,079 persons had essentially continuous residence in Racine from at least the age of 6 until the cut-off date for data collection (1974 for the first two cohorts and 1976 for the third cohort). In addition to the data on police contacts, referrals, and court dispositions for persons in the three cohorts, we have interviewed 889 persons from the 1942 and 1949 cohorts.

Neither sex nor race/ethnicity was conceptualized as an explanatory variable. Both are statuses which may have some predictive value but in themselves they do not explain delinquent and criminal behavior. On the other hand, the community's perception of these statuses must be taken into consideration if we desire to understand how recorded contacts with the police, contacts for more serious forms of misbehavior, referrals, and dispositions eventuate in the incarceration of the disproportionate numbers of people with specific race/ethnic and sex characteristics. No matter which measure of frequency or seriousness of police contacts was utilized, white females generally had the fewest contacts and the least serious involvement with the police and black males had the most contacts and most serious involvement with the police. But even though minorities had disproportional involvement, three-quarters of the black males having had a police contact between the ages of 6 and 17 in comparison with half of the white males of each cohort, the great bulk of the police contacts in Racine has been with white males, regardless of the age

period considered. White males accounted for 77 percent of all police contacts in the 1942 cohort, 66 percent of the 1949 cohort, and even 52 percent in the 1955 cohort (where the proportion of contacts by females of each race or ethnic group had markedly increased).

INCREASING INVOLVEMENT AND SERIOUSNESS FROM COHORT TO COHORT

Comparison of the three cohorts revealed that overall rates of contact with the police did not increase from cohort to cohort as much as did rates of police contact for the more serious offenses such as assault, burglary, theft, and robbery. The proportion of contacts which involved these and other serious offenses (Part I offenses) more than doubled between the 1942 and 1955 cohorts for the age period 6-17 and more than tripled for the age period 18-20. And delinquency among females increased from cohort to cohort even more than it did among males regardless of the measure of frequency of seriousness employed.

At the same time that frequency and seriousness of police contacts were increasing from cohort to cohort, rates of police contacts, particularly for Part I offenses, were increasing for Racine as a whole over the years covered by the research. Although this period was one in which the number of police officers patrolling the community rose from 89 to 169, this increase did not begin to match the increase in arrest rates in the community. It could not be said that increases in police contacts, seriousness of offenses, or increases in arrest rates for the city were merely a function of an increasing probability of contact with police officers. The probability is, however, that whatever the increases in frequency and seriousness of reasons for contacts or arrests, only part of the increase in rates from cohort to cohort and the city as a whole should be attributed to increasing misbehavior of the residents of Racine or member of the cohorts.

THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF DELINQUENCY AND CRIME

No matter how delinquency and crime rates were computed (by place of contact or place of residence) for the 26 statistical areas which were developed for the city of Racine it was apparent that police contacts and more serious contacts had their highest incidence in the inner city and its interstitial areas. At the same time, police patrolling is more intensive in areas which have a high incidence of delinquency and crime. As a result, residents of these areas as well as those who frequent them have a greater probability of police contacts than do persons who do not reside there and who seldom go there.

The high concentration of Racine's black population in the inner city and its interstitial areas and a similar but different pattern of concentration of Chicanos plays a part in explaining why they have more frequent contacts with the police than do whites. Although there was a decline in the proportion of white males with police contacts from the center of the city outward in most age periods, at least half of the white males in high socioeconomic status areas had at least one nontraffic police contact during their lives. It is consonant with the growth of Racine to find that areas with high rates of

police contacts (the inner city and interstitial areas) expanded from cohort to cohort no matter how delinquency and crime were measured.

Although blacks were more concentrated by subarea of residence and of contact than whites, police contacts by whites became more concentrated (from cohort to cohort) by subarea of residence and more dispersed by subarea of contact. It is apparent that the whites have become more involved in crime and delinquency in areas of the city other than those in which they reside and that even those who live on the periphery have contributed to the high rates of delinquency and crime in the inner city and its interstitial areas.

When we look at the race/ethnic proportions in the various residential areas in Racine we find that the proportions who have ever had a contact by race/ethnicity are not greatly different from the proportion of each race/ethnic group in each area. The consistency with which the race/ethnicity of persons with contacts parallels the race/ethnic composition of each area of the community reinforces the position that delinquent and criminal behavior is generated in a social milieu which provides for contacts with the police.

CONCENTRATION AMONG MULTIPLE OFFENDERS

While police contacts for delinquent and criminal behavior were highly concentrated among some individuals in each cohort, they were also widely dispersed--60 percent to 70 percent of the males in each cohort had at least one contact for an offense other than a traffic violation. A small portion of each cohort had continuing police contacts but most of the people did not. For example, less than 25 percent of each cohort's males have had five or more nontraffic contacts but these chronic offenders accounted for from 77 percent to 83 percent of all contacts by the males in their cohort.

From 5 percent to 7 percent of the persons in each cohort was responsible for over half of the nontraffic police contacts and roughly 20 percent of each cohort's members were responsible for 80 percent of the nontraffic police contacts generated by that cohort. An even smaller percent (from 8 percent to 14 percent of each cohort) was responsible for all of the cohort's felonies. The concentration of contacts for more serious offenses was greater among females than males, from 2 percent to 7 percent of the females in each cohort having generated 100 percent of the felonies by females in their cohorts. If one wished to identify the persons who were responsible for about 75 percent of the felonies (and much of the other crime), then approximately 5 percent of each cohort, the persons with two or three felony contacts, would be the target population.

CONTINUATION AND DISCONTINUATION

Contact Sequences--Although the probability of having an initial police contact was very large (more than 80 percent of the males in the 1942 and 1949 cohort and over 70 percent in the 1955 cohort had at least one contact as did 48 percent of the females in the 1942 cohort, 52 percent in the 1949 cohort, and 45 percent in the 1955 cohort) and the probability of continuing contacts for males was at least 80 percent after the fourth contact, over half the

males with a first contact discontinued having police contacts before their fifth contact and half the females before their second contact. By their 10th contact 80 percent of the males in each cohort had discontinued having any sort of police contact. They discontinue even sooner in the felony sequences. Approximately 80 percent of the males in each cohort did not have a felony contact after their third contact. Discontinuation rates for females were even more abrupt for every sequence. The existence of a "hard core" group of continuers suggests again that there is a relatively small group on whom attention should be focused by the juvenile and adult justice systems. Continuation probabilities for the Racine cohort, with controls inserted to make the Racine data comparable to the Philadelphia data, produced quite similar results.

Increasing Seriousness--Although a variety of analyses were conducted to test the hypothesis that offenders proceed to more serious offenses, little evidence of systematic progression in seriousness was found. In no case do the data generate what might be called a smooth curve, but seriousness does gradually increase from contact to contact among males, reaches an initial peak (for most persons in their teens), then declines, only to rise again among those who continue to have frequent contact with the police. This is especially true among persons with 40 or more contacts. The most prevalent pattern, however, is one of declining seriousness and discontinuation after the teen-age period. The few who continue to have police contacts into their late 20's with an increase in seriousness (and finally a decline) are those who become well known to the adult justice system and thus create the impression of continuity and increasing seriousness in delinquent and criminal careers. The careers of these persons are atypical of all who have had contacts with the juvenile and adult justice systems.

Age Period Continuity--When continuities in police contacts were examined by age periods it was found that there was a variety of patterns based on combinations of the juvenile period (age 6-17), the intermediate period (age 18-20), and the 21 and over age period. Most persons who had contacts in more than one period commenced in the juvenile period but, if traffic offenses are excluded, no more than 15 percent of the males and 4 percent of the females in any cohort had contacts in each age period. While there is variation based on the place of socialization and race/ethnicity, not even among blacks who were socialized in the inner city do we find more than a third with contacts in each age period.

Nevertheless, it has been established that some individuals have police contacts during the juvenile period, continue to have them as young adults, and even beyond the age of 21 while others do not. This raises the question of the probability of continuity between age periods and the correlation between number and seriousness of contacts in one period and subsequent periods.

There is some probability of continuation, but the correlations and measures of proportional reduction of error for either frequency or seriousness of contacts between adjacent age periods were too low to permit prediction of the extent and seriousness of a person's career in a following age period from his or her record in a prior age period. Interestingly enough, the highest association (0.696) was between the number of police contacts by inner-city

white males from the age of 6 through 17 and their number of contacts from the age of 18 and on.

Inner-City Continuity--Construction of continuity types and use of controls for place of socialization permitted selection of a relatively small percentage of offenders who were most likely to have criminal careers after the age of 18, careers which included a large number of felonies. For example, in a high risk group composed of that 11.7 percent of the 1942 cohort who were socialized in the inner city and its interstitial areas and had continuous careers before 18, 53.3 percent had high seriousness scores after 18. No other area and no other continuity type had even close to 50 percent with high seriousness scores after 18. Persons from the inner city and interstitial areas with continuous careers before 18 produced the largest proportion with high seriousness scores for the 1949 and 1955 cohorts.

As promising as this sounds, one must look at the total picture. While 43.8 percent of the inner city group with continuous contact careers before 18 and high later seriousness scores committed at least one felony after 18, they comprise only 26 percent of the persons in the 1942 cohort and 29 percent and 22 percent of the persons with felony contacts in the 1949 and 1955 cohorts. Felony offenders are spread throughout the community and, of these, some never had a police contact before the age of 18.

As in every other manner in which the data have been examined, it is found that there is a high degree of concentration, i.e., there are certain categories of persons who have a high probability of having serious careers that include felonies, but there is also a high degree of dispersion in that people scattered throughout the community who either had no juvenile record or only had intermittent contacts for minor offenses ultimately are charged with serious offenses by law enforcement agencies. Because they do not have extensive records as juveniles there is no basis for prediction of their later criminal behavior. Knowing that a high percent of those from a high risk group will have serious offenses as adults is not the same as predicting who in a total cohort will have serious offenses as an adult, but it is the latter with which we are most concerned.

PREDICTING FROM ACCUMULATED EXPERIENCE

Several other approaches were explored. When a series of prediction tables was constructed based on the number of police contacts a juvenile had had through each age, it was found that in the 1942 cohort over 90 percent of those who had one contact through age 15 had at least one subsequent contact and 100 percent of those who had two or more contacts through the age of 15 had at least one more contact after that age. But 60 percent of those with no contacts through age 15 had at least one contact after that age. By the age of 18 only 43 percent of those who had no contacts through that age had a contact sometime in the future, and 72 percent of those who had had two or more contacts had at least one more contact in the future. Similar findings were present for the 1949 and 1955 cohorts. Tables were also constructed with the criterion of five or more contacts after any given age. The differences were even sharper in that at the age of 18, for example, only 5 percent of those who had had no contacts previously would have five or more contacts

after that age, while 65 percent of those who had five or more contacts through the age of 18 would have five or more after that age. Prediction tables based on seriousness scores in which the criterion was a seriousness score of six or more after any given age produced similar results.

However, when the data for any given age were used in prediction, it was found that the combined errors of omission and commission were greater than or only slightly less than those which would be made by a prediction from the modal category of the marginals. In other words, at any given age, for example 18 for the 1942 cohort, if one were to predict that no one would have five or more contacts one would only make marginal errors of 18 percent. By utilizing past police contacts of four or more contacts as the basis for predicting who would have five or more contacts in the future, these errors would be reduced to 14 percent but we would have falsely predicted that 35 persons would have five or more contacts who did not (5.5 percent) and that 54 persons would not have five or more contacts when they did. Whatever would be done to those whom we predicted would have five or more contacts would be done to 97 persons (35 of whom did not need it) and 54 who should have received special attention would not have had it. This illustrates the nature of the problem faced by persons on the firing line if they are expected to deal effectively with the problem of crime prevention. The 1949 and 1955 cohorts produced similar findings.

We concluded that although there is a relationship between frequent and more serious contacts in the early years and continuity of careers, it alone does not enable us to improve our predictive efficiency over that based on the marginals because too many errors of omission and commission are made if we act on these data alone.

THE DISPOSITION OF POLICE CONTACTS

The Decision to Refer--Although the high proportion of minority group members in juvenile and adult institutions has often been attributed to step-by-step discrimination in the chain of events between the commission of an act and institutionalization, most cross-sectional studies have produced contradictory and/or inconclusive evidence of significant race/ethnic or socioeconomic discrimination at any decisionmaking point. These contradictory findings suggested that longitudinal data are required to test the proposition that as an individual proceeds through the system the decision to take the next formal step is more likely to be made if the miscreant is nonwhite or of lower socioeconomic status than if he/she is white or of high socioeconomic status. Each step adds an increment of nonwhites and/or persons of lower socioeconomic status to those who will be formally brought closer to institutionalization. In the end, a significantly large proportion of the institutionalized population is nonwhite or from lower socioeconomic status groups.

The initial screening process, the decision to refer or not to refer, is often the first step in a chain of events that sends a few percent more of minority or low socioeconomic status persons on to the next stage of the process. Although a higher percentage of black and Chicano than white males were referred from each cohort, when controls for seriousness were introduced,

race/ethnic differentials became less consistent. Black males, however, were still disproportionately referred beyond their contribution to the most serious categories of contacts. When referrals were for nonfelonies or felonies, that proportion of persons referred also increased in each race/ethnic group with frequency of contact, particularly among black males with five or more contacts. In other words, a larger proportion of the chronic offenders had had at least one of their contacts referred (a massing of contributions to the official records) regardless of what they had done. All of this indicates that minorities make up a disproportionate number of those referred because they have more police contacts, more contacts for more serious offenses, and because a disproportionate number are referred beyond what would be expected considering the categories of behavior into which their reasons for police contact fall.

Continuity in Referrals--The next question was whether or not referrals through a given age were highly associated with the number of referrals after that age. In each cohort we found relatively high correlations between the number of referrals through an age, such as ages 17 through the early 20's, and referrals after that age, but the ability to increase predictive efficiency over that obtained from the marginals was limited.

The problem is best described by presenting an example based on the 633 persons in the 1942 cohort. At the age of 18 only 17 percent of those who had no referrals through that age would have a referral after that age, while 91 percent of those who had five or more referrals thorugh that age would have at least one referral after that age. However, while 10 of the 11 persons in the cohort who had five or more referrals before the age of 18 had referrals in the future, there were 82 people who had no referrals at all through the age of 18 but who did have at least one later referral. Although persons who are frequently referred through a given age will continue to have referrals, many who have not been referred frequently or have not been referred at all will have referrals in the future. In short, one can predict that a large proportion of those who have frequent contacts and a large proportion of those who have frequent referrals will continue to be referred, but there are numerous others who will have contacts and referrals after their teens who have not had them to that time.

Although it is apparent that many of those who have frequent contacts and numerous referrals as juveniles will continue to have them, we are still faced with the question as to whether this is characteristic of the persons or characteristic of responses by authorities to prior behavior--resulting in fulfillment of the prophecy regardless of how the individual behaves in the future. Does early identification and intervention effectively deter juveniles from further misbehavior or does it insure that they will continuously be identified as miscreants? This led to the question of the effectiveness of sanctions and the necessity of deciding if persons with equal or similar careers who are severely sanctioned, mildly sanctioned, or not sanctioned at all have similar or different rates of continuity. Theoretically, one would expect if sanctions are effective, all other things being equal, sanctioned persons would have less continuity than unsanctioned persons.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SANCTIONS

What we found, in a variety of analyses and with considerable regularity, was an increase in frequency and seriousness of misbehavior in the periods following those in which sanctions were administered. This was more the case for males than females but the best that could be said is that sanctions have a benign effect on the females. The extent to which continued police contacts are a response to sanctions and not an extension of a pattern of misbehavior is yet to be determined, but the data made one wonder. We have not meant to imply that sanctions in themselves generate continuity in careers from delinquency to adult crime but, all other things being relatively equal, the imposition of sanctions is not followed by a decline in frequency and seriousness of contacts. That there have been some instances of decline in future police contacts upon the application of sanctions cannot be denied, but that may be for the same reason that there is a general decline in contact among persons who have not been sanctioned. It may be that the factors which make for effectiveness in sanctioning are so complex and this coupled with the complexity of people makes it difficult, if not impossible, to impose sanctions (within statutory limits) in an effective manner.

We concluded from a variety of multivariate analyses that the significant effect of juvenile seriousness on adult seriousness persists even when the intervening effects of juvenile referrals and sanctions are held constant. With few exceptions, intervention by the agencies of social control does not play even a moderate role in decreasing the seriousness of adult contacts. Overall, neither referrals nor sanctions had an impact on later seriousness comparable to juvenile seriousness. But, at best, only one-third of the variation in adult seriousness was explained by juvenile seriousness, referrals, and sanctions.

WHAT THE INTERVIEWS TOLD US

Family, Work, and School--Interviews with persons from the 1942 and 1949 cohorts were valuable in enabling us to see how persons from these cohorts viewed themselves and how their reports of their own misbehavior related to their official records. And some long-cherished notions about the causes of delinquency receive little support from longitudinal cohort data. For example, the marital status of parents had little relationship to the delinquent behavior of juveniles.

Although police contact rates for persons in the 1942 and 1949 cohorts declined after they were married, the introduction of appropriate controls for years of exposure before and after marriage produced neither simple nor consistent effects for both sexes or cohorts. Similarly, age of leaving home failed to have a consistent impact on the number and seriousness of contacts for both cohorts of either sex. There was little relationship when occupational level and regularity of employment of heads of families were considered, except for blacks. And, contrary to the notion that employment while in high school deterred delinquency, those who were employed during both the summer and the school year, particularly the males, had somewhat more police contacts and higher seriousness scores than did others. Furthermore, there were significant increases in the number of police contacts and seriousness

scores after full-time employment for those who commenced their first full-time employment at the age of 17 or earlier.

It may also be that commitment to work at an early age reduced commitment to school and is thus tied in with leaving school before obtaining a diploma. Leaving school without a diploma and reasons for doing so turned out to be related to seriousness of official police contact records, both of which had a complex relationship to attitude toward school.

The Normalcy of Juvenile Misbehavior--At the outset we stated that it was just as important to understand why so few juveniles went on to careers in adult crime as to explain the continuity of a few. To understand this we must know more about how juveniles perceived their police contacts and their misbehavior which did not result in police contacts. Almost 70 percent of each cohort admitted that they had been stopped by the police once or twice before 18, about 60 percent of them around the age of 16 or 17. Most had not been stopped for anything serious, even as the police saw it. About two-thirds of each cohort also admitted doing things for which they were not caught. When official contact records and self-report measures were combined, well over 90 percent of each cohort's males appeared to have engaged in youthful misbehavior, followed by 65 percent to 70 percent of the females. Nevertheless, few continued to get into trouble after age 18 and even fewer were involved in serious trouble after 18. Of those who had been both stopped by the police and done things for which they could have been caught (the group that would be most likely to continue their misbehavior into adulthood) only 10.6 percent of the 1942 cohort and 13.9 percent of the 1949 cohort had a major misdemeanor or felony police contact after the age of 18. Only 5.3 percent and 8.1 percent had a felony-level police contact after that age. Furthermore, most of those who were caught and most of those who were not caught reappraised their behavior and ceased to engage in the acts which either got them or could have gotten them into trouble.

Looking at it even more carefully we saw how frequently the automobile got juveniles into trouble with the police and how other behaviors were related to it. It was not an early driver's license per se that resulted in police contacts but simply having access to the automobile, just as early employment may have exposed some juveniles to greater contact risk and also given them funds to be spent in a trouble-producing way during the years of socialization. Both males and females had more police contacts after receiving their driver's licenses but we must remember that most were receiving their licenses just at the time that they were eager to have the rights and privileges of adults--to engage in unfettered fun and to enjoy the freedom of adults, without perhaps knowing how to be as careful as adults.

When asked why they were doing the things that got them or could have gotten them in trouble from 30 percent to almost 50 percent of the incidents described by members of each cohort were seen as "just for fun." And those activities which resulted in a police contact were done with someone else in four out of five cases, usually with the persons that they ran around with.

Responses to Community Disapproval--Most juveniles were not dealt with by referral, those who were were generally not severely sanctioned, and few stated that they reacted to the situation with hostility and rebellion. While

negative attitudes toward the police were related to high seriousness scores before and after the age of 18 it is difficult to say whether negative attitudes generate serious trouble with the police or serious trouble generates negative attitudes. Most important, however, is the fact that relatively few of each cohort had negative attitudes toward the police--those few who did were likely to have higher juvenile and adult seriousness scores than those who did not.

Coupled with what appeared to be considerable police understanding of the juveniles was the failure of persons close to them (with the exception of some sympathy from peers) to condone their delinquent behavior. And over two-thirds of each cohort stated that their parents had a positive influence on their lives. Only 7 percent of the 1942 cohort and less than 11 percent of the 1949 cohort stated that students at school had a negative impact on their lives.

Going further, while having friends in trouble with the police as juveniles or adults was correlated with seriousness scores as juveniles and adults, relatively few had friends in trouble with the police during both periods (2.4 percent in the 1942 cohort and 9.8 percent in the 1949 cohort). While this associational variable has considerable value in explaining the continuity in careers for a portion of each cohort, the fact that so few members of each cohort had delinquent and/or criminal friends helps explain why so few had continuing trouble with the police.

The conclusion that most misbehavior ceased as a consequence of the process of socialization into adult roles was bolstered by the fact that most juveniles had ceased the type of misbehavior for which they could have been caught but were not by the age of 18. And their responses to the question, "What caused you to stop?" revealed that most had ceased for positive reasons rather than the fear of getting caught (less than 8 percent stopped because they feared getting caught).

OFFICIAL RECORDS VS. SELF-REPORT DATA

We were concerned with respondents' accounts of their police encounters and how they compared with official reports, with their self-reports on delinquent and criminal behavior and how they compared with their official records, and last, how their self-concept compared with official records and self-reports. While 80 percent of the whites in each cohort either reported their number of police contacts consistently with police records or over-estimated them, only half the blacks reported the number of contacts consistently with the records and the other half reported fewer contacts in comparison with official records. There were some differences between what respondents said they were doing at the time of a police contact and what they reported police said they were doing at the time of the contact (38 percent disagreement for the 1942 cohort and 32 percent disagreement for the 1949 cohort), but the reasons for the discrepancies appear to be differences in perception related to the police officer's interpretation of an event and a juvenile's interpretation of the same event.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSES OF THE CORRELATES OF FREQUENCY AND SERIOUSNESS

When path analysis was used to determine the direct and indirect effects of background and intervening variables on official and self-report seriousness scores for the age period 6-17 it was found that having friends in trouble with the police had a significant effect on official seriousness in every case except for the 1942 cohort females. Extensive use of the automobile while in high school had a significant effect on self-report seriousness for both sexes of both cohorts. Failure to graduate from high school was significant for the males of both cohorts and having family and/or friends whom they believed had a negative influence on them was significant for females of both cohorts.

Not unexpectedly, these background and intervening variables had no consistent pattern of effects on either sex's or cohort's official seriousness score for the ages 18 and older and official seriousness ages 6-17 was the only variable that had a significant effect on both sexes of both cohorts' official seriousness scores for the later age period. Two school variables did, however, have significant effects, attitude toward school for the 1942 cohort males and failure to receive a diploma for the 1949 cohort males. While the background and intervening variables were not consistently related to adult self-report seriousness, juvenile official seriousness scores were for both cohorts.

It has become almost traditional (since Wolfgang et al.) to think of people as nonoffenders, one-time offenders, nonchronic offenders (2-4 contacts), and chronic offenders (5 or more contacts). Although we found little cross-cohort agreement when the data were analyzed according to these categories, there were differences between the extremes of groups, those who had no contact or those who had 5 or more contacts. Some of the variables characteristic of those with 5 or more contacts during the juvenile period were attitudes toward the police, frequency of auto use, having friends in trouble with the police, and socioeconomic status of place of residence during the period prior to age 21.

When multiple discriminant function was conducted utilizing all possible cutting points between high frequency and low frequency of contacts, felony vs. nonfelony contacts, and Part I offenders vs. non-Part I offenders, inner-city and interstitial residence and negative attitudes toward the police were characteristics of persons with more frequent and more seriousness reasons for contact in each cohort. But in no case did these and all other variables account for more than 20 percent of the variance. Perhaps the most important conclusion reached as a result of this analysis was that results will vary depending on the typology utilized and the cutting points selected.

That inner-city and interstitial places of residence during socialization appeared often as a characteristic of those who fall into the serious offender categories and that persons with group ties during the period 14 through 17 fell so often in the less serious categories indicates that integration into the larger society does much to explain differences in the persistence and continuity of delinquent and criminal behavior among members of each cohort. This, coupled with the community's perception of the sources of delinquency and crime and the functioning of the juvenile and adult justice systems, makes

differential rates of continuity and seriousness in an urban/industrial community with a growing minority group population normal rather than a phenomenon which is startling and inexplicable.

ONE LAST WARNING

At this point we can only say that it is one thing to describe delinquency and crime as they are distributed in an urban/ industrial community and changes in rates during different stages in the life cycle, historical changes, changes by sex, changes in spatial distribution, particularly for more serious types of delinquent and criminal behavior, but it is quite another to predict from juvenile police contact records and experiences with the juvenile justice system who will have numerous contacts or contacts for serious violations of the law as adults. Indeed, the greatest error that has been made by sociologists and others with an interest in the relationship of early misbehavior to later misbehavior is the assumption that statistically significant relationships and reasonably high correlations translate into the ability to predict continuity in behavior. There are many fraudulent claims in the literature stemming from a lack of statistical sophistication. For this reason we have made a distinct effort to critically evaluate the Racine data and findings.

Whether they permit improvement in prediction or not, these data contribute to the understanding of the nature of delinquent and criminal careers and how they both are generated in the community. They lead to the conclusion that if we wish to decrease delinquency rates and reduce such continuities as do exist, steps must be taken to modify the operation of the community's institutions commencing with the school system, the manner in which police forces have traditionally functioned, and the system under which sanctions are applied. The next section of this paper describes some of the procedural or institutional changes that are suggested by the findings that have just been summarized.

APPROACHES TO THE REDUCTION OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND YOUTHFUL CRIME

It is apparent that a proportion of the youth who are socialized in the inner city and its interstitial areas and in other areas as well have not seen the existing organization of society as one into which they can fit and through it progress toward life goals that are acceptable in the larger adult society.

The School--Perhaps the best indicators of this negative attitude are the two closely related findings that attitude toward school and leaving school before graduation are related to both juvenile and adult police contact seriousness scores and self-report seriousness scores (intertwined is years of education). Much has been written in recent years on the trials and tribulations of school administrators, teachers, and counselors. The media have dramatized the problem of drugs and delinquency, sometimes in such a way as to create the impression that the only solution is to turn the school over to police control. There is an excellent literature from the perspective of educators which reveals that even the most dedicated school personnel have

come to despair at the problems of misbehavior in the schools, their inability to achieve conformity to conventional standards of behavior by their students, their inability to achieve the discipline that they see as necessary if all students are to have a traditional learning experience, and, even more important, the high dropout rate.

But, central to the findings of this study is the necessity of avoiding the labeling of students as delinquent or headed for a career in crime on a basis of their involvement in classroom or school misbehavior. The data from Racine, however analyzed, show that while most persons are troublesome at some time during their youth, few go on to careers in crime, To place youth in the "troublemaker" category early in their school careers may only result in treatment which maximizes the fulfillment of the prophesy. Even if we take the position that the acquisition of a history of being difficult at an early age places some students in a high-risk category, should action be taken which maximizes the probability that, rather than being integrated into the larger group, they will be even more likely to have as their friends and associates persons who are also in trouble? Rather, is it not a matter of determining how to channel students into activities that they will find more rewarding than their disruptive behavior or activities that remove them from the realities of life?

It is also difficult for adults in and out of the school system (who have already reaped the rewards of secondary and higher education) to realize that the rewards for conformity and diligence in school are not clearly defined and may be perceived by students as unevenly distributed in school and in the world of work. Completion of high school or college does not have the same payoff for all, no matter that there are relationships between years of education, income, and various other valued goals in the larger society. The inequities in rewards may be more visible that the overall relationships between education and success.

The fact that school dropout does not invariably lead to continued misbehavior and is sometimes symptomatic of more than the inability to achieve academically does not mean that we should be unconcerned about this basic problem. The entire community, not just those in the school system, should be concerned about why large segments of school-age youth fail to see education as at least a partial solution to their problems, as a necessary if not sufficient step toward their life goals.

The question, of course, is what, if anything, can be done to change the school and the students? Young people should have educational opportunities that they deem appropriate to their needs rather than limited alternatives based on either the vested interests of educators or commonly accepted perceptions of youth which may or may not be derived from an understanding of the long-term life situations that they will encounter.

Most recently, although not a new idea, there has been considerable interest in alternative education programs which will serve to keep young people in school. Whether the current concern about this approach has its roots in a new appreciation of the fact that neither the traditional college preparatory track nor a strictly vocational track provide viable experiences for all students or in the realization that there is an overabundance of youthful

manpower is irrelevant. What will work or what works best is a matter of question (which will take extensive research and some years to answer).

Coupled with this is the necessity of developing opportunities for all persons that are commensurate with their abilities. Formal education must have a payoff, whther it is in terms of occupational level, income, or increased opportunities for satisfying social participation. While the school can provide education, it is up to the community to provide opportunity. This suggests that there should be closer linkages between the school and the community. What can be done to redefine the school as a center for juveniles and adults? The problem will persist as long as school is a place of work for teachers and administrators and a place of "detention" for youth. Should it not be a place to which adults go for more than an occasional evening class, athletic event, or some other social event? Exactly which functions could be decentralized to the school would vary depending upon its location and whether it is an elementary school, a junior high school, or a senior high school. The development of the school as a place for functions for persons of all ages may well be the first step toward its redefinition by youth. Perhaps the solution to keeping some youth in school is an alternative education program tied in with the world of work, one in which opportunities for the acquisition of adult status are provided along with formal education.

The Police--No matter how the data are analyzed, police contacts and more serious police contact scores as juveniles are related to continuity in police contacts and more serious police contact scores as adults. Although we have shown that high-risk categories of juveniles develop and provide disproportionately more adult offenders than do low-risk categories, little increase in predictive efficiency over the modal category of the marginals was obtained by utilizing past records as the predictor (for most groups the best prediction is that no further contacts or no further serious misbehavior will take place). Taking area of socialization, sex, and other variables into consideration resulted in some increase in predictive efficiency but even with the addition of data obtained by interview it was clear that only part of the variance in adult careers had been explained and much of that by prior record, including not only police contacts but referrals and sanctions (although the latter contributed less than seriousness scores and referrals).

All of this raises the question of intervention. Diversion programs have become popular but their effectiveness is questionable, diversion itself being another form of intervention which, if available to the police, may take the place of counseling and release. At this point it is not possible to select one program over another and one is led to believe that radical nonintervention in noncriminal cases has considerable merit. Considering the facts that: (1) small percentages of each cohort accounted for large percentages of each cohort's contacts, (2) that felonies and major misdemeanors made up 14.0 percent, 17.7 percent, and 29.0 percent of the police contacts of each cohort in succession, and (3) that while the proportion of males who were referred during the age period 6-17 was somewhat higher (decreasing from cohort to cohort) than the proportion of these more serious reasons for police contact, continuation and expansion of street-level dispositions (counseling and release by the officer) is probably a wise policy because fewer youth are brought into the justice system, a step for which we see little evidence of positive results.

It may also be that the effectiveness of a policy of street-level dispositions could be enhanced by police training program which provides officers with a better understanding of human behavior and juvenile behavior in particular. Only by providing police officers with a better basis for decisionmaking than that which they may informally acquire through encounters with juveniles over a long period of time can we expect them to employ the kind of discretion that will limit referral to only those whose behavior would be criminal (by intent if they were an adult) and those whose condition is so serious that court-imposed resources are required.

But again, we must emphasize that only a small proportion of those who have police contacts as juveniles commit serious offenses as adults and there are as many, if not more, persons who have their first contacts with the police for serious offenses as adults. Even the most judicious decisions by the police in their encounters with juveniles cannot be expected to eliminate adult crime. To charge the police with this responsibility by instituting a policy of dealing more severely with juveniles in their early encounters fails to accept the facts.

The Juvenile Court and Probation--Although the data on court dispositions and the application of sanctions have failed to show evidence of corrective effects, they do indicate that to the extent that the juvenile court judges believed that they could, they followed a policy of judicious nonintervention. This is possible to only a limited extent, however. Consistent with the conclusion that street-level handling by well-trained officers is a desirable policy, we would also take the position that judicial nonintervention is equally wise. As long as police referrals and court sanctions are followed by more contacts, more referrals, and more severe sanctions it cannot be said that the system is accomplishing its purpose. This is not to deny that persons who have police contacts, who are referred, and who are sanctioned have done something to bring about their involvement in the justice system. But is is apparent that the consequences of processing have been continuing misbehavior and continuing involvement while similar persons who have not become so heavily involved in the system are less likely to continue to engage in behavior which results in their names appearing in the public records.

Since the juvenile court will deal with a certain proportion of the juveniles in the community (20.4 percent of the 1955 cohort had a court disposition through the age of 17 and 58.7 percent of these had received court sanctions) and the court has not shown evidence of effectiveness with the limited alternatives available to it, the question is raised as to what, if anything, can be done. Since the juvenile court does not punish, it cannot be said that making the punishment fit the crime would lead to greater effectiveness. On the other hand, increasing the variety of alternatives available to the judge should be considered as an approach to greater effectiveness. In the case of the alleged juvenile delinquent the decision as to what course of action to take should involve not only consideration of the past experiences of the person in court but other information that assists in explaining the social genesis of the juvenile's misbehavior (this involves cooperation with the juvenile bureau of the police department and appropriate persons in the school system).

One of the aims of any court procedure is the protection of society. In the juvenile case there is a major concern with what may be done to change behavior because it is assumed that the die has not been cast, that the juvenile is plastic rather than nonmalleable iron. Court effectiveness involves an understanding of the life experiences that have brought the juvenile to court. While removal from the community may be satisfying to some person in the community, the record shows that both juveniles and adults will be back. So, the ultimate question is not one of how to most expeditiously remove miscreants from the community but how to integrate them into the larger social system so that their talents will be employed in socially constructive ways. This should be a major concern to the community, for if it is not the cost will become increasingly higher.