

# City Life and Delinquency

Summary Report  
April 1977

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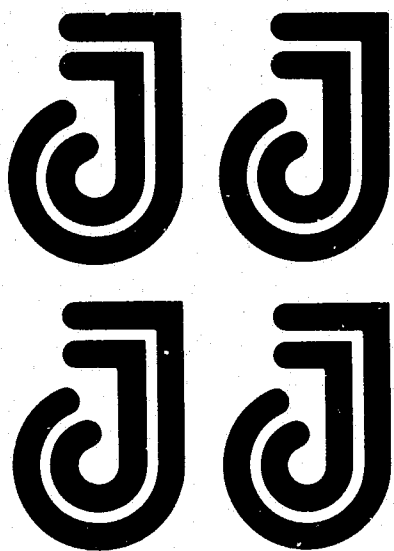
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**Summary Report  
April 1977**

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NCJRS

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ACQUISITIONS

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## Introduction

1. This research examined several cohorts or longitudinal panels of boys born in 1957 (attending public or Catholic parochial schools in Philadelphia) and their parents. There were three representative samples: (a) a probability sample of 671 black youths born in 1957 attending local public schools (selected in 1970); (b) a sample of 365 white youths born in 1957 attending a local public school (selected in 1971); and (c) a sample of 268 white youths born in 1957 attending the ninth grade in a Philadelphia parochial school in 1971 (selected in 1971). From the first sample, 81 percent of the boys (and their mothers) were interviewed in the first survey year and 77 percent were reinterviewed the following year (1972). One completed household set of interviews was secured in either the first or second year from 89 percent of the sample. From the second and third samples, an 84 percent completion rate (for boy *and* mother interviewed) was achieved. Several different populations were used throughout the data analysis although more analysis was made of the 532 black family interviews secured during the first year (Time One).

There were also 508 black families successfully interviewed in the second year (Time Two), which are often used for comparison with the 502 white families interviewed in the same year (1972). Finally, much attention is paid to the panel of 452 black families who responded during *both* the first and second survey years.

2. "Official delinquency records" (some record of the commission of a delinquent act in the Philadelphia Police Juvenile Aid Division files or Juvenile Court records) revealed in 1972 that about one-third (32.5 percent) of the black juvenile subjects were delinquent (having at least one recorded contact with police or juvenile court). This percentage, given the general demographic characteristics of the population involved, is completely expectable and similar to previous findings of comparable Philadelphia black juveniles. By the next year 41 percent were similarly delinquent. This is confirmation of the enormous spurt of delinquency starting at age 13. Ten percent were delinquent at 13; 32 percent at age 14 and 41 percent by age 15.

3. Attempts to differentiate our subject populations into meaningful social classes, based on the two-factor Hollingshead Index were not very successful. The factors used, education and occupation, created considerable anomalies and resulted in many families on public assistance being assigned to the middle class. A three-factor Warner Index of Status Characteristics (house type, source of income, and occupation) was used and proved to be, surprisingly, far and away the best measure of comparing the various social strata of our samples. In rough terms, our black population (whether the 452

who were twice interviewed [our panel population] or the 508 who were interviewed only in the second survey year) were 22-23 percent middle class, 30 percent working class, and 47-48 percent lower class. The whites in our two samples were very different in their distribution: 53 percent were middle class, 31 percent working class, and 16 percent lower class.

4. The most salient demographic difference between our white and black populations related to father's absence. The father was absent in 15.1 percent of the white families and 52.4 percent of the black families studied.

## **Educational Aspirations-Expectations, Quality of Life, and Values Related to Delinquency**

1. The educational aspirations of black youths and their mothers were quite high. Seventy-seven percent of the mothers wanted their sons to go to college and 61 percent of the black youths similarly indicated their desire to attend college. Even in the lowest income groups, 68 percent of the mothers and 51 percent of the youths indicated their aspirations for college education.

2. When the educational aspirations of black "official delinquents" were compared with those of boys not having a police or court record of delinquency it was found, expectedly, that significantly more nondelinquents had aspirations to attend college than did delinquents. But even among delinquents 54 percent evinced a desire to extend their education beyond high school.

Strikingly, when we moved from educational aspirations (how far one "wants to go") to educational expectations (how far one "expects to go"), the association between education and nondelinquency decreased and became nonsignificant, although 51 percent of the delinquents and 60 percent of the nondelinquents expected to attend college. This was all the more interesting in light of the fact that the delinquents were significantly more grade retarded than nondelinquents.

3. Reducing the 261 questions in our first year schedule to manageable dimensions by use of factor analysis we determined five major factors: (a) Quality of Life; (b) Middle Class Means and Goals; (c) Individual vs. Group Action; (d) Fear and Avoidance; and (e) Ideology. Together these explained 77.6 percent of the variance in the questions answered by black families. This permitted us then to cluster families by the five factors into 11 "O-types" or standardized score profiles. The O-type with the highest delinquency rate, 49 percent, was one close to the average for four factors but with a "low" quality of life (involving fear and concern, avoidance and altered behavior, desire for safety, poor features to neighborhood life, and much concern with drugs and theft).

The O-type profile with the highest delinquency rate, 49 percent at Time One, is the one close to the standard or average in all factors except the quality of life. The adults report what we term a low quality of life which included the following items:

- a. Fear and concern
- b. Avoidance and altered behavior due to fear of being victimized

- c. Desire for safety in neighborhood, schools, and place of work
- d. Poor report on neighborhood in regard to rent, shopping, schools, friendliness, etc.
- e. High report on drug peddlers, stealing, etc.

Whereas the socialization process would be most difficult to assess and change, the factor reported as quality of life would not be. Policy makers and social agencies can address themselves to many of the items used in the scales.

O-types 1, 6, 9, and 10 with *the lowest delinquency rates* have the kinds of profiles that one may expect. For instance the O-type 1 profile shows a high quality of life; O-type 9 shows a high quality of life and a high score in avoidance, fear, and altered behavior; and the profile of O-type 6 is close to the mean in all factors but tends to report favorably on the quality of life, lacks attachment to middle class goals and means, and declares the individual is more to blame for his position in life than the social system. In addition, the youth in question tends to be fearful and practices avoidance of "dangerous" places.

4. The use of the above statistical analyses, however, did not reveal educational aspirations to be important in explaining or helping "predict" delinquency. The main profile difference that emerged contrasting black delinquents with black nondelinquents, after dividing families into those with and without delinquent youths, was that delinquents perceived they operated within a poor quality of life while nondelinquents reported a good or high quality of life.

There is an O-type profile of delinquents whose families report a high quality of life but seem to be trapped by the inconsistencies produced during the peculiar socialization process reported in an earlier cluster analysis involving family ideology, punishment, and self esteem. Youths with low delinquency rates indeed reported a good quality of life, but curiously and perhaps understandably in one instance (O-type 3) rejected middle class goals and values. Perhaps this represents a realistic adjustment to their "life chances" and they experience no "strain."

5. Comparing maternal and youth educational aspirations (college or high school) during Time One and Time Two, it was found that regardless of the juvenile's or adult's school aspirations at Time One, all groups with high school aspirations at Time Two had higher delinquency rates than those who aspired to college in the second study year. Weighing the relative importance of educational aspirations and social class on delinquency, it was found that social class (as measured by the Warner Scale) did explain more of the differences among delinquency rates.

It should be noted that a relationship exists between social class and delinquency such that the lower class has the highest rate, 45 percent, and the

middle class the lowest, 25 percent. The lower class has the highest delinquency rate—this much of the findings supports Merton's original anomie theory. However, it's those boys with the lowest educational aspirations within each social class who have the higher rates.

In general, then, social class as measured in this study accounts for more differences among delinquency rates than does educational aspirations. Generally, this finding supports Merton's theory. However, the finding is also consistent with the notion that the lower class lacks bonds to conventions and that families have no resources to effectively control their youth. Strictly speaking for a confirmation of a strain theory those lower class youths with high aspirations should show the highest delinquency rates. This is not the case according to the data in this study.

6. Analyzing the comparative role of selected variables related to black delinquency, the use of Automatic Interaction Detection revealed that the most important variable was family structure (46 percent of the boys in broken homes and 30 percent of the boys from intact homes were delinquent). The highest delinquency group (64 percent) consisted of boys from broken homes, with few middle class values and a low educational index. On the other hand, the lowest delinquency rate (11 percent) was found for those boys who came from intact families, with a high educational index and surprisingly low middle class values. But both of the *next two high delinquency rate groups had intact families*; in one instance the family was lower class with low material goals and a low educational index (63 percent); in the other instance, although social class values were high and the educational index high, the quality of neighborhood life was reported as low (60 percent).

The three groups with the lowest percent delinquency were middle or working class and reported a high quality of neighborhood life; in one of the multivariate groups identified the family was not intact and the rate was 17 percent. Dealing primarily with education-related variables it was found that the highest black delinquent group (86 percent) were boys who limited their aspirations to a high school education, and low attachments to parents but high middle class (material goods) goals. The same variables when applied to white youths produced the highest delinquency (59 percent) for youths who wanted a high school education, expressed low attachment to teachers, and were involved in school activities and hobbies.

The comparison of the interaction variables over time indicates that educational aspirations become increasingly important in their association with, or as an aid in understanding, delinquency. However, variables such as an extremely large family, middle class goals, father's presence and/or interaction, persistently show up as important differentials in the comparisons of delinquents and nondelinquents. The boys who persisted in aspiring to college although they expected high school in the second time period, showed low delinquency rates for their cohort. It does seem that the ones who maintained their commitment to higher education in spite of their low

expectations provide evidence for "control theorists;" they may have felt strain but it did not reflect itself very much in the delinquency rate. Those who lowered their aspirations and expectations had the highest delinquency rates. One could argue of course that they yielded to "strain" and were expressing themselves realistically and acting out their resentment.

High educational aspirations over time and educational aspirations which change from low to high are associated with lower delinquency rates and aspirations which are persistently low or change from high to low have average or high delinquency rates. This finding is consistent with both strain and control theories. For those youths or mothers who persisted in their educational aspiration it might be argued that they firmly held to middle class or working class values.

As to those youths who had or changed to high educational aspirations, they may be regarded as committed to middle class values and hence give evidence of the influence of social control. For those youths who were persistently low or changed from high to low, one may interpret their behavior either in the context of "strain" or a commitment to lower class values. However, they must be regarded as being contrary to Cloward and Ohlin's notion that boys who *cannot revise their aspirations downward* experience frustration and hence explore new alternatives and become delinquents (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960:86).

7. Interaction Detection has revealed some populations at risk for which neither the strain or control theories seem to yield a plausible interpretation. For instance, a group of families in which youths had a delinquency rate of 11 percent were intact, had a higher than average attachment to education as a means or a goal *but rejected* traditional sentiments and virtues. Strain and control theories don't seem to fit these families. They seem to be abandoning older bonds, ties or controls and adapting to a new, changing situation in which they are convinced the old virtues do not work. Changing values or values which have gone unrecognized may be the better explanation.

8. The quality of neighborhood life seems to make a big difference for both the middle and working class black families which are broken and report low attachment to middle class values and average educational expectation-aspirations. Where quality of life is high, the rate is low (17 percent). On the other hand, low quality of life is associated with a high delinquency rate of 48 percent. One could argue that a form of control theory is operating here—even though the family is broken, it has moderate but above average educational aspirations and a reasonable degree of social class status even though it reports some skepticism about middle class values. This sort of finding is also perhaps consistent with Matza and Sykes' suggestions on subterranean values (Matza and Sykes, 1969). Though this idea is accepted, it could be argued that the quality of neighborhood life provides social controls or indeed indicates the presence or absence of either legitimate or illegitimate opportunities.



9. An intact working class and middle class black family in which expectations-aspirations are modest, may be exhibiting feelings of strain in regard to their social status maintenance or improvement, which is reflected in a 43 percent delinquency rate. These same intact middle class and working class families, who explicitly report quite low aspirations-expectations and educational goals, may be making an adjustment to so-called higher educational aspirations and perhaps have blue-collar occupational aspirations. Briefly, they feel no status strain and report a 21 percent delinquency rate.

10. The analysis of the educational data does not lead to a clear cut conclusion, but this should be expected. The "facts" do not easily yield or fit the sharply defined theories already suggested. However, the weight of this evidence suggested by the analysis seems to yield an interpretation more in accord with the notions of commitment to middle class values and the social control ideas of Hirschi. Some sub-groups have been identified where indeed "strain" or adherence to other than middle class values may account for high delinquency rates.

## Victimization, Fear of Crime, and Altered Behavior

1. When the area of criminal victimization was examined in our subject population, we were faced at once with the issue of the knowledgeability of the adult head of household informant concerning criminal acts which took place against other members of the household. Adults were asked about household victimization of 10 crimes (attempted robbery, robbery, burglary, assault, sexual assault, threats of injury, malicious mischief and arson, acceptance of counterfeit instruments, minor sexual offenses, and injury in a hit-and-run or reckless driving accident); youth were asked about their personal experiences as the victims of robbery or attempted robbery, assault, and extortion.

Most juveniles who were robbed reported that a visible weapon (gun, knife, etc.) was used, they were threatened by such a weapon, or they were actually assaulted and something of value was taken. These were usually serious robberies and involved 202 black youthful victims in Time One. Within these 202 families, however, adult respondents reported some household robbery in only 44 cases. This 21 percent overlap, as small as it may seem, represents a maximum estimated degree of agreement because in some of these 44 adult-reported robberies, the adult respondent was describing a robbery which involved the adult himself or someone in the family other than the subject youth. In Time Two, 136 boys reported being robbed while only 38 of their parents (28 percent) reported a household robbery. Therefore, adults were extremely poor informants about even serious felonies which transpired against their children. To a considerable extent this is because 58 percent of the children did not tell their parents of the crime and also because only 53 percent of the parents who were told of their children's robbery victimization, recalled the event to the interviewer.

2. When household victimizations were examined over two years, it was found that the amount of crime our subject population "consumed" was the same each year (44 percent victimized at Time One and again at Time Two). The most usual victimizations were attempted robbery, assault, threats of injury, and burglary.

3. Further, the pattern of family victimization in one year is positively associated with family victimization experiences in the following year. One hundred fifty-nine families (35 percent of our black panel population) were *continuing non victims* (victimized in neither Time One or Time Two); 105 families (23 percent) were *continuing victims* (victimized both in Time One and Time Two); and 188 families (42 percent) were *occasional victims* (victimized in only Time One or Time Two).

4. For black juveniles, 30 percent and 38 percent were robbed at Time One and Time Two respectively, 16 percent and 18 percent were assaulted, and 7 percent and 7.5 percent paid protection.

5. As with households, juvenile victimization in *one year* is positively associated with juvenile victimization in the second year. One hundred seventy-five youths (39 percent) were *continuing non victims*; 110 (24 percent) were *continuing victims*; and 167 (38 percent) were *occasional victims*.

6. Curious patterns of multiple victimization were found for black youths. Boys who paid extortion were unlikely to have been assaulted but were very prone to have been robbed. Boys who were assaulted were unlikely to also have paid extortion but were very likely to have been robbed. However, when this universe of all 200 boys robbed was examined, on the average they were unlikely to have also been assaulted (29 percent) or to have also paid protection (14.5 percent).

7. When delinquency (officially recorded) was related to victimization experience, no significant relationships were found. Delinquents and nondelinquents were similar in being victimized for robbery or extortion. While delinquents reported a higher rate of being assaulted (26 percent to 15 percent), the difference was not significant.

8. Criminal depredations against families showed almost identical percentages of household victimizations for families of delinquent and nondelinquent youths. Even when delinquent status was related to serious household victimization (robbery, serious assault or sexual attack) the same pattern of nonsignificant differences was found.

9. Contrary to the findings of previous research, juveniles from lower income black groups were not more heavily victimized than boys from higher income groups. However, in Time One, the higher the family income the higher the proportion of boys who were robbed.

10. The dangerousness of the immediate area in which the families lived was differentially perceived by adults and juveniles. During the daytime one's close neighborhood (within a block or two) was considered dangerous by 32.5 percent of all black adults and only 19 percent of the juveniles. The reverse was true at night, with 49 percent of the adults and 56 percent of the juveniles considering it dangerous then.

11. Adults gave scaled (from 0 to 10) fear scores for 13 events involving themselves or their children; juveniles produced scaled fear scores for eight events during Time One. Adult fear levels were considerably higher than

those of the juveniles. Only two percent of all adults and about eight percent of the juveniles were rated as showing almost *No Fear*. Over 60 percent of all adults and 49 percent of all juveniles had above midpoint fear scores. Over four percent of all adults and one percent of all juveniles produced *Absolute Fear* scores (top level fear for all rated items), operating within what one might consider a "panic view of life."

12. What particularly frightened black parents (excluding the ominous area of subways) were the possibilities of their children being injured or robbed either at school or in their immediate neighborhood.

13. To some extent higher adult fear scores may be related to the household experiences with criminal victimization. Fifteen percent of the adults produced the highest possible fear scores (115-130) and reported 22 percent of all household assault victimizations and 18 percent of all household robbery victimizations. The same maximally fearful adults were also more likely to consider their immediate neighborhood more dangerous in the daytime than at night, but the difference between them and the less fearful was not significant.

14. Adult fear scores were related to the two-year period for household victimization status (continuing victim, nonvictim or occasional victim) and those who were continuing victims had, naturally, the most elevated fear scores while the never and occasional victims were alike in lower fear scores.

15. No significant relationship was found between juvenile (personal) victimizations and juvenile fear scores.

16. A comparison of the intrafamilial fear of criminal victimization scores of adults and children in the same family reveals a significant relationship. In 109 families (24 percent) both youth and adult had below midpoint fear scores; 151 cases (33.5 percent) had both producing above midpoint fear scores. In 27.5 percent of the cases, the boy gave low fear scores and his parent high scores. The remaining group (15.5 percent) were 68 families where the parent had low fear and the boy produced a high score. This disagreement between boy and parent is far more likely to show the parent with high fear and the boy low fear and is probably a function of great parental fear for their children's safety.

17. The major areas of juvenile fear (fearful to more than half of all black youths) were streets more than a block from home, subways, parks, and streets going to and from schools. If we focus on the school environment, 54 percent of all boys thought streets to and from school dangerous; 44 percent rated school yards as dangerous; 34 percent rated school hallways dangerous; and 21 percent even thought school rooms were dangerous. Much juvenile

truancy and disenchantment with the educational system may be directly related to the perceived danger of arriving and departing from school and school settings.

18. The perception of danger was somewhat greater for delinquents than nondelinquents in the first year, particularly in regard to their immediate neighborhood, trolley and buses, and streets to and from school.

19. In reference to altered behavior (changes in everyday behavior calculated to reduce the risk of criminal victimization), most adults at Time One and Time Two tended to engage in multiple avoidances (stay home at night, try not to go out alone at night, don't go to movies alone, do less shopping alone, visit friends less, don't talk to strangers, avoid subways, try not to work in "bad" areas, and keep children off streets at night).

20. A significant proportion of all adults engaged in weapon reactions—buying guns, keeping loaded guns in the house, keeping weapons by the bed, and carrying weapons when they went out. Adults with higher than average fear scores were significantly more likely than those with lower fear scores to engage in avoidance behaviors, noneconomically expensive forms of new positive behavior, and economically expensive types of altered behavior. No differences according to adult fear scores were found for weapon reaction. Generally, the greater the fear the greater the avoidance of previous behavior and the more restricted and confined the lifestyle adopted to subvert the risk of criminal victimization.

21. Most black youths were likely (at Time One and Time Two) to avoid talking to or meeting strangers, going out alone at night or entering another gang's territory at night or day. While only a small percentage admitted to carrying a gun or knife, the vast majority (over 70 percent) admitted to carrying "something else" for protection. Generally juveniles engaged in fewer avoidances and *more* weapon reactions than did adults. Juveniles were less fearful and changed their lives less in regard to the risk of victimization than their parents.

22. White and black youths populations by age 15 had, expectedly, differential rates of delinquency with 41 percent of the blacks and 14 percent of the whites having official delinquency records.

23. One hypothesis suggested in the past is that the status of being a juvenile delinquent might be functional for many boys because the reputation for "toughness" often associated with the label of delinquent might reduce the number of attacks and robberies against such identified individuals. For both white and black youth populations, this did not appear to be the case. Delinquents and nondelinquents were very similar in the way they rated the

relative seriousness of their immediate area in the daytime and at night. White youths, both delinquent and nondelinquent, thought their neighborhood to be far less dangerous than did black youths.

The same pattern held for areas of fear. Delinquents and nondelinquents showed no significant differences as to what they regarded as dangerous settings. Indeed black delinquents rated all school settings (streets to and from school, school yards, school halls, and school rooms) as more dangerous than did their nondelinquent counterparts, but the differences were not statistically significant. The same situations regarding school settings occurred even more dramatically with the white population and more than twice as many delinquents as nondelinquents rated school rooms, yards and halls as dangerous social settings. Also whites (delinquent and nondelinquent) were less fearful of 12 of the 13 settings than were blacks (regardless of delinquency status).

As to fear of criminal victimization, black delinquents scored somewhat lower for all four events (being robbed, assaulted, paying protection or being killed by teenagers) than nondelinquents but the differences were insignificant. The reverse was true for whites with delinquents scoring higher than nondelinquents for three of the four settings (being robbed, assaulted or killed).

When actual victimizations are examined, black delinquents were very similar to nondelinquents in the percentage robbed or extorted, but they were significantly *more* likely to have been assaulted. The same pattern was found for white youths with similar victimization rates of robbery or extortion and significantly more delinquents than nondelinquents assaulted.

There were no significant differences found between delinquents and nondelinquents (black or white) concerning altered behavior, although black and white delinquents were somewhat more apt to carry a gun, knife or "something else" for their personal protection.

Thus it would seem that delinquents do not perceive their world as safer or more dangerous than do nondelinquents; delinquency is not associated with lesser fear; delinquents are slightly more victimized; and they do not constrain or modify their life any more or less than nondelinquents. The status of being a delinquent has no "payoff" along these lines.

24. Regarding gang affiliation, if one uses official social agency listing of members of highly publicized and visible gangs, very few members of our subject population (under 10) were found on these central registers. Not satisfied with official listings, we attempted to group subjects into structural or functional gangs, based on the presence of certain organizational features (a group leader; acknowledged, recognized turf; and the ability to precisely define the limits of the boundaries), or the existence of common social (functional) concerns (the group fought other groups, ego was expected to fight with them and if he did not he would be dropped from the organization). Generally, structural gang members had heightened fears of the local area and

specific social settings, were more victimized and more prone to acquire a delinquency record than nonstructural gang members. On the other hand, functional gang membership did serve real interest for the members; compared to the nonfunctional gang members, they had dampened (lessened) fear of neighborhood, with lesser and less diffused fears, fewer criminal victimizations, less change in customary modes of behavior (as a consequence of fear of crime), and no higher rates of delinquency.

## Family and Delinquency

1. Forty-seven percent of our black families were intact (husband and wife present) at Time One but only 43 percent one year later, compared to 85 percent of the white families. Comparing rates of broken homes by family income, we find that the lower income for blacks the higher the broken home rate (81 percent for those below \$3,000 annual income to 11 percent for those over \$20,000). Similar patterns with minor differences were found for the whites. The lowest income group (under \$3,000) had a broken home rate of 54.5 percent while the next slightly more affluent groups (income of \$3,000 - \$3,999) had the highest broken home rate (94 percent). Thereafter the rate decreases with a fair amount of regularity.

2. An interesting pattern emerged for the 226 black youth who reported an absent father at Time One. Fully 22 percent indicated that while the father was no longer living at home, they still had some involvement or interaction with him.

3. For blacks at Time One, 31 percent of boys with a father present and 47 percent of boys with a father absent were delinquent. The difference was statistically significant but with a low strength of association. The white pattern (at Time Two) was 13 percent of boys with a father present and 19 percent of boys with a father absent were delinquent. This difference was not significant.

4. In general the relationship between delinquency and father's absence holds true for three social class levels.

5. The degree of father-son interaction was found also to be related to delinquency for blacks—the higher the reported interaction, the lower the delinquency rate. This was especially true for the lowest social class. This factor proved to be unrelated to delinquency for whites.

6. Automatic Interaction Detection (AID) analysis of the variables of father's presence, father-son interaction, number of siblings, social class, and family income revealed important differences between blacks and whites. For blacks, father-son interaction proved more salient than the structural measure of patriarchy. In addition family size and social class were also important. In general the higher delinquency rates were found among lower social class boys with relatively low levels of father-son interaction. Low delinquency rates were found for boys with relatively high levels of father-son interaction and a small number of siblings. With whites high delinquency rates were



found for lower social class boys with three or more siblings, whereas lower rates were evident for middle working class boys reporting a father present in the household. The measure of father-son interaction proved unimportant.

7. Structural matriarchy is of little importance in understanding the delinquency of blacks, although it might be of some importance for middle or working class white males.

8. Social class and family size cannot be ignored for either blacks or whites in any explanation of delinquency among family variables.

9. The expanded AID analysis using 20 independent variables found the following factors to be associated with higher rates of delinquency for blacks:

- a. low frequency of father-son interaction
- b. high levels of punishment
- c. large number of siblings
- d. low degree of agreement between child and adult on social values
- e. high commitment to middle class goals
- f. low commitment to middle class values
- g. greater acceptance of illegitimate means
- h. lower educational expectations on the part of the boy
- i. low social class

In general an exclusive combination of these factors resulted in relatively high rates of delinquency. For example, boys with low father-son interaction and a high level of punishment had a very high delinquency rate of 82 percent whereas boys with high father-son interaction and low levels of punishment exhibited a delinquency rate of nine percent. In situations where there was a mix of "favorable" and "unfavorable" characteristics, delinquency rates tended to be in the middle range. It was also possible for favorable characteristics to "neutralize" the effect of a strong "unfavorable" factor and vice-versa.

For blacks delinquency seems to be associated with difficulties in family interaction and a low level of attachment to predominant social values. It is also evident that non-familial factors are of some critical importance.

10. For whites the following factors were associated with higher rates of delinquency:

- a. high punishment level
- b. low child-parent agreement
- c. low educational aspirations of the boy

- d. high commitment to middle class goals
- e. low attachment to school
- f. low attachment to parents

Boys with reported high levels of punishment, low educational aspirations, and low attachment to parents and school exhibited the highest delinquency rate (75 percent). In contrast boys reported to experience low levels of punishment and a high degree of child-adult agreement had the lowest rate of delinquency (three percent).

In general our results *suggest* that family per se is more important in the etiology of delinquency for blacks than whites.

11. In a prediction study of subsequent delinquency for blacks we found the best single predictor to be a previous delinquency record. Boys with previous records were twice as likely to have a subsequent record as those with no previous record. However, other variables tended to increase the "success of prediction" (e.g., number of siblings, father-son interaction, social class, boy's and adult's educational aspirations, family values, and boy's commitment to illegitimate means).

## Policy Implications

1. The first problem to be addressed as regards the educational institution is the reduction of truancy. A large proportion of the delinquents in our cohort had been truants from school, i.e., they had school records indicating frequent truancy or official, police or court records involving the delinquency of truancy. Boys who are officially delinquent by reason of truancy are usually extremely chronic in their truancy. That is, in these cases truancy comes to the attention of the police only when the school has failed in its attempts to "handle the problem." Truancy has been regarded as a serious phenomenon by social scientists who have studied the educational and schooling processes intensely and also by those who have studied delinquency.

2. Some significant degree of truancy can be reduced if we recognize that a significant proportion of youth is simply afraid to attend school or is afraid of the routes leading to and from school. School administrators should become aware of this significant dimension of the truancy problems and perhaps react by appropriately policing or controlling streets and routes perceived as dangerous (by school students).

3. On the related problem of school drop-out, our findings indicate that delinquency, in general, precedes the boy leaving school. Furthermore, recent studies (e.g., Elliott, 1966; Mukherjee, 1971) contradict the notion that dropouts have a higher incidence of delinquency *after* they leave school. Bachman's findings (1971) emphasize that the problem of "drop-out" has been exaggerated. A program for drop-outs and delinquents in Washington (1964-1967) has been characterized as an "overwhelming failure;" those who had passed the high school equivalency examination were found to be more delinquent than those who failed. Ray and Ina Jeffrey (1970) concluded that educational retraining programs fail to reduce delinquency. Our data seem to suggest that one solution to this problem would be to let the delinquents drop out. This however, may produce other consequences. There is also some evidence that conditions associated with the phenomenon of delinquency are also associated with school dropouts.

3a. With additional evaluation of our data we will be better able to intervene at an earlier time in a youth's school career.

3b. Some experimental methods must be tried to discover ways to reduce students' fears of school yards, halls, and rooms.

4. The most general finding regarding schooling and educational

aspirations in the present study is that black youths who want to go to college are slightly less delinquent than those who indicate they want to stop at high school. Over time the difference in delinquency rates increases between college and high school aspirants. A tentative analysis indicates this difference is probably related to social class so that it vanishes when the association between delinquency and educational aspirations is controlled for social class.

5. In fact, however, variables such as family size, social and economic quality of the family, quality of the neighborhood environment, middle class values, and others all "explain" or show greater association with delinquency.

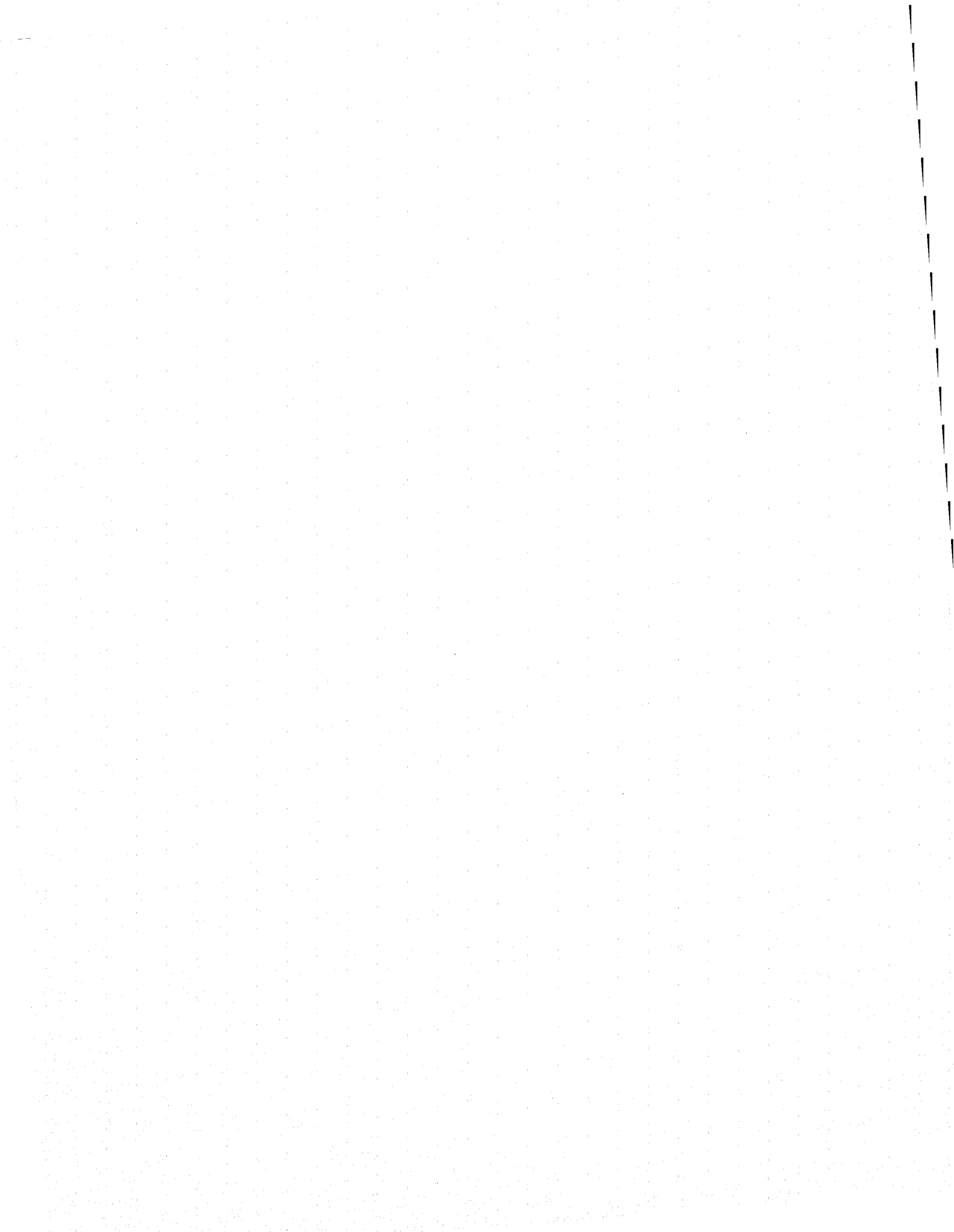
6. The percent delinquent for those who persist (over two years) in saying that they want to stop their education with high school increases over time, while those who say they are college-bound manifest decreasing rates. It would be appropriate to retain the college aspirations for as long as possible and attempt to decrease the proportion who do not verbally aspire to college. On the other hand, it is difficult to accept the notion that a realistic solution would be to encourage everyone to go to college. Rather one can more securely make the recommendation that junior and senior high schools give the kind of general preparatory education which will allow all to go on to college if they wish. After high school all boys could choose between colleges and universities, one and two year technical programs, and schools which are connected with trades and industries. The goal of achievement should not be locked into short time periods; a good high school education will benefit everyone. Students who do not go on to a college or university should not be looked down upon.

7. In regard to family structure, our most general finding was that youths from "broken" families (black or white) showed little or no difference in regard to delinquency compared to children from intact families. Rather, what is important is the social stability of family life, father-son interaction, and income. It is difficult to see how certain deficiencies can be remedied. Lower class families, broken or intact, with little income lack the resources and authority to maintain adequate social control over their children, especially in light of our findings regarding criminal victimization, fear of crime, and quality of life. Income maintenance and improved neighborhood life seem reasonable recommendations, although scarcely novel ideas.

8. It is important to differentiate the major civic and political aspects of crime in America today. There is on the one hand a certain actual volume of crime and delinquency committed which involves persons as victims. We could, and to some extent do, concern ourselves then with the problems of crime, its consumers, and its producers. A large percentage of our families experienced victimization and certainly some attention must be paid to this

fact. But, it is important to recognize that the actual experience of victimization does not seem to be related to high or low levels of fear of crime. That is, the second political dimension of crime in America, even more central than crime rates and relative probabilities of becoming the victim of some violent or economic offense, is the *fear of crime* which has gripped the nation for the past decade. Our findings indicate that being the victim of a crime does not produce a higher fear level of one's becoming a victim again when compared to nonvictims' fear scores. If we are able to reduce criminal victimization to a significant extent, it is very likely that this would *not* dampen widespread fear and concern for self and family about becoming victims of crimes. Fear of crime is relatively unrelated to the objective risk of becoming a victim independent of actual victimization experiences. The successful policy of reducing crime will not reduce *fear* because fear is not a rational product stemming from or directly related to victimization experiences. To reduce fear of crime it might be suggested that the mass media in some way work to alter faulty perceptions of true crime risks.

9. Another policy implication emerging from the findings relates to on-going gang control programs operating largely in black areas. Based on the data of this report most youth who belong to gangs are not perceived as belonging to real, i.e., highly publicized, gangs. We use two different approaches to define gang affiliation. The "functional" gang member, compared to those who do not belong to functional gangs, derives positive personal and psychological advantage from such affiliation. He is less often the victim of a criminal act; he produces lower fear levels; he operates with fewer constraints on his everyday life; and he is less likely to restrict his life style (as a consequence of his fear of crime). This pattern holds for both black and white youths.



**END**