

THE EFFECT OF LEGAL SANCTIONS ON JUVENILE DELINQUENCY
A COMPARISON OF THE LABELING AND DETERRENCE PERSPECTIVES

BY

CHARLES W. THOMAS
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This study, based on self-administered questionnaire data obtained from a sample of 2,249 public school students in Portsmouth and Virginia Beach, Virginia in both the Fall and the Spring of the 1975-76 academic year, was designed to measure the impact of formal sanctions on subsequent attitudes and behavior. Secondary goals of the study included an assessment of the type and magnitude of delinquency reported by those in the sample, the risk of apprehension confronted by those reporting delinquency involvement, and the extent to which non-legal factors were associated with formal responses to juveniles. The analysis shows that those in the sample report a high level of involvement in delinquency, including serious forms of misconduct; that the vast majority of all types of delinquency elicit no formal response by the police or the juvenile court; and that the consequences of formal responses are more often counterproductive than supportive of the treatment goals of the juvenile justice system. On the other hand, however, nowhere in the analysis are the negative consequences of formal sanctions shown to be as negative as many contemporary statements of labeling theory imply.

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ACQUISITIONS

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PREFACE

Introduction

Few social problems are perceived to be of direct and immediate relevance by a majority of Americans. Poverty, unemployment, political corruption, defects in our health care delivery systems, inflation and a broad spectrum of other social ills are, of course, a source of general concern. Objectively, each affects the quality of life everyone experiences, but none constitutes the kind of thing which routinely impacts on the everyday lives of all. Some, like poverty and discrimination, tend to be pressing problems only for those who are poor or who are discriminated against. Those who are neither poor nor subjected to discrimination, while often concerned and desirous of a solution to these problems, find it difficult to identify with the plight of those who fall into one or both categories. Other problems, like inflation and political corruption, which have a relatively direct effect on most of us, and which are commonly noted as salient concerns by a large majority, tend to be passively

accepted as characteristics of our economic and political systems about which pityfully little can be done. Consequently, the former types of problems are often ignored, practically speaking, by average citizens; the latter are typically viewed as simple facts of life to which all must adjust.

Juvenile delinquency falls into neither of these categories. Research as well as everyday experience attests to the fact that it is not something characteristic of any special category of the population. To the contrary, numerous studies have shown that delinquency is common in every geographical area, every segment of our social class structure, all communities, and among the children of any type of family one can envision. It is, in short, a ubiquitous social problem. Indeed, every available body of statistical information supports the hypothesis that the magnitude of the problem is growing in terms of both its frequency and seriousness. Further, societal reactions to juvenile delinquency are not premised only on the recognition of the fact that it directly affects so many. Even among those who adopt a far more retributive stance toward adult offenders, most view juvenile misconduct as something about which something can and should be done. Whether one encounters private citizens or those directly involved with delinquency in some professional way, there is a pervasive belief that we can and must devise explanations,

develop policies, and implement programs that have the effect of "saving children."

The question, of course, revolves around how one goes about the task of serving this goal. It is precisely at this point that the waters become muddied and the consensus evaporates. To save the children implies many things: that they are doing something from which they should be saved; that we understand the factors which produced the behavior we wish to eliminate; that we have the technological ability to change behavior; that we are capable of putting together the kinds of programs, policies, and organizations which can articulate the knowledge we have accumulated -- and that we have and are willing to expend the resources required by our desire to prevent and control delinquency. In all of these regards we find more questions than answers, more conflict than agreement, and, on a purely practical level, more cynicism than optimism.

The questions, conflict, and cynicism have not stopped us from attempting to do something. To the contrary, much has been attempted, but because so little of what has been tried has been systematically evaluated we know almost nothing about what, if anything, has been accomplished. It is in response to that problem that the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has provided financial support for the research reviewed in this monograph. The general questions posed here are, I

think, critically important ones for all segments of the juvenile justice system and those, like myself, whose concerns for the development of the field of criminology and academic affiliations provide them with the luxury of being able to study the problem of delinquency at a distance rather than being overwhelmed, as they certainly would be, were they forced to deal with the issue on the same practical, everyday, hectic, and often frustrating basis as do school and juvenile justice system officials. Although I will return to the specifics of the research problem later, the study was designed to assess the effect of responses we make to juveniles in trouble.

Implicit in the choice of the research problem is an assumption which I think most of us would view as tenable. Particularly over the past century, and as a consequence of many changes in the size, structure, complexity, and values of American society, the role played by the family, church, community, and other groups with regard to guiding, supervising, and controlling juveniles has progressively diminished. These responsibilities have been increasingly allocated to or assumed by specialized organizations. The socialization of children, always a portion of the responsibility of public schools, continues. So does the goal of transmitting basic skills necessary for the assumption of adult vocational and professional roles. Increasingly, however, schools are charged with providing supervised

social activities, recreational opportunities, counseling, guidance, and, not unimportantly, with controlling the behavior of juveniles and imposing sanctions on those guilty of misconduct. Similarly, our system of juvenile justice, something which has developed largely in the past seventy or eighty years, long ago moved away from any simplistic notion of apprehending and punishing delinquents as ends in themselves. Instead, detecting and reacting to delinquency are now viewed as noxious, though perhaps necessary, means by which the system can enter into and positively influence the lives of juveniles.

More simply put, this study assumes that numerous factors have had the effect of drastically enlarging the social control responsibilities of both the public schools and the juvenile justice system. Sometimes eagerly, sometimes with a good deal of hesitation, both sets of agencies have accepted this mandate; both have made very visible changes in their organizational policies and arrangements to accommodate their evolving goals. Further, there is at least one common denominator in the efforts of both to prevent and control misconduct: the imposition of sanctions on those presumed to be guilty of rule or law violations. This is not to suggest that sanctions are necessarily viewed by either as ends in themselves. There are times, of course, when that is the case: a child breaks a rule or law and is punished for doing so simply because punishment is just

(or, less philosophically, because it is required by "the rules"). Often teachers, school administrators, police, intake officials, and juvenile court judges react to misconduct in the hope that their response will make the child less likely to misbehave in the future (which we can term the goal of "specific deterrence") and that reacting to one juvenile will lessen the likelihood that others will risk involvement in similar behavior (which we can refer to as "general deterrence"). Most commonly, I suspect, reactions to misconduct are at least implicitly designed to provide punishment for the guilty, thereby serving some notion of retributive justice, while at the same time producing both specific and general deterrence. Regardless of this, and of those situations where recognitions of and reactions to some type of misconduct are viewed as a justification to intervene into the lives of juveniles in order to set the stage for the delivery of some other service (e.g., entry into educational programs designed for children with "special problems," "pre-delinquent" treatment programs, various court-sponsored diversion programs, and so on), both the social control and the therapeutic efforts of the school and the juvenile justice systems begin with some type of official reaction to alleged misconduct.

This is precisely what is viewed as problematic by this study. As briefly and in as non-technical way as

is reasonable given the subject matter, the balance of this monograph will place heavy emphasis on the effect of official reactions to juvenile misconduct on the subsequent attitudes and behavior of those juveniles who are singled out for special attention. Because this category of juveniles is nowhere viewed as a representative cross-section of those who could have been responded to, some preliminary attention will be given to levels and types of delinquency reported by the students in the sample and to some of the many factors which influence the probability of official responses independent of the type of misconduct.

Those even superficially familiar with contemporary theory and research in the field of delinquency will quickly note the primary advantage of this research. Most of the decisions being made on a very practical level today regarding the ifs, whens, and hows of reacting to delinquency are necessarily being made on the basis of virtually no systematic evaluative research. The requisite data have simply not been obtained. The bits and pieces which do exist are almost never analyzed in such a way as to shed any meaningful light on the issues at hand. Consequently, there are those who advise juvenile justice practitioners to react to juveniles only when it is absolutely necessary to do so and, when there are no reasonable options, to intervene in the least formal and most supportive manner possible. Otherwise, we are told, we will inadvertantly

so stigmatize juvenile offenders that, in effect, we push them toward rather than away from further involvement in delinquency. At the same time, there are a growing number of respected authorities who argue that this hesitation to react is based more on an ill-conceived liberal philosophy than on hard behavioral science evidence. Their contrary claim, which draws its potency from such diverse sources as behavioristic psychology, deterrence theory, utility theory, and the "rational man" so long adored by professors of economics, is that the cost-reward value of behavior is at least partly a function of the ratio of costs associated with the behavior to the rewards made available by engaging in the behavior. Thus, they argue, the goals of specific and general deterrence may be served better by the imposition of swift, certain, and adequately severe sanctions than by intentionally avoiding any application of sanctions because of some nebulous hypothesis that they might prove stigmatizing and that this stigmatization may, in turn, encourage delinquency.

In their more sophisticated forms, there is much that can be said in support of the logic of both of these views. Both, however, cannot be equally useful in explaining behavior (though I should quickly add that a reasoned synthesis of the two is almost certainly possible, very probably in the theoretical terms employed by Ronald L. Akers in the recent second edition of his Deviant Behavior:

A Social Learning Theory Approach). Stripped of their respective assumptions and the qualifier that "all other things being equal" sanctions will or will not deter, an evaluation of the impact of sanctions as they are applied and reacted to by juveniles in real social contexts will almost certainly lend support to one perspective and question the viability of the other. The purpose of this research is to provide such a comparative test.

Limitations of the Study

As will soon become clear, there is no claim made in any portion of this monograph that the truth has finally been found or that the design and execution of the study were flawlessly conceived and executed. Truth claims are invariably so tentative that no reasonable researcher ever makes them -- and no reasonable reader would believe them were an overly zealous researcher so foolish as to suggest that his or her study provided a definitive answer. Similarly, there are aspects of the research design, measurement techniques, and analysis about which I wish something could have been done. Unfortunately, time, financial support, limitations on access to students, and all manner of other constraints -- including my own abilities -- would not be denied.

A few examples of relevant problems should at least be sufficient to encourage the reader to approach what follows with appropriate caution. Perhaps the most

important qualification is that it was possible to obtain data from those in the sample at only two points in time: the beginning and end of the 1975-76 school year. While that is a distinct improvement over the bulk of delinquency research, the impact of sanctions obviously implies a process of interaction between actors and a social audience over time. We know very little about the immediate, short-term, and long-term consequences of sanctions. Had we been in a position to follow those in the sample for a longer period of time, the advantages would have been considerable. Purely practical constraints precluded doing so.

Similar limitations dictated the method of data collection and the type of sample. As will be discussed in more detail elsewhere, questionnaires were administered to randomly selected classes in the public junior and senior high schools of Portsmouth and Virginia Beach, Virginia. It was not possible to base portions of the analysis on the products of detailed interviews with a subsample of the students we contacted in their classes, though it cannot be denied that contact interviews, when properly handled, provide the basis for a richer analysis than can any variety of numbers extracted from however large a set of questionnaires. Basing the analysis solely on public school students, which must be translated into those public school students who attended the classes drawn for our

sample on both of the days on which data were collected, further aggravates the problem for obvious reasons.

Beyond these problems and limitations in the design of the study, there will be many readers who will be concerned with the analysis presented here. This is particularly likely with regard to the assessment of how sanctions imposed by school officials and contacts with the juvenile justice system influence the attitudes and behavior of the juveniles in our sample. The primary problems, at least from my view, revolve around the choice of variables which are considered, the techniques employed to operationalize those variables, and the choice of statistical methods appropriate to the questions we wished to answer. Each of those issues demanded decisions of one kind or another. Frankly, I doubt that any two researchers would have made the same choices given the options that were available. My only defense is that what was done strikes me as at least a logical and systematic approach. It certainly has the advantage of doing much to isolate the effects of sanctions in a relatively conservative fashion. The disadvantage is that relatively little attention is devoted to such traditional concerns as differentials by age, sex, socioeconomic class, academic performance, family background characteristics, and many of the other variables which have provided a focus for earlier studies of delinquency among public school students.

Acknowledgements

On the other hand, were we to wait for the ideal study opportunity to come along before we conducted research, there would never be any research. Moreover, there is much about this study that must be described as positive. From a purely personal perspective, the opportunity to obtain a large volume of data from a sample of 2,249 juveniles who were considerate enough to complete a lengthy questionnaire at two points in time is considerable. How useful or informative the treatment of that data proved to be is best left to the reader. Further, throughout the study, which has taken more than two years to complete, I have profited greatly from the efforts of many other people who have consistently done everything they could to improve the quality of the study and of this report. If the product of all the work that has been completed is of any merit, it is very much a consequence of those efforts. To the extent that it falls short in one or more regards, the defects are almost certainly reflections of my not having paid adequate attention to the comments and criticisms of one or more of those who patiently advised me on various aspects of the work which was done.

High on my list of people whose efforts must be acknowledged are those who have served as members of an Advisory Panel whom I chose with the advise and consent of the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency

Prevention: Professor Ronald L. Akers, Department of Sociology, University of Iowa; Dr. Delbert S. Elliott, Director, Behavioral Research Institute; Professor Malcolm W. Klein, Department of Sociology, University of Southern California; and Professor Harwin L. Voss, Department of Sociology, University of Kentucky. If there was ever a "blue-ribbon" group from whom to seek advice, in terms of both their considerable reputations in the field of criminology and their very real expertise in delinquency research, this certainly was one.

I was no less fortunate in putting together a research staff, and there simply is no way to adequately express my appreciation or indebtedness to those who worked with me during the course of the study. At least they know that I know that none of what is reported here could have ever been done had it not been for their efforts. I am especially grateful to Dr. Jeffrey M. Hyman, who somehow managed to handle the bulk of all the computer work I required while simultaneously producing an excellent doctoral dissertation on a sub-set of the data obtained in the study; Dr. Ineke H. Marshall, who based her unusually sophisticated doctoral dissertation on the official court records data we collected early in the project; Ms. Robin J. Cage, on whom I have depended in this and other research for the past four years; Ms. Betty Wade Coyle, without whom the data collection phase of the study could never have been

completed; Mr. Robert G. Howard, my research assistant; and Ms. Ruth Seligman, who typed, re-typed, and edited more versions of what appears here than I care to count.

Special appreciation is also due the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The Institute, perhaps more specifically its parent organization, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, has been abused far more frequently than it has been praised. This is nowhere more the case than in criticisms made by academicians. My experiences during the course of this study may or may not be representative, but I have never found those with whom I have had any contacts at NIJJDP to be anything other than highly flexible, considerate, and supportive. I was particularly fortunate to be able to work with one staff member of NIJJDP throughout this project, Ms. Bonnie P. Lewin. Despite numerous changes required in the initial research design, method, and time schedules -- not to mention my own less than perfectly organized way of doing things -- Ms. Lewin managed to keep the study more or less on schedule. That species of patience and tolerance is admirable. Without her assistance and, of course, the generous funds made available through grants 75-NI-99-0031 and 76-NI-99-0050, the project would have been impossible.

Finally, the cooperation and support all of us experienced in our dealings with the officials of the Ports-

mouth and Virginia Beach public schools and juvenile courts is, practically speaking, what made the study possible. When I talk with other criminologists whose interests require that they obtain assistance from school administrators and/or juvenile court officials, I shudder to think of how totally impossible this kind of study would have been in many if not most cities. Beyond this inadequate expression of thanks for the help and genuine interest shown by school and court personnel, I hope that the results reported here will shed at least some light on some of the problems they necessarily confront each day.

PART I: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

As will quickly become apparent, the concerns of the research reported here are quite different than those posed by the bulk of delinquency research. The general questions are sufficiently straight-forward that they constitute the kinds of things about which those unfamiliar with prior research would assume we already know a good deal. Stripped of all the jargon that contaminates the vocabulary of criminologists, the study examines how much delinquency was engaged in by a representative sample of juveniles who were public school students in two metropolitan areas, the factors that appear to influence the likelihood of official reactions to such behavior, and, most importantly, whether official reactions had an effect on the attitudes and behavior of the children whose alleged misconduct prompted some kind of response. The real problem, unfortunately, is that these are issues about which we know very little. Particularly with regard to the effect of official responses on the subsequent attitudes

and behavior of those singled out for special treatment, we know almost nothing.

Seeking answers to these kinds of questions without the benefit of guidelines that might otherwise have been provided by earlier studies is a risky undertaking under the best of circumstances. Perhaps the greatest danger is that we will necessarily ignore much of the available delinquency theory and research because it has so little to say about our primary concern -- the impact of official reactions to juvenile misconduct. There is also a risk of moving toward the more quantitative aspects of the research so quickly that the conceptual and practical concerns that prompted the study are ignored. Hopefully both hazards can be avoided by devoting preliminary attention to some of the aspects of both the research problem and the broader issues it reflects in a way which places the analysis in a more meaningful perspective.

Conflicting Views on Juvenile Justice

From the outset it must be understood that the efficiency and effectiveness of our system of juvenile justice has the dubious distinction of having stimulated far more commentary and debate than objective research and evaluation. On the one hand, many academicians and even larger numbers of practitioners in the juvenile justice system continue to be supportive of a highly flexible, informal, therapeutically-oriented system of

dealing with youthful offenders. Such a system, they contend, is grounded on sound philosophical premises and recognized principles of individualized treatment. While often acknowledging the defects and difficulties upon which the attention of many critics have focused, advocates of the present system go on to assert that most shortcomings are the products of the faulty implementation of particular programs and types of responses rather than of any fundamental weaknesses in the underpinnings of their philosophy and theory of juvenile justice. To the contrary, they more frequently argue that our method of responding to juvenile offenders is more properly conceived as the product of an exemplary social experiment that is now almost a century old, an experiment that continues to provide a model for those throughout the world who seek to establish enlightened methods of dealing with juvenile delinquency.

On the other hand, it is obvious that many of those familiar with the operation of the juvenile justice system are far less lavish in their praise for either its present methods or its philosophical presuppositions. They contend, among other things, that the system does not efficiently identify those who might profit from the intervention of one or more of the agencies which comprise the juvenile justice system; that, instead, intervention is so selective as to improperly discriminate against

some categories of juveniles; and that intervention strategies, even if even-handed in practice, have never proven effective in facilitating movement toward the goals they purport to serve. Consequently, critics argue forcefully for fundamental alterations in the structure of the juvenile justice system and for broad-sweeping changes in the methods employed by the officials of that system.

It should be quickly noted that both groups have most frequently opted, perhaps as much by necessity as choice, to confront one another in polemical battles. Thus, victory or defeat has been more the consequence of political power or the sophistication of legal arguments than of a dispassionate consideration of objective empirical evidence. The closing of traditional correctional facilities in Massachusetts, for example, was more a reflection of the exercise of political power, largely the power vested in a single individual, than of a response clearly dictated by appropriate behavioral science research. In the same vein, the innumerable programs that seek to divert some types of juvenile offenders, particularly status offenders, from additional formal processing by the juvenile justice system are more the product of federal initiatives and of federal control over funds for state and local programs than of a carefully balanced consideration of any empirically-based projections of the benefits to be expected from these programs. Similarly, and despite some passing atten-

tion to a selective body of research, Supreme Court decisions in such cases as Kent v. United States, 383 U.S. 541 (1966), In Re Gault, 387 U.S. 1 (1967), and In Re Winship, 397 U.S. 358 (1970), each of which was designed to have a significant impact on the operation of our juvenile courts,¹ were essentially the products of critics having rigorously raised a series of constitutional issues, not of their having provided hard empirical evidence on any alleged defects in the juvenile system that went beyond the particular facts of the cases under review by the Court.

The general point need not be labored over further. Simply put, the problem is largely that both advocates and opponents of our juvenile justice system are ill-equipped to bolster their contentions with acceptably sophisticated or systematic evaluations that would otherwise provide objective evidence on the issues over which they so clearly differ. Whether the system is to be viewed as a successful example of our competence as social engineers or as a dismal testimonial to the proverb that the road to hell is often paved with good intentions is not so immediately obvious as many would have us believe. What is obvious is that we are only beginning to hold the system accountable, to demand that it and the other segments of the larger criminal justice system of which it is a part begin the laborious process of carefully and systematically evaluat-

ing the efficacy of their expenditures, programs, and policies.

In making these demands or, as is the primary purpose of the research described here, in responding to them by initiating the kinds of evaluative analyses that the demands imply, there is no need to align ourselves with either advocates or critics of the juvenile justice system. True, it is more common to find such demands coming from those pushing aggressively for reform than from those who are at least reasonably well-satisfied with the status quo. That fact, however, does not detract from the reality of the situation confronting the juvenile justice system. Regardless of what those on either side of the several polemical issues may presently feel about the efficiency and effectiveness of the juvenile justice system, they know pityfully little. Those who feel the system should not be radically changed find that they lack hard evidence to support their contentions; those who feel that the system is an abject failure find themselves unable to marshal such compelling evidence that the validity of their critique becomes incontrovertible. Thus, the paucity of information and evidence has a comparable effect on those of either persuasion and, consequently, both groups do or should have an equal commitment to far higher standards of accountability than those which prevail at the present time.

The Research Problem

The limited purposes and focus of the present study do not, of course, include the crowning of any victor in the various controversies raging over and within the juvenile justice system. The object, instead, will be to examine those aspects of an unusually large, longitudinal project funded by the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention from 1974 to 1977 that may shed some light on two issues of considerable importance to both academicians and juvenile justice system practitioners.

First, and particularly within the past decade, a growing number of those familiar with the characteristics of the juvenile justice system have voiced considerable concern with two important dimensions of the processing of juveniles, both of which will be considered as aspects of screening efficiency. One of these reflects the ability of various segments of the system to identify those involved in misconduct and to discriminate between those who are involved and those who are not in such a way as to avoid reacting to juveniles whose behavior is not delinquent. Not unlike concerns voiced elsewhere regarding the volume of undetected or unreported crime, the issue here is whether responsible agencies and officials have been able to detect misconduct when it occurs.² Unlike the adult system, however, the potential problem for the juvenile justice sys-

tem is more pressing. Their mandate, while partly one of crime detection and control, is more far heavily oriented toward identification which has individualized treatment rather than just punishment as its goal. Identification and effective intervention, of course, must be timely if they are to be useful. Inefficiency in this regard, therefore, strongly implies considerable difficulty if not probable failure on the related dimension of effectiveness.

Second, reliable, valid, and prompt identification of delinquent misconduct is not the only aspect of what is conceived here as screening efficiency. Indeed, its relevance to the maintenance of either a just or an effective system is often ignored and, instead, attention is directed toward whether those juveniles who are identified are even a crudely representative sample of those who have engaged in misconduct. Stated differently, many, including this author,³ have voiced concern over differentials in responses to juvenile offenders that strongly imply discrimination by juvenile justice officials and, thereby, the absence of a proper regard for their rights to due process and equal protection under the law.⁴ Here the question is not whether those engaging in delinquent behavior are detected, but whether those who are find themselves, for example, subjected to being taken into custody by the police, placed in detention, scheduled for a formal appearance in juvenile

court, or committed for institutional treatment do so because such screening criteria as their race, sex, or socioeconomic status have been employed improperly. To the extent that decisions are made on these or similar bases, we would have to conclude that the juvenile justice system is inefficient (and, quite obviously, that those responsible are guilty of having abused the discretionary decision-making powers delegated to or informally assumed by them).

These two dimensions of efficiency may be viewed as aspects of the "front-end" of the system on which far more information than is presently available is badly needed if the system is to become more accountable for its actions. Nevertheless, we know a good deal more about the efficiency of juvenile justice agencies than we do about the effect of reactions on the juveniles who are processed. Despite this, many, members of the judiciary not being the least important among them, have been willing to support the individualized and informal aspects of the juvenile system largely because of their expressed belief that informality and flexibility are crucially important to intervention strategies which hypothetically lessen the likelihood of continued involvement in delinquent misconduct. Thus, for example, the Supreme Court denied that juveniles have a constitutional right to a jury trial in McKeiver v. Pennsylvania, 403 U.S. 528 (1971), and

held, in part, that to grant this right would "put an effective end to what has become the idealistic prospect of an intimate, informal protective proceeding" (403 U.S. 545). The catch, however, is that we know almost nothing about the effect of the intervention of juvenile justice system officials and agencies on the subsequent attitudes, values, and behavior of those who have been the objects of intervention.⁵ Consequently whether, or in what way, decisions and policies of the police, juvenile court intake officials, juvenile court officials, probation officers, and correctional administrators have an impact on the lives and life-chances of the juveniles to whom they respond (and on those they decide merit no response) remains a question that can only be answered in an unacceptably speculative fashion. The necessary evaluative data are, quite simply, not available; the appropriate kinds of investigations have not been undertaken.

This study is one of the few projects that have attempted to counter these shortcomings by systematically focusing attention on selected aspects of the efficiency and effectiveness of the juvenile justice system. Following a discussion of the theory and methodology relied upon during the course of the project, which is provided in Part II, the monograph is divided into four basic sections. In the first of these the intent is to provide something of a general overview of the social and demographic charac-

teristics of the 2,249 junior and senior high school students in Portsmouth and Virginia Beach, Virginia from whom data were obtained in the Fall and again in the Spring of the 1975-76 academic year, the levels and types of delinquent activities these students reported having been involved in both prior to and during the time period covered by the study, and similar information on the frequency of their contacts with either the police or juvenile court officials. This general issue is further explored in Part IV of the report by a controlled analysis designed to determine whether the type and frequency of responses to delinquency reflect, as has so often been argued, any improper or discriminatory screening of juvenile offenders on the basis of such characteristics as their sex, ethnicity, or social position.

These initial segments of the analysis are, of course, not designed to evaluate the relative effectiveness of the system. One could, for example, stipulate in advance that much delinquency, like much adult criminality, never comes to the attention of any part of the criminal justice or juvenile justice systems and that some fraction of the decisions made by juvenile justice officials is almost certain to be selective to the point of being at least arguably improper. Neither a large volume of hidden delinquency nor the detection of improper correlates of decision-making, however, necessarily demonstrates that

the consequences of intervention are positive, negative, or neutral. Indeed, some level of what is being defined here as inefficiency is an almost inherent characteristic of virtually all organizations for which people are both a raw material and a product. Colleges and universities, for example, screen a pool of prospective students in their attempts to identify those who might profit from admission. In doing so they obviously do not properly identify all of those who might profit from admission nor, equally obviously, do all of those they elect to admit have the experience and training required to become sound students. Further, in applying their admission standards many colleges and universities, not always unintentionally, discriminate on a variety of bases that many would argue are improper. They are not, in other words, always particularly efficient organizations, but their inefficiency in these regards does not mean that they will fail in their attempts to provide training which effectively changes the values and capabilities of those they may have inefficiently identified as being suitable for admission. Consequently, in Part V of this report considerable attention is devoted to the effect of sanctions. The emphasis is on sanctions imposed by school officials and contacts with the police and juvenile court. Whether these contacts are viewed from a crime control perspective or that of the juvenile justice system, the intended

effect of responses to juveniles is similar. Official contacts in either context are intended to influence both attitudes and behavior. If this proves to be the case, we could properly conclude that the system, whether efficient or inefficient, was effective in its response to that sub-set of juveniles toward whom intervention efforts were directed. Thus, the analysis presented in Part V of this report relates such factors as type and number of contacts with the juvenile justice system before and during the year-long period of the study to both the level of self-reported delinquent involvement at the end of the study and changes in delinquent involvement between the Fall and Spring of the 1975-76 academic year.

Finally, Part VI of the report seeks to address social policy issues of some special relevance for decision- and policy-making in the juvenile justice system. Here the discussion is necessarily somewhat more speculative and, perhaps, more reflective of the judgment, preferences, and opinions of the author. Still, in any analysis of the type undertaken here one reaches a point at which the identification and interpretation of particular correlations, differences, and patterns ceases to fall within the realm of basic research and begins to move ever closer to applied research. If the primary goal of the former is the creation of knowledge as something which is

more or less an end in and of itself, the latter has as its product evaluations of what is being done and, more importantly, what should be done if particular goals are to be efficiently and effectively served. While many might differ on this point, my rather strong feeling is that basic behavioral science research does not and cannot properly address itself to any questions which involve assessments of what should or should not be done by anyone about anything. It can only identify what is taking place within a particular setting, the consequences of what is happening, and the extent to which these consequences serve the goals established by, in this case, those responsible for the juvenile justice system. What should or should not be done in light of the findings of an investigation such as this one reflect considerations and decisions that go well beyond both the scope of basic research and of the competence of those who typically conduct such research.

Simply put, therefore, Part VI of this study is at least as evaluative as it is analytical. It certainly reflects a judgment on how the results of this particular study indicate the juvenile justice system is performing relative to one conception of how it should perform. The reader will have to make his or her independent determination of how reasonable or balanced or logical those concluding observations may be. For now it is sufficient to

preface the forthcoming discussion with what I suspect should be an obligatory element in the introduction of any research report that touches on such hotly debated topics as those to be considered here. Specifically, the reader has a right to know the general orientation the author of a report has toward the issues being posed in his or her research. Such positions can, though hopefully they do not, influence the design of a study, the choice of appropriate measures, and the manner in which data are analyzed. By this I do not mean that researchers intentionally and with premeditation stack the proverbial deck to insure that their findings will match their preconceptions. That, thankfully, is by far the exception rather than the rule. On the other hand, none can deny that it is extremely difficult, perhaps flatly impossible, to fully detach personal opinions and values from the hundreds of decisions that are necessarily made during the course of any project so large as that reported on here. In light of that reality I can at least make the nature of my predispositions sufficiently clear that the properly alerted reader can proceed with whatever degree of caution they deem appropriate.

My assessment of those elements of the juvenile justice system that will be touched on here, an assessment which I trust the reader will find did not improperly influence the design and analysis components of this study, may be simply stated. The system proports to foster types

of intervention into the lives of children which encourage them to better adjust to the world in which they live and even, when it is deemed to be appropriate, to restructure some aspects of that world (as is the case when, for example, they are declared to be wards of the court and are committed to institutions that, presumably, provide them with treatment, supervision, and guidance which would not otherwise be available). To do so, officials of the system claim that they must be granted unusually broad discretionary powers and, further, that they must be allowed to exercise these powers in a flexible, informal fashion which, practically speaking, they do not wish to have subjected to any later scrutiny, review, or possible reversal by, for example, the appellate courts. Moreover, they ask that these powers be allowed them in the absence of any compelling demonstration that they are critical to the achievement of their objectives; that the exercise of these powers facilitates the efficient and effective attainment of these goals; and in the face of at least some evidence that the system as presently constituted is neither efficient nor effective. Particularly under our system of law, I think they ask too much and demonstrate too little in justifying their contention that the suspension of some "procedural niceties" is balanced by the positive product of their labors. Further, my judgment does not flow purely or even largely from some suspicion

that the broad discretionary power allowed juvenile justice officials has not adequately proven itself by increasing their success. Even the moderate utilitarian position that the end justifies at least some means is not one that I share in this regard. Instead, and perhaps to put it a bit too abruptly, I would prefer to see some juveniles suffer because the system did not intervene on their behalf than to see all juveniles deprived of the constitutional guarantees, including the right to due process of law, that constrain the responses of other segments of the criminal justice system. Consequently, I would be inalterably opposed to any system of juvenile justice, however efficient or effective, that infringed upon a fully elaborated doctrine of fundamental fairness, equity, equal protection and due process.

The purpose of this report is not, of course, to challenge the juvenile justice system on what are essentially legal grounds. Instead, it is designed to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of that system as it operates in two specific jurisdictions along the lines outlined previously. The position of the author of the report is provided purely because it is a proper concern for the reader. That information will have, I hope, as slight an impact on the willingness of the reader to objectively consider the analysis and findings of the report as it had on the design and execution of the research being reviewed here.

PART II. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

With the exception of the concerns to be addressed in Part III of the monograph, which revolve around the volume and types of delinquency reported by those in the sample, the primary concerns of the research are directly or indirectly linked to two rather general theoretical orientations which have attracted a good deal of attention in recent criminological theory and research. This is especially true for that portion of the analysis which explores the impact of formal reactions to misconduct on the attitudes, self-conceptions, and behavior of those singled out for special attention. As was noted earlier, labeling or interactionist theory contends that reactions to misconduct, particularly formal kinds of reactions of the types represented by the intervention of school and juvenile justice system authorities, are often so stigmatizing that individuals are pushed toward still further misbehavior. As McCaghy quite properly noted recently, "at the heart of the perspective lies the assumption that

labeling not only involves the defining of persons and their behavior, but may also heighten the likelihood that the behavior will continue." (Emphasis in original)¹

Deterrence theory, on the other hand, arrives at a contrary conclusion through its reliance on the notion that individuals will not opt to engage in a type of behavior if their prior experience (having been punished) or their expectations (perceptions of the risk of punishment) have taught them that the risks associated with the behavior exceed the potential rewards the behavior might yield.

Reviews, extensions, and critiques of both models have produced a voluminous literature, so we need not concern ourselves with any detailed review of either the theoretical or empirical research here.² It is necessary, however, to outline the relevance of each to the present study and to examine the manner in which variables central to one or both of these models were incorporated into the design of this research. Consequently, the following portion of this chapter concerns itself with the logic of the labeling and deterrence models as they pertain to the specific problems posed in this study. Following that brief discussion, more detailed consideration will be given to the design of the study, the sample selection procedures, and the manner in which the major variables were measured.

Labeling Theory

The historical antecedents of labeling theory notwithstanding, it seems fair to say that its development began with the publication of works by such central figures as Lemert,³ Becker,⁴ Erikson,⁵ and Kitsuse.⁶ Subsequent to those early studies the basic model attract so much attention from people who approached its development from so many different perspectives that there is no single view which is generally accepted as correct. Instead, one can reasonably talk about symbolic interactionist versions of labeling theory, conflict theory versions, structural functionalist versions, and so on. Despite these very real differences, however, the two focal points of the labeling approach constitute common demoninators for most of the contemporary theory and résearch, and both are of relevance to this study.

First, advocates of the labeling perspective have argued one point very cogently. Delinquency (or any other kind of deviance) is not something which is an inherent characteristic of a type of behavior. Instead, what comes to be viewed as delinquent behavior and who we come to define as a delinquent constitute the outcomes of an interpretive process which necessarily involves a social audience (though, of course, actors who have learned the culturally available definitions which would have been applied by a social audience can obviously react to their own behavior even when, in a physical sense, that audience is not

present). Thus, for example, Kitsuse argues that:

Sociological theory and research in the area traditionally known as "social pathology" have been concerned primarily with the classification and analysis of deviant forms of behavior and relatively little attention has been given to societal reactions to deviance....I propose to shift the focus of theory and research...to the processes by which persons come to be defined as deviant by others. Such a shift requires that the sociologist view as problematic what he generally assumes as given -- namely, that certain forms of behavior are per se deviant and are so defined by the "conventional" or conforming members of a group.⁷ (Emphasis in original)

Similarly, Rubington and Weinberg observe that:

...deviance is in the eyes of the beholder. For deviance to become a social fact, somebody must perceive an act, person, situation, or event as a departure from social norms, must categorize that perception, must report that perception to others, must get them to accept this definition of the situation, and must obtain a response that conforms to this definition. Unless all these requirements are met, deviance as a social fact does not come into being.⁸ (Emphasis added)

On the surface these and other observations which suggest that, "...deviance is not a quality of the act the

person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender',"⁹ are little more than a recognition of the obvious fact that all forms of deviance are more properly viewed as a social reality than as an objective quality of behavior. The important point, however, is that the interpretive process employed in defining acts and actors is widely believed to include definitional criteria which significantly increase the probability that some categories or types of individuals will be the objects of negative societal reactions. Specifically, assuming involvement in a type of behavior that in some contexts is likely to be viewed as deviant, individuals vary greatly in the degree of risk they encounter.

This risk factor (or, conversely, the extent to which one or more variables provide a buffer which inhibits the attribution of a stigmatizing label) is determined by a very large number of influences which may have little or nothing to do with the objective nature of the behavior in question. Whether there will be a negative response, and how negative the response will be in terms of the magnitude of sanctions imposed, is partly a consequence of, for example, where the behavior takes place (public behavior is more likely to prompt a response than private behavior), whether someone or something was harmed by the behavior, the characteristics of the victim (a white vic-

timizing a black is typically viewed as less serious than a black victimizing a white; victimizing an organization is likely to be viewed as more serious, at least in legal terms, than an organization victimizing an individual), and so on. The most common emphasis in labeling theory, however, is the relevance of the social characteristics of an actor. The basic contention is that, holding type of behavior constant, negative societal reactions are most likely when the actor's degree of social economic, and political power is low.

The aspect of the labeling model which emphasizes the relevance of factors linked to the differential attribution of potentially stigmatizing labels is, of course, one of the concerns of this research. To the extent that a juvenile's personal, social background, and demographic characteristics are significantly related to his or her probability of confronting some formal reaction independent of the seriousness of involvement in delinquency, questions would have to be raised regarding one of the dimensions of efficiency discussed previously. But our major concern is with the consequences of formal reactions. Indeed, as will quickly become apparent, it is with regard to this issue that the contrary predictions of labeling and deterrence models become most obvious.

Advocates of the labeling model approach this focal concern of their perspective in a fashion which appears

to be both too mechanistic and exceedingly difficult to evaluate. It is mechanistic in the sense that statements of the model describe the process which begins with negative reactions to misconduct and results in heightened involvement in and identification with deviance as though stigmatizing reactions were both a necessary condition for what Lemert termed "secondary deviance" (i.e., that heightened involvement in deviance and the adoption of a self-conception as a deviant will never occur in the absence of stigmatizing reactions) and a sufficient condition for movement toward secondary deviance (i.e., that a shift from primary to secondary deviance is almost inevitable after the stigmatizing reactions set what is often viewed as a self-fulfilling prophecy in motion). Although those associated with developments in labeling theory would be quick to deny that they have taken so deterministic a position, their own work strongly implies that they have. Becker, for example argues that:

Treating a person as though he were generally rather than specifically deviant produces a self-fulfilling prophecy. It sets in motion several mechanisms which conspire to shape the person in the image people have of him.¹⁰

Similarly, Lemert comes very close to claiming that societal reactions are a necessary condition for secondary deviance when he observes that:

It is seldom that one deviant act will provoke a sufficiently strong societal reaction to bring about secondary deviance....However, in the absence of reactions...it is questionable whether a transition to secondary deviance would take place.¹¹ (Emphasis added)

Further, and not unimportantly given the fact that the present study is designed to assess the impact of official, public kinds of reactions, the labeling literature is replete with hypotheses which place special emphasis on the potency of public stigmatization. Scheff, for example, contends that:

In the crisis situation occurring when a residual rule-breaker is publicly labeled, the deviant is highly suggestible, and may accept the proffered role...as the only alternative....The rule-breaker is sensitive to the cues provided by these others and begins to think of himself in terms of the stereotyped role.¹²
(Emphasis added)

In Tannenbaum's earlier work the hypothesis is stated even more flatly:

The young delinquent becomes bad because he is defined as bad and because he is not believed if he is good.
There is a persistent demand for consistency in character....Once it [a negative public definition] is established, then unconsciously all agencies combine to maintain this definition even when they apparently

and consciously attempt to deny their own implicit judgment.¹³ (Emphasis added)

Recall, however, that a problem with this aspect of labeling theory noted previously was that it was difficult to evaluate. This is partly a reflection of the emphasis on social process that is fundamental to the model. Schur, for example, observes that:

At the heart of the labeling approach is an emphasis on process; deviance is viewed not as a static entity but rather as a continuously shaped and reshaped outcome of dynamic processes of social interaction.¹⁴

(Emphasis in original)

This, in turn, makes it virtually impossible to test many of the implications of the model unless longitudinal data are available. A more tedious difficulty is that statements of labeling theory too frequently contain tautological elements that, left unresolved, could have the effect of rendering the model useless. Specifically, some of the labeling literature appears to draw a distinction between societal reactions which successfully confer stigmatizing labels and those which constitute mere sanctions, but it provides no objective means of discriminating between labels and sanctions in advance of noting the consequences of the social reaction. Instead, those reactions which are followed by an increased incidence of the misconduct and/or the adoption of an altered self-conception are viewed

as having conferred a stigmatizing label; those which fail to have one or both consequences are dismissed as irrelevant.

Following the critiques of this aspect of labeling theory provided by Tittle and others,¹⁵ we will attempt to avoid so circular a definition here. Given our concerns with sanctions imposed by public school officials, contacts with the police, and appearances before juvenile courts -- all of which typically have the character of being formal, public, and visible -- the expectation derived from labeling theory is that these sanctions and contacts constitute negative labels which, if the labeling model is correct, will be linked to the kinds of adverse consequences so heavily emphasized by that theoretical perspective.

Deterrence Theory

When I began the abbreviated review of the position advanced by labeling theorists I emphasized the fact that the foundations of that perspective were so varied that it has evolved into multiple orientations rather than a single unified approach. That is even more evident with regard to deterrence theory. As soon as one poses questions regarding the efficacy of punishment as a means of bringing about some desired modification in human behavior, all varieties of models come to mind. Philosophers think of Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian views; experimental

psychologists immediately consider Skinner's behavioristic psychology (or, if they have a somewhat "softer" orientation, of Bandura's contributions); sociologists cite Aker's social learning theory; criminologists recall the contributions to the "classical school of criminology" made by such figures as Cesare Beccaria; and the relatively recent interest in criminality among economists brings with it an emphasis on Becker, Tullock, Ehrlich, and others.

I have no intention of suggesting that the philosophers, economists, sociologists, criminologists, psychologists and others concerned with the outcome of sanctions have been systematically working toward the construction of a single theory of deterrence. Indeed, the only really systematic theme one can readily detect in their writings is that they habitually ignore theory and research in fields other than their own. They seldom even talk to each other, at least in my experience. Putting aside the several varieties of disciplinary jargon, however, there are some relevant commonalities in the kinds of influences which are generally viewed as significant, and all adopt a position that is at variance with that of the labeling model.

It is useful to begin by commenting on the one thing that, in my view, sets the stage for the contrary predictions which can be derived from the labeling and deterrence models. As we have already seen, advocates of

the labeling view often come too close to describing persons involved in deviant behavior as things which react more than they act. Thus, they emphasize the ability of negative societal reactions to push an individual ever closer to what Lemert calls secondary deviance. This implies, if carried to its extreme, a passive actor whose future attitudes, values, and behavior are more the predetermined product of what a social audience has done to him or her than of choices made by the actor. In other words, many of those associated with labeling theory have been more concerned with explaining when, why, and against whom elements of a social audience will react than with why an individual behaves in a particular manner before or after a reaction to behavior takes place. This is at least partly a reflection of their contention that, as the previously cited observation from Howard Becker's work suggests, "Treating a person as though he were generally rather than specifically deviant produces a self-fulfilling prophecy...several mechanisms...shape the person in the image people have of him."¹⁶

Although one might fairly critique most applications of deterrence theory for granting too little attention to the ability of societal reactions to constrict non-deviant options open to those on whom sanctions are imposed and to push them toward rather than away from further involvement in deviance, it has the advantage of emphasizing

the ability of actors to choose between available courses of action both before and after they encounter potentially stigmatizing reactions. This is not to say that deterrence theory is not deterministic. It is. The difference is that it attempts to identify the kinds of variables which influence particular kinds of behavioral choices. Thus, it devotes more attention to accounting for the behavior of individuals who engage (or fail to engage) in proscribed kinds of behavior with relatively little emphasis being placed on explaining the reactions of others to the behavior. In other words, though this is to put it a bit too superficially, deterrence theory views the behavior of deviant actors as problematic; labeling theory more commonly defines the behavior of a social audience toward deviant actors as problematic.

At least when reduced to its basic assertions, deterrence theory is relatively easy to summarize (though, like labeling theory, testing its propositions is a far more complex undertaking). The basic assumption is that the course of human behavior is shaped and determined by the actual and/or anticipated consequences associated with it in the mind of actors. Not at all unlike the views of the classical school of criminology, the notion is that individuals who have access to options other than those likely to prove unrewarding (or, if you like, painful, costly, stigmatizing, and so on) will elect from those avail-

able courses of action which, relatively speaking, are likely to prove rewarding (or, again, pleasurable, profitable, status granting).

Before moving any further it is important to note the qualifications implicit in what is emphasized above. First, and in some ways most importantly, the presence of choice, though it is often not emphasized in discussions of deterrence theory, is crucial. As will quickly become apparent, the dominant focus of deterrence theory is on those factors which make the choice of engaging in proscribed behavior increasingly unrewarding. More realistically, however, one must recognize the costs and rewards associated with conformity versus the costs and rewards of non-conformity. To the extent that conventional options are reduced (which is one of the points of emphasis in labeling theory), the likelihood of choosing non-conventional options increases, all other things being more or less equal.

Second, what might be viewed as objective costs of choosing a course of action may not be comparable to subjective assessments of costs in the mind of an actor.¹⁷ Indeed, one of the problems with the deterrence model is that it often presupposes that some kinds of costs (the risk of arrest or confinement, for example) will lessen the rate of involvement in the behavior presumably rendered costly by the probability of sanctions. This, of

course, is not necessarily true. The prospect of being arrested for involvement in delinquency, for example, may be viewed as excessively costly by some types of juveniles, but being arrested may prove quite rewarding for others whose point of reference is different. Further, the notion of costs associated with choosing one rather than another behavioral option also presupposes actors have something to lose, but how much an individual has to lose is itself a variable. A middle-class juvenile who wishes to be favorably evaluated by conventional others, for example, has a good deal more to lose than a gang delinquent whose structural access to legitimate opportunities has already been effectively blocked.¹⁸ Further still, objective risks, such as the computation of arrest probabilities based on the ratio of crimes reported to the police to number of crimes cleared by arrests, may or may not be the same as an actor's perception of risk.¹⁹

Despite these and other problems, the bulk of the deterrence literature emphasizes a point made by Beccaria more than two hundred years ago in his classic work, On Crimes and Punishments:²⁰

From all I have written one may deduce a general theorem of great utility, though hardly conformable with custom, the usual legislator of nations. The theorem is this: In order for a punishment not to be an act of violence of one or of many against a private

citizen, it ought to be public, prompt, necessary, the minimum possible in the given circumstance, proportionate to the crime, dictated by the laws.

From whatever disciplinary vantage point one approaches the issue, the basic conclusion of those contributing to the development of deterrence theory is remarkably similar to this utilitarian sentiment: Individuals will not elect to engage in proscribed forms of behavior if the consequences of rule-violations are adequately swift, certain, and severe.

Implications for the Research

Putting aside the attention to be devoted to the general nature of the delinquency reported by those in the sample and our concern for factors which influence the likelihood of contacts with the police and juvenile court, it should now be clear that criminologists differ greatly in their views on the consequences which follow the imposition of sanctions. Too simplistically put, those working from the orientation provided by labeling theory view societal reactions to misconduct, particularly official reactions, as producers of still more misconduct; those with more of an affinity for deterrence theory contend that the reverse is likely to be the case, at least under some circumstances.

The implications for this research, unfortunately, are not so straight-forward as they may appear. The primary

goal of this study is to examine the effect of sanctions imposed by public school officials and contacts with two important elements of the juvenile justice system, the police and the juvenile court, on the attitudes, values, and behavior of those in the sample. Taken at face value, this would appear to be exactly what is addressed by a voluminous research literature. Nothing could be further from the case, however. The bulk of the labeling literature deals with the differential attribution of potentially stigmatizing labels. Only a handful of studies have even attempted to determine the effect those reactions have had on the subsequent behavior of those who have encountered negative reactions.²¹ Similarly, the preponderance of the contemporary deterrence research concerns itself with the effect of general measures of the certainty and severity of sanctions, as measured by such variables as arrest probabilities and the likelihood of confinement for various types of criminal behavior, on subsequent rates of proscribed behavior. Few studies have examined the central proposition of the model which contends that people who perceive the costs associated with a behavior as excessive will choose some alternative course of action.²²

What we confront, then, is an almost total absence of prior research on the problem which prompted this study. Apart from a very small group of studies which have ap-

peared in the last few years, the contrary predictions of the labeling and deterrence models regarding the consequences of sanctions remain untested. Thus, in her recent and frequently cited review of the effect of labeling on juveniles, Mahoney summarizes the present state of our knowledge in the following terms:

The labeling perspective opens a rich source of insight and research possibilities to us. It focuses our thinking upon the ways in which youths are defined as deviant, the ways in which they are swept into the juvenile system, and the effects upon them of other persons' reactions to their behavior. It focuses our thinking also on the youth's perceptions of the process. Perhaps, as research on labeling accumulates and becomes more precise, and as we become better able to raise researchable questions, labeling will emerge as an important causal factor in the etiology of delinquent behavior. Meanwhile, no such evidence exists, and it would be a disservice to both the labeling perspective and the youths in the juvenile justice system to act as if it did.²³

(Emphasis added)

Research Methodology

During the Spring and Summer months of 1975, arrangements were finalized with the juvenile court and public

school systems of Portsmouth and Virginia Beach, Virginia. The goal was to obtain two types of data. The first was to be drawn from a large and representative sample of official juvenile court records, the second from questionnaires administered to an equally large and randomly selected group of junior and senior high school students. The results of the records analysis have been reported elsewhere,²⁴ so our attention here will be devoted exclusively to the information obtained from the public school students. Before moving to an examination of those data, it is useful to provide something of an overview of the research design and the manner in which the major independent and dependent variables were operationalized.

First of all, the sample selection procedures deserve some attention. Our initial intent was to draw a simple or systematic random sample of students, each of whom could be identified by name in our records to facilitate a cross-validation of self-reported police and court contacts with official records. Both school and court officials expressed serious reservations about this procedure, their concern being that doing so would constitute an improper invasion of the rights of the students and their parents. As an alternative, we proposed a cluster sample within which the sampling units would be classes required of all students at each grade level of each school in the two cities. This proved satisfactory to

everyone involved. Thus, an attempt was made to contact all students attending classes which were randomly selected from all required courses being taught in thirteen junior and senior high schools in Virginia Beach and nine schools in Portsmouth. A coding system was developed which allowed us to match questionnaires completed early in the Fall of the school year with those completed late in the Spring.

Complete questionnaire data were obtained from 3,028 students in grades 8-12 in September of 1975, and follow-up data were obtained from 2,249 of these students in May of 1976. Thus, complete data were obtained at both points in time from 74.27 percent of those in the original sample. This analysis deals only with those for whom we have both baseline and follow-up data. Obviously, there is no way to define the sample as random. In particular, those students who were absent from the school at either point in time were automatically excluded from the analysis presented in this monograph. Still, the characteristics of those in the sample suggest that it is adequately representative, and a few bits of information on the general characteristics of the sample may prove instructive in some regards. Specifically, 47.5 percent of those in the sample were male, 52.5 percent were female; 74.3 percent were white, 23.7 percent were black; and the median age for the sample was slightly greater than 15. The number drawn from each grade level was roughly equal, though as would be expected, the numbers

decrease somewhat as grade levels increase (8th grade N = 476, 9th grade N = 479, 10th grade N = 465, 11th grade N = 385, 12th grade N = 422). The majority of the students come from unbroken homes (74.2 percent resided with both their mother and father), though a significant number do not (9.7 percent resided with a parent and a step-parent; 12.5 percent resided in mother-only homes, 1.3 percent resided in father-only homes, and 2.3 percent resided with neither their mother nor their father). While many were taking primarily college preparatory courses (31.5 percent), the majority described their courses in school as being devoted to general education (51.4 percent) or business/vocational training (16.0). Despite this, 30.8 percent indicated that they were definitely going to attend college, and 37.9 percent were fairly certain that they would go to college.

Given the goals of this study, the sample and, more importantly, the means by which it was drawn present both advantages and limitations. The primary advantage is that we were able to administer an essentially identical questionnaire to a large and representative sample of juveniles at two points in time. This, in turn, provided us with a large volume of information on what those in the sample were like at the beginning of the 1975-76 school year, data on many things which took place during the school year, and a means of determining the extent and direction

of any attitudinal and behavioral changes which took place between September of 1975 and May of 1976. The major disadvantage is that we had no reasonable means of determining the exact temporal relationships between some of the major variables under consideration. In particular, although we did obtain a measure of involvement in juvenile delinquency during the school year, thereby providing a means of determining whether the level of delinquency was different from that reported for the year prior to the initial data collection point, there is no precise means of knowing whether any changes in delinquency took place before or after sanctions were imposed by school or juvenile justice system officials. Thus, the meaning of any correlations reported between measures of sanctions imposed during the school year and the measure of self-reported delinquency for the same time period are necessarily ambiguous. Delinquency could have increased, thereby prompting sanctions, or sanctions could have been imposed, thereby prompting increases or decreases in delinquency. Fortunately, however, this problem of time order does not appear in the analysis of any of the other dependent variables, and the information obtained in the Fall questionnaire on sanctions imposed prior to the study can be employed in an attempt to further resolve this difficulty.

Because these issues are dealt with in some detail in Part V of the monograph, no further discussion is neces-

sary at this point. It is important, however, to give some consideration to the manner in which the major independent and dependent variables were measured. That information is presented in a summary fashion in the following paragraphs.

Delinquency Involvement The measurement of delinquency in self-report studies such as this is invariably difficult, and there is no generally agreed upon method by means of which a single summary measure of delinquency involvement can be created. Any such measure, however, must take several factors into consideration. First, care must be taken to insure that the measure includes a broad range of types of delinquency rather than, as is often the case, placing disproportionate emphasis on only relatively non-serious varieties of misconduct. Second, there must be some means of assigning weights to individual delinquent acts so that minor and serious types of delinquency are not treated in the same fashion. Third, there must be some way of incorporating variations in the frequency of delinquent involvement into the measure. Finally, the measure must have some temporal limits. In other words, the time period for which the measure is applicable should be specified.

These problems were handled here by constructing three separate measures of delinquency involvement: delinquency involvement prior to 1974, delinquency involvement during 1974-75, and delinquency involvement during the

1975-76 school year. Each measure is based on self-reported involvement in thirteen types of delinquency. The relatively non-serious delinquent acts included theft of items valued at two dollars or less, purchase of alcohol, truancy, and the use of a false identification card. Moderately serious delinquent acts included running away from home, fighting, theft of items valued at between two and fifty dollars, vandalism, and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle. Serious delinquent acts included assault with a weapon, breaking and entering, theft of items valued at more than fifty dollars, and auto theft. Students were asked to report how many times they had engaged in each type of behavior prior to 1974 and during 1974-75 on the Fall questionnaire and on the frequency of involvement during the 1975-76 school year on the Spring questionnaire.

To compute a single delinquency involvement scale score for the three time periods, the following method was employed. Minor types of delinquency were assigned a seriousness weight of "1," the more serious acts a weight of "2," and the most serious acts a weight of "4." The scale scores for each student were then set equal to the product of the seriousness weights multiplied by the self-reported frequencies summed across the thirteen types of behavior being considered. These scores, because they reflect both the frequency and the seriousness of delinquent activities, may be interpreted as an indicator of the

level of delinquency involvement during each of the three time periods. The availability of these three measures of delinquency allows us to use delinquency involvement as both an independent and a dependent variable as well as allowing a determination of whether the seriousness of delinquency changed during the 1975-76 school year.

Self-Concept as Delinquent A second variable, and one which is of particular importance to any assessment of the contentions derived from the labeling model, is the extent to which juveniles have or develop delinquent self-concepts. As with the delinquency variable, separate measures were created from the Fall and Spring data, but they are composed of identical items. In this and other attitude scales, care was taken to insure that the attitude items reflected a common underlying dimension. Toward that end, each initial pool of potential items was factor analyzed. Any item which did not yield a factor loading of .30 or greater on the first factor of the unrotated factor matrix was deleted from further consideration.

Attitudes Toward the Law While not directly related to our concerns with the labeling and deterrence models, other delinquency theory emphasizes the role played by attitudes toward the law. For example, control theory views positive attitudes toward the law as a bond to conventional society, a bond which serves to inhibit delinquency. Those who lacked such a bond at the beginning of the study period,

therefore, would be expected to engage in more delinquent behavior during the 1975-76 school year than those with relatively more positive attitudes. More importantly, if school sanctions and legal contacts have the effects hypothesized by the labeling model, attitudes toward the law provide an important dependent variable. To the extent that those sanctions and contacts weaken bonds to conventionality, future involvement in delinquency would become more likely.

Attitudes Toward the Police and the Courts A measure of attitudes toward the police and the courts was also incorporated into the study design. It plays a role quite similar to that of the law scale, though the referent of each is obviously more specific. Those with negative attitudes toward these agencies at the beginning of the study were expected to be more involved in delinquency than those with positive attitudes independent of any influence exerted by the school sanction and legal contact variables. Further, each also provides a dependent variable which allows us to determine whether the school sanction and legal contact variables have the effect of lessening respect for these components of the juvenile justice system.

Deterrence Scale Because our intent is to remove many of the influences which might produce or inhibit delinquency during the 1975-76 year independent of the affect of school sanctions and legal contacts, it was also neces-

sary to incorporate a measure of student attitudes toward the likelihood of punishment at the beginning of the study. Specifically, those who felt that apprehension and punishment were very likely to follow delinquent behavior at the beginning of the study were expected to be less involved in delinquency during the 1975-76 school year with or without the influence of school sanctions and legal contacts.

Perceived Consequences of Labeling Because the perceived costs of labeling vary between individuals who are similar in many other regards, a measure of perceptions of the cost of labeling is also included in the analysis. As with the deterrence variable, the notion is that those who view the consequences of labeling as serious would be less likely to engage in delinquency during the school year than those who view the consequences in less negative terms.

Involvement in Conventional Behavior As with the several independent variables already described, involvement in conventional behavior is likely to inhibit delinquency independent of any influences exerted by the presence or absence of sanctions. Thus, the Fall questionnaire included a measure of the amount of time each student spent on such conventional activities as extracurricular events, homework, community activities, and jobs.

School and Legal Sanctions All of the previously described variables were included to serve one of two

purposes. First, the Spring measures of attitudes toward the police and courts, self-concept as delinquent, attitudes toward the law, and delinquency involvement during the 1975-76 school year will all be cast as dependent variables in the analysis presented in Part V of the monograph. Second, the baseline measures of those variables and the measures of involvement in conventional behavior, deterrence and the perceived consequences of being labeled will all be employed as independent variables. Although the details of the methodology will be more fully described later, the logic of the analysis is easily summarized. We will allow the entire set of independent variables to explain as much of the variation in each of the dependent variables as they can. None of that explained variance can be attributed to the potential influence of sanctions imposed during the school year. If, however, sanctions have any statistically or substantively significant effects, those effects can be detected when the sanction variables are incorporated into the analysis after all of the other independent variables have been taken into account.

Obviously care must be taken to discriminate between both types of sanctions and the time periods during which they were imposed. Thus, two types of sanctions will be considered: school sanctions and legal sanctions. The school sanctions variable is measured in terms of the frequency of being removed from a class, expelled from

school, or suspended from school. The legal sanctions variable is measured in terms of the frequency of being picked up by the police and appearing before the juvenile court. Although it was not possible to obtain data on the outcome or seriousness of legal sanctions (e.g., did being picked up by the police result in a referral to the juvenile court, how severe was the disposition imposed by the court, and so on), both police and court contacts clearly fall within the meaning of sanctions for both the deterrence and labeling paradigms. Further, care was taken to distinguish between school and legal sanctions imposed before 1974, between 1974 and 1975, and during the 1975-76 school year.

Because all of these measures are presented in Appendix A, no further consideration of them needs to be given here. Instead, given this overview of the research design and methodology, it is now possible to shift our attention to the analysis of the data obtained from these 2,249 public school students. As has been indicated previously, the analysis will be subdivided into three segments. In the initial section consideration will be given to the volume of self-reported delinquency we detected, variations in types of delinquency involvement, and social and demographic correlates of delinquency. The more detailed analysis presented in Part IV of the monograph examines the likelihood of contacts with the police and

the juvenile court, special attention being given to the labeling theory contention that the juvenile justice system operates in a discriminatory fashion. The third and, for our purposes, the most important section of the analysis represents an attempt to isolate and evaluate the impact of school and legal sanctions on delinquency, attitudes toward the law, attitudes toward the police and courts, and self-conceptions.

PART III: THE PROBLEM OF DELINQUENCY

Introduction

In turning to the analysis of data obtained from the 2,249 junior and senior high school students, our initial concerns may be addressed fairly simply. The goal is to provide an overview of the delinquency problem confronted by these two cities. This involves some specification of the total volume of delinquent behavior and, more importantly, a reasonably detailed assessment of (1) the types of delinquent activities in which these juveniles report involvement; (2) whether participation in one type of delinquency implies involvement in other types of misconduct; and (3) whether delinquent involvement is more or less likely as we compare the self-reported behavior of one portion of the sample with that of another.

In examining these preliminary issues we will not be concerned with how efficient the juvenile justice system is in detecting or responding to those involved in delinquency, nor will we attempt to evaluate the effect of any such responses on those in our sample. Instead, the

intent is to examine the magnitude of the problem and related information on whether it is as pervasive as many have suggested rather than a characteristic of easily definable segments of the juvenile population. To do so we will first assess the involvement of those in our sample in the thirteen specific types of behavior on which we obtained self-report information.

How Much Delinquency?

Both personal experience and observation attest to the fact that virtually all juveniles have been involved in some type of behavior that could have prompted a response by juvenile justice officials. Thus, the finding that 70.52 percent of those in our sample reported involvement in at least one of the thirteen types of misconduct under consideration here during the 1975-76 academic year will certainly not come as a major surprise.¹ This finding, however, does not convey important information on how a little involvement among some categories of juveniles and quite a lot of involvement among others affects the volume of delinquency which takes place in these two cities.

To put that point in a somewhat better perspective, consider the following information. During the 1975-76 academic year this representative sample of 2,249 juveniles reported having committed 18,150 separate delinquent acts.² Regardless of what standards one applies, there is no

reasonable doubt over the contention that juvenile delinquency is a significant problem of juvenile justice agencies in these cities. Still, particularly when dealing with the behavior of juveniles, it is far too easy to be misled by or be misleading with such superficial statistics. The data in Table 1 show that the volume of delinquent behavior in which those in the sample have engaged is considerable, but it is equally obvious that much of the delinquency is of only slight to moderate seriousness. Further, Table 2 shows that 57.07 percent of the more than 18,150 delinquent acts that were reported to have occurred during the 1975-76 academic year would, at least practically speaking, be defined as status offenses (violations of liquor laws, truancy, running away from home, using false identification and fighting); that another 37.36 percent are somewhat more serious (petty larceny, theft, vandalism, and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle); and that only 5.57 percent of the reported behavior would normally be defined as serious (assault with a deadly weapon, breaking and entering, auto theft, and grand larceny). Nevertheless, even when we restrict our evaluation of those offenses described here as serious, we see that 5.57 percent of the total volume of reported behavior is equal to 1,011 serious offenses.

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS REPORTING INVOLVEMENT IN EACH OF THE THIRTEEN DELINQUENT ACTS

Type of Behavior	Ever ^a	1974-75	1975-76
Truancy	30.92	20.11	27.53
Purchase Alcohol	31.95	30.28	37.16
Petty Theft ^b	50.80	33.03	33.65
Runaway	11.63	5.68	3.71
False ID	18.89	15.80	15.63
Vandalism	33.71	26.74	26.89
Theft ^c	24.87	18.19	19.30
Fighting	60.55	41.72	30.31
Joy Ride	9.93	9.02	9.53
Assault w/weapon	10.32	7.29	5.64
Breaking & Entering	10.80	6.43	5.91
Auto Theft	3.23	2.56	2.28
Grand Larceny ^d	5.56	4.30	3.85

^aThis is an underestimate of the percentage who have engaged in each type of behavior because it is based on responses to the Fall questionnaire. Consequently, it does not include those who had not engaged in a particular behavior prior to the Fall of 1975 but who did engage in the behavior during 1975-76.

^{b,c,d}"Petty theft" refers to positive responses to an item which asked if the respondent had "taken little things worth only a couple of dollars; "theft" refers to taking items worth between \$2-\$50; "grand larceny" refers to theft of items worth more than \$50.

TABLE 2

AN OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUME OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR REPORTED DURING
THE 1975-76 ACADEMIC YEAR BY TYPE OF BEHAVIOR

<u>Type of Behavior</u>	<u># of Reported Incidents^a</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Truancy	2,377	13.10
Purchase Alcohol	4,618	25.44
Petty Theft	2,787	15.36
Runaway	134	.74
False ID	1,466	8.17
Vandalism	1,951	10.75
Theft	1,437	7.92
Fighting	1,763	9.71
Joy Ride	606	3.34
Assault w/weapon	311	1.71
Breaking & Entering	347	1.91
Auto Theft	142	.78
Grand Larceny	211	1.16
Total	18,150	100.00

^aThis represents a significant underestimate of the true volume of delinquency, particularly for the relatively common types of behavior. The data were coded in such a way that a value of 8 on each behavioral variable was equal to eight or more incidents. Thus, any interpretation of the total volume of delinquent misconduct is certain to be conservative.

It is very difficult to put these or many of the other figures into any meaningful comparative perspective for a variety of reasons. There are, of course, official statistics on at least several of the types of offenses under consideration here, but a direct comparison of these statistics and those available from the students in this sample would be too misleading. For example, official statistics are based on only those crimes which are reported to the police rather than the "true" volume of criminality;³ a single event, even one reported to the police, may have involved several juveniles and, consequently, may have been reported by more than one of the juveniles in this sample; and, perhaps most importantly, any rates computed on these self-reported offenses are rates among adolescents rather than, as is the case with most official statistics, rates in the total population.⁴ Still, the point should be obvious. There is no question about the fact that these juveniles are involved in a good deal of delinquency, that their rate of involvement in what are typically defined as serious offenses is greater than that for the population as a whole, and that juvenile delinquency is a sizable problem for the juvenile justice system agencies in these two cities.

Patterns of Delinquency Involvement

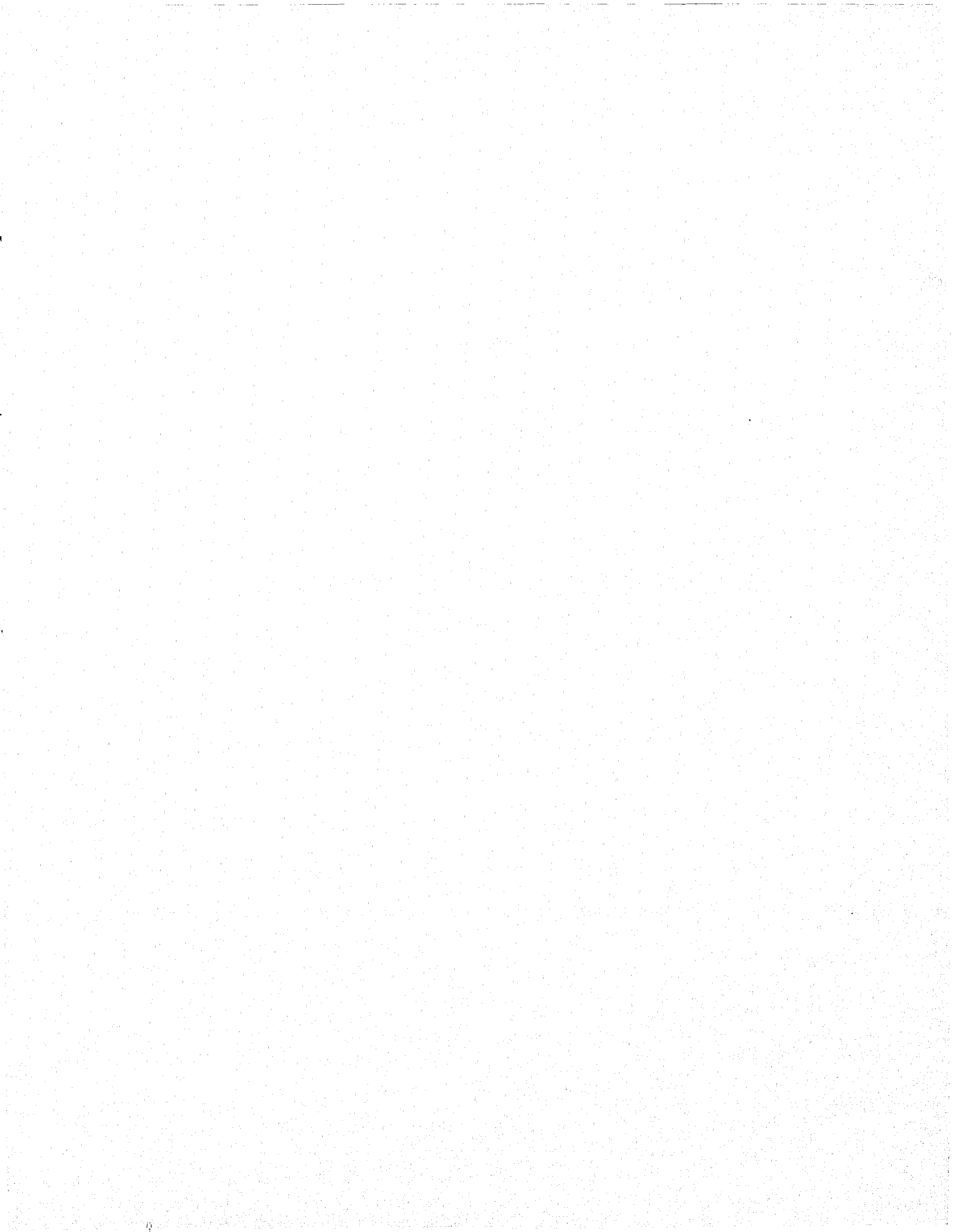
The descriptive statistics presented in Tables 1

and 2 provide us with a good deal of information on the volume of different types of delinquency engaged in by those in the sample, but they tell us little about some of the other concerns voiced by those in the juvenile justice system. Specifically, most students of delinquency would quickly acknowledge the fact that the vast majority of juveniles will engage in at least some misconduct. The bulk of these activities, however, are generally viewed as episodic and non-serious. Few would argue that the juvenile justice system does or should have a special interest in those juveniles whose occasional involvement in non-serious delinquency fails to imply a serious behavioral problem. Instead, the primary concern is with those whose frequent and/or serious delinquency poses a threat to the juvenile, to other citizens, or to both.

Although our interest in this study is not with identifying patterns of delinquency involvement, the issue merits at least some attention in this preliminary segment of the analysis. We will approach it in two ways. First, while prior research suggests that patterns of delinquency involvement are much too diverse to merit their being defined as highly specialized delinquency careers, it can be argued that those who are involved in non-serious delinquency at one point in time often become involved in more serious misconduct at some later point. In other words,

there may be a tendency for the seriousness of delinquency involvement to intensify over time. To examine that possibility we will relate type of self-reported delinquency involvement during 1974-75 to that reported for the 1975-76 school year.

Second, it is equally easy to argue that there is a relationship between types of delinquent activity. As the level of participation in one type of misconduct increases, the likelihood of participation in other types of delinquency may very well increase. By determining the intercorrelations between the three sub-scales of our overall delinquency involvement measure, we will be able to assess the extent to which involvement in one type of delinquency is predictive of involvement in other types of misconduct.



TYPE OF DELINQUENCY INVOLVEMENT IN 1974-75 BY TYPE OF DELINQUENCY INVOLVEMENT 1975-76

		<u>1975-76 Delinquency Involvement</u>					
		None	Minor Only	Moderate Only	Minor & Moderate	Major	Totals
1974-75 Delin- quency Involve- ment	None	65.6 (386)	14.3 (84)	7.7 (45)	9.5 (56)	2.9 (17)	100.0 (588)
	Minor Only	21.1 (70)	39.5 (131)	6.6 (22)	27.1 (90)	5.7 (19)	100.0 (332)
	Moderate Only	33.6 (119)	11.6 (41)	22.9 (81)	24.6 (87)	7.3 (26)	100.0 (354)
	Minor & Moderate	2.9 (57)	22.8 (141)	6.6 (41)	48.9 (303)	12.4 (77)	100.0 (619)
	Major	8.7 (31)	9.3 (33)	7.3 (26)	35.1 (125)	39.6 (141)	100.0 (356)

Gamma = .555, $\chi^2 = 1,040.02$, $p < .001$

Table 3 provides information on the extent to which knowledge of type of delinquency engaged in during 1974-75 is predictive of the type of delinquency engaged in during the 1975-76 school year. Both variables are based on the sub-scales of the overall delinquency involvement measure. Thus, the first category of each variable reflects no delinquent activity, the second category includes those who reported involvement in only minor offenses (theft of items valued at two dollars or less, purchase of alcohol, truancy, and use of a false identification card), the third category those who reported only moderately serious delinquency (running away from home, fighting, theft of items valued at between two and fifty dollars, vandalism, and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle), the fourth category includes those who reported both minor and moderately serious misconduct, and the final category includes those reporting either serious offenses (assault with a weapon, breaking and entering, grand larceny, and auto theft) or a combination of serious and less serious offenses. No separate category was employed for those reporting only serious offenses because of the very small number who were involved in only this narrow set of offenses during both time periods (1974-75 N = 8; 1975-76 N = 7). An important qualification which must be kept in mind in making any interpretation of this table is that it tells us nothing about frequency of delin-

quency involvement. Thus, for example, a juvenile who reported one minor offense and one major offense during each of the two time periods would appear in the bottom right-hand cell of the table, but so would another juvenile who reported multiple serious offenses during each time period.

The most obvious findings revealed by Table 3 is that the two variables are strongly related to one another ($\gamma = .555$, $\chi^2 = 1,040.02$, $p \leq .001$). In other words, past behavior is a relatively good predictor of future behavior, those reporting more serious delinquency during 1974-75 being the most likely to also report more serious delinquency during the 1975-76 school year. More importantly, there is also a tendency for the seriousness of self-reported delinquency to increase over time. For example, while 65.6 percent of those who reported no delinquency during 1974-75 were similarly uninvolved in any delinquency during 1975-76, 14.3 percent reported minor types of delinquency, 7.7 percent reported moderate types, 9.5 percent reported a combination of minor and moderate delinquency, and 2.9 percent reported serious types of delinquent acts. This does not mean that those reporting no delinquency or only minor kinds of delinquency in the earlier time period invariably become more delinquent subsequently. That is obviously not the case. Of those reporting moderately serious types of delinquency during the 1974-75 period,

for example, 33.6 percent reported no delinquency involvement during 1975-76 and 11.6 percent reported involvement in only minor kinds of delinquency. Still, if we accept these variables as indicators of one aspect of the seriousness of delinquency involvement, the odds appear reasonably good that the seriousness of involvement will either remain the same or increase over time.

Although Table 3 tells us something about the continuity of delinquency over time, it also neglects other information which may be of equal importance. First of all, while it does show that juveniles do not restrict themselves to a single type of behavior, it does not provide a means of bringing the diversity of delinquency into sufficiently sharp relief. Second, it totally ignores the frequency of delinquency involvement. Our expectation, however, was that the frequency of involvement in one type of delinquency would be correlated with frequency of involvement in other types of misconduct. To examine this possibility the sub-scales of the overall delinquency involvement measure for 1975-76 were broken into categories. The minor and moderate sub-scales were trichotomized (the first category reflecting no involvement, the second indicating below the average level of involvement, and the third category including those with an above average level of involvement). Because of the relatively small number of

students reporting serious types of delinquency, that measure was dichotomized (no serious delinquency versus one or more serious acts).

TABLE 4

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN MINOR DELINQUENCY SUB-SCALE AND MODERATE DELINQUENCY SUB-SCALE FOR 1975-76 DELINQUENCY

		<u>Moderate Sub-Scale</u>			
		<u>None</u>	<u>Below Average</u>	<u>Above Average</u>	<u>Totals</u>
<u>Minor Sub-Scale</u>	<u>None</u>	74.0 (670)	16.6 (150)	9.4 (85)	100.0 (905)
	<u>Below Average</u>	41.2 (269)	25.4 (166)	33.4 (218)	100.0 (653)
	<u>Above Average</u>	25.8 (178)	16.2 (428)	58.0 (704)	100.0 (691)

Gamma = .605, $X^2 = 514.32$, $p < .001$

Table 4 shows that there is a strong relationship between the minor and moderate sub-scales for the 1975-76 school year (gamma = .605, $X^2 = 514.32$, $p < .001$). As the level of involvement in minor types of delinquency increases, so does of the level of involvement in moderate types. Similarly, if the table is examined a bit differently, as the level of involvement in moderate types of delinquency increases, so does involvement in minor types of delinquency. Thus, for example, only 12.1 percent of those who reported

no minor types of delinquency during the school year reported an above average level of involvement in those acts defined as moderately serious, but of those who reported an above average number of minor delinquent acts 58.0 percent also reported an above average number of moderately serious delinquent acts.

TABLE 5

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN MINOR DELINQUENCY SUB-SCALE AND MAJOR DELINQUENCY SUB-SCALE FOR 1975-76 DELINQUENCY

		<u>Major Sub-Scale</u>		
		<u>None</u>	<u>One or More</u>	<u>Totals</u>
	<u>None</u>	97.0 (878)	3.0 (27)	100.0 (905)
<u>Minor</u>	<u>Below</u>	88.1	11.9	100.0
<u>Sub-</u>	<u>Average</u>	(575)	(78)	(653)
<u>Scale</u>	<u>Above</u>	74.7	25.3	100.0
	<u>Average</u>	(516)	(175)	(691)

Gamma = .645, $X^2 = 179.66$, $p < .001$

Table 5 reveals much the same thing regarding the association between involvement in minor and serious types of delinquency. As the level of involvement in minor types of delinquency increases so does the likelihood of involvement in serious delinquency (Gamma = .645, $X^2 = 179.66$, $p < .001$). Just as before, the reverse is also true. Those reporting serious types of delinquency were also more involved in minor types

of misconduct than those who reported no serious delinquent acts. Of those who reported no minor delinquency, for example, only 3.0 percent reported one or more serious delinquent acts, but 25.3 percent of those who were most involved in minor types of delinquency also reported one or more serious delinquent acts.

TABLE 6

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN MODERATE DELINQUENCY SUB-SCALE AND MAJOR DELINQUENCY SUB-SCALE FOR 1975-76 DELINQUENCY

		<u>Major Sub-Scale</u>		Totals
		None	One or More	
<u>Moderate Sub-Scale</u>	None	97.9 (1093)	2.1 (24)	100.0 (1117)
	Below Average	92.3 (395)	7.7 (33)	100.0 (428)
	Above Average	68.3 (481)	31.7 (223)	100.0 (704)

Gamma = .818, $X^2 = 356.31$, $p < .001$

As a final illustration of this trend for degree of involvement in one type of delinquency to be predictive of involvement in other types of misconduct, Table 6 shows a very strong association between the moderate and serious sub-scales (gamma = .818, $X^2 = 356.31$, $p < .001$). For example, only 2.1 percent of those reporting no moderately serious delinquency did report one or more serious acts,

but 31.7 percent of those with above average levels of involvement in moderate types of delinquency also reported serious delinquency.

Arriving at a balanced interpretation of these three tables is difficult for a number of reasons. Part of the problem is simply the arbitrary choice of how to compute the percentages (e.g., should we look at the percentage of those reporting serious delinquency who also reported minor delinquent acts or should we focus on the percentage of those reporting varying levels of involvement in minor delinquency who also reported one or more serious types of delinquency). The interested reader, however, can obviously recompute the percentages if he or she wishes to examine these data a bit differently. Nevertheless, these tables and those presented earlier are instructive in several regards. The most obvious point is that those in the sample report a large number of delinquent activities, and almost three-fourths report involvement in at least one of the thirteen types of delinquent acts included in our self-report inventory. As most would expect, the preponderance of the delinquent behavior reported was relatively non-serious. On the other hand, there is evidence which suggests that delinquency involvement may become more serious over time. Further, as the level of involvement in one type of delinquency increases, there is a significant increase in the probability of other types of

delinquent behavior.

Social and Demographic Correlates of Delinquency

Public conceptions of juvenile delinquency tend to greatly over-emphasize a stereotype that is accurate for only a very small proportion of those who actually engage in delinquent misconduct. Apart from the obvious factual inaccuracies reflected in such stereotypes, they encourage the belief that delinquent behavior is common only among a small fraction of the adolescent population. This distortion is not infrequently supported by various official statistics that provide information on the social and demographic characteristics of juveniles whose behavior has prompted some formal response. Available estimates of the proportion of the juvenile population that is referred for a formal juvenile court hearing each year, for example, show that something on the order of 3.4 percent of all juveniles appear in juvenile courts in any given year. Moreover, males, older juveniles, members of minority groups, those involved in particularly frequent and/or serious misconduct, and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are disproportionately represented in that sub-set of juveniles who are responded to by the police, courts, and related agencies of the juvenile justice system.

A large number of studies based on unofficial statistics, particularly those obtained during the course

of self-reported delinquency research such as the present study, encourage conclusions that are quite contrary to either popular stereotypes or official records data.⁵ They show, among other things, that the vast majority of delinquent behavior remains hidden from any official scrutiny, that the majority of juveniles engage in at least some delinquent misconduct, that juvenile delinquency is common among virtually every segment of the adolescent population rather than heavily concentrated in sub-segment of juveniles, and that many of those who are habitual and/or serious delinquents are never reacted to by any juvenile justice agency.

Consequently, when this study was initiated our very strong expectation was that juvenile delinquency would be common in virtually all categories of juveniles in both Portsmouth and Virginia Beach. This expectation certainly received preliminary support from the information already discussed which shows that over seventy percent of those in our sample reported having been involved in one or more of the thirteen types of delinquency under consideration during the 1975-76 school year. What that general figure does not show is the more detailed information we obtained on the distribution of levels of delinquent involvement across particular categories of the sample. Much of that data is reported in Table 7.

TABLE 7

ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS AND
DEGREE OF DELINQUENT INVOLVEMENT, 1975-76

	<u>Delinquent Involvement</u>			
	Very Low	Low	High	Very High
<u>Race</u>				
Non-white	33.5 (190)	25.4 (144)	25.7 (146)	15.5 (88)
White	28.1 (470)	19.2 (321)	24.4 (408)	28.2 (472)
Gamma = .190, $\chi^2 = 39.63$, df = 3, $\alpha = .001$				
<u>Age</u>				
13-15	33.6 (418)	21.5 (268)	21.3 (265)	23.6 (294)
16-18	24.4 (219)	19.4 (174)	29.8 (267)	26.4 (237)
Gamma = .148, $\chi^2 = 32.61$, df = 3, $\alpha = .001$				
<u>Sex</u>				
Male	18.6 (198)	19.0 (202)	26.6 (282)	35.8 (380)
Female	39.4 (463)	22.3 (262)	23.2 (273)	15.1 (178)
Gamma = -.411, $\chi^2 = 181.94$, df = 3, $\alpha = .001$				
<u>Social Class</u>				
High	27.4 (266)	20.3 (197)	26.1 (253)	26.2 (254)
Low	32.1 (272)	20.9 (177)	22.3 (189)	24.7 (209)
Gamma = -.073, $\chi^2 = 6.48$, df = 3, $\alpha = .090$				

In interpreting this table it is important to recall what it reflects. Almost three-fourths of those in the sample report at least some delinquent behavior during the 1975-76 school year, but this table does not evaluate the association between social background characteristics and a simple involvement/no involvement measure of delinquency. Instead, the degree of delinquent involvement measure is a composite indicator based on both the seriousness and frequency of delinquent misconduct. For the purposes of this tabular analysis this delinquency variable was divided into quartiles, and particular care should be exercised in interpreting the percentage distributions. The information provided on racial difference in Table 7, for example, shows that 15.5 percent of the non-white students and 28.2 percent of the white students had very high levels of delinquent involvement in the year prior to the beginning of this study. This does not mean that these juveniles are very delinquent in some objective sense; it does show that, relative to the total sample, non-whites report less involvement in delinquency than whites.

An inspection of the associations and percentage distributions presented in Table 7 confirms the expectation that delinquency is not a type of behavior which is common only among some segments of the sample. The association between social class and delinquency, for example, is not statistically significant, and the linkages between

race, age, and delinquency, while significant, are weak. Indeed, only the relationship between sex and delinquency involvement is strong, males reporting far more delinquency than females. The only unanticipated finding is that whites reported more delinquency than non-whites, but that trend is not pronounced. Thus, while race, age, and sex are significantly related to delinquency, the most important fact for our purpose is that delinquent behavior frequently encountered in sub-segments of the sample which differ in their social background and demographic characteristics. On the other hand, it is at least possible that restricting our attention to the overall measure of delinquency involvement is obscuring potentially stronger levels of association between these independent variables and specific categories of delinquent behavior. In order to determine whether that was the case, this aspect of the analysis was extended by relating each of the independent variables to the three sub-scales of the overall delinquency measure which were described previously. The findings of that analysis are summarized in Table 8.

TABLE 8

SUMMARY OF ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS AND DELINQUENCY INVOLVEMENT SUB-SCALES

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Delinquency Sub-Scale Variable</u>
Race	Overall = .190
	Minor = .232
	Moderate = .171
	Serious = .039*
Age	Overall = .148
	Minor = .343
	Moderate = -.181
	Serious = -.238
Sex	Overall = -.411
	Minor = -.317
	Moderate = -.450
	Serious = -.538
Social Class	Overall = -.073*
	Minor = -.076*
	Moderate = -.038*
	Serious = .092*

*Indicates non-significant associations.

The general interpretation provided for Table 7 is also appropriate for Table 8 in the sense that none of the independent variables have particularly strong levels of association with the sub-scales of the overall delinquency involvement measure. Some differences emerge which merit comment, however. First, the association between race and delinquency involvement becomes increasingly less pronounced as our attention shifts from overall delinquency ($\gamma = .190$) to more serious misconduct ($\gamma =$

.171 for the moderate delinquency sub-scale and .039 for the major delinquency sub-scale). Thus, while the white students in the sample were somewhat more likely to report minor or moderately serious delinquency, there is no significant difference between their involvement in serious delinquency and that of the non-white students. Given the contrary findings of previous research, this is difficult to interpret, but one possibility is the nature of the sample. Because it is restricted to junior and senior high school students who were in school at both data collection points during the 1975-76 school year, no data were obtained from drop-outs or from those absent from school at either point in time. To the extent that truancy and/or dropping out of school are related to ethnicity, our results would be distorted. Second, while the association between age and the overall delinquency measure shows that the older students were more involved in delinquency than their younger counterparts, Table 8 shows that the younger students reported slightly higher levels of involvement in both moderately serious and serious types of delinquency (gamma = -.181 and -.238 respectively). This may also be a reflection of the sample employed, but both the levels of association and the percentage distributions in the two contingency tables show that the differences by age are small.

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1 OF 2

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this preliminary analysis section was to provide an overview of the volume of delinquent behavior reported by those in this sample. The findings that have been presented will certainly come as no surprise to those familiar with prior self-report delinquency research. Delinquency is clearly a problem of considerable proportion in these two cities, and it is not a problem that can be attributed to particular segments of the juvenile population. To the contrary, with the single exception that males are a good deal more involved in delinquency than females, the distribution of delinquency crosses over every category of the population.

Particularly if viewed from the perspective of those less familiar with delinquency research, some of the findings here may present something of a reality shock. Far too frequently the problem of delinquency is dismissed as relatively inconsequential behavior which, however irritating it might be from time to time, is far more an illustration of youthful exuberance than of something that poses any real threat to the community. Children, after all, will be children. The small fraction who do anything that is "really criminal" are the minority who have "bad friends," who come from "bad homes," who have "adjustment problems," or who are in some way different from "normal" adolescents. Such views

find pityfully little support in the analysis presented here. True, most of the delinquency these students reported was relatively non-serious, but they also reported more than a thousand acts that would meet virtually anyone's definition of serious crimes (assault with a weapon, breaking and entering, auto theft, and grand larceny). Further, the findings show that delinquency involvement may become more serious over time. Most importantly for our purposes, however, are the findings which showed that delinquent behavior, including serious delinquency, is not unique to any special category of juveniles.

On balance, however, it should be emphasized that this segment of the report is included more to set the stage for subsequent portions of the analysis than as a detailed assessment of the distributions and patterns of delinquency reported by those in the sample. A more pressing issue is the ability of the juvenile justice system to identify and react to delinquents, and the primary concern is with evaluating the impact of reactions to juveniles on their subsequent attitudes, values and behavior. It is toward the first problem that we now direct our attention.

PART IV: THE PROBLEM OF DETECTING DELINQUENCY

Introduction

Two general questions must be posed in this segment of the report. First, what is the likelihood that a juvenile who is engaging in delinquency will be brought to the attention of some part of the juvenile justice system? This is particularly relevant for those who feel that the system should deter juveniles from involvement in delinquency. Whether our concern is with the ability of the system to operate in such a way that it convinces the potential offender that misconduct is too costly an option (general deterrence) or with its ability to react to a particular offender in a fashion that lessens the probability of further misbehavior (specific deterrence), most would agree that the system must be capable of detecting a significant proportion of the behavior it seeks to control. To the extent that the system is inefficient in detecting delinquency, we would anticipate that difficulties regarding its effectiveness will increase.

Second, we must also consider whether the probability of some official reaction is more a function of who the

juvenile is than of what he or she may have done. This issue is more of a concern for the labeling paradigm than it is for the deterrence model. Labeling theorists, many of whom have been particularly critical of the juvenile justice system, have often argued that the imposition of formal sanctions is discriminatory and that the potential for discrimination is increased in the juvenile justice system because its flexible, informal method of operation does not incorporate many of the procedural constraints that are common in the criminal justice system.

These concerns are certainly not unique to this study. To the contrary, there are dozens of published reports in which the issue of differentials in reactions to delinquency has been posed.¹ There is, however, an important distinction between this and most prior research which must be kept in mind. The preponderance of the literature is based on samples of juveniles who have come into contact with the police,² juvenile court intake officials,³ or the juvenile court.⁴ The researchers have then examined differential patterns of response to that special sub-set of juveniles who have come to the attention of one or more of these agencies. How these agencies respond to the juveniles with whom they have some contact is, of course, an important concern, but it is not the problem to be addressed here. Instead, we will be examining the experiences of a large and representative sample of public school students in two cities.

Almost three-fourths report some delinquent activity during the 1975-76 school year. Some came to the attention of the police or juvenile court; most, as we will soon see, did not. Thus, the question is whether or not those who did report police and/or juvenile court contacts were more or less randomly drawn from those involved in delinquency.

The Probability of Detection

The initial question may be approached in a straightforward manner. In the previous section we noted that 70.52 percent of those in the sample reported having engaged in one or more of the thirteen types of delinquency under consideration during the 1975-76 school year. Now we need to determine the probability that someone reporting delinquent involvement will come into contact with the police or the juvenile court. In doing so it is useful to relate the type of involvement reported during the school year to police and court contacts. Tables 9 and 10 contain much of the necessary information.

TABLE 9

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN TYPE OF SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENCY AND CONTACTS WITH THE POLICE

		<u>Type of Delinquency</u>				
		<u>None</u>	<u>Minor</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Minor & Moderate</u>	<u>Major</u>
<u>Police Contacts</u>	<u>None</u>	98.9 (656)	92.6 (398)	95.3 (205)	82.0 (542)	63.6 (178)
	<u>One or More</u>	1.1 (7)	7.4 (32)	4.7 (10)	18.0 (119)	36.4 (102)
	<u>Totals</u>	100.0 (663)	100.0 (430)	100.0 (215)	100.0 (661)	100.0 (280)

Gamma = .689, $X^2 = 275.34$, $p < .001$

Looking first at Table 9, we can obtain information on both the likelihood that those in the sample will have one or more contacts with the police and whether this probability is related to the type of self-reported delinquent involvement. As virtually everyone would expect, the proportion of those reporting contact with the police is not high. Only 12.0 percent (N = 270) of those in our sample had any contacts with the police during the school year. Some, of course, had multiple contacts, so the total number of contacts reported is a good deal higher (N = 527). Still, reports of this number of police contacts relative to the more than 18,000 incidents of delinquent acts on which we have information make it clear that the risk of detection by the police is low.

It is reasonable to argue that the juvenile justice system has no major interest in detecting each and every child who may engage in delinquent behavior. It is obviously much more concerned with locating those juveniles whose delinquent behavior is more serious. Table 9 also provides information relevant to assessing their efficiency in that regard. Perhaps the most striking finding is that there is a very strong relationship between type of delinquent involvement and contact with the police (Gamma = .689). As the seriousness of delinquency increases there is a dramatic increase in the likelihood of one or more police contacts being reported. Thus, for example, only 1.1

percent of those reporting no delinquent behavior during the school year had a contact with the police, but 36.4 percent of those reporting serious types of delinquency also reported police contacts. It is obvious, then, that as the seriousness of delinquency increases, so does the risk of intervention by this segment of the juvenile justice system. On the other hand, even among those in the sample who reported serious types of delinquency the majority had no police contacts (63.6 percent, N = 178), and the probability of no police contacts is still greater for those who reported a combination of both minor and moderately serious acts (82.0 percent, N = 542).

TABLE 10

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN TYPE OF SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENCY
AND CONTACTS WITH THE JUVENILE COURT

		<u>Type of Delinquency</u>				
		<u>None</u>	<u>Minor</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Minor & Moderate</u>	<u>Major</u>
<u>Court Contacts</u>	<u>None</u>	98.5 (653)	91.6 (394)	96.7 (208)	89.0 (588)	80.4 (225)
	<u>One or More</u>	1.5 (10)	8.4 (36)	3.3 (7)	11.0 (73)	19.6 (55)
	Totals	100.0 (663)	100.0 (430)	100.0 (215)	100.0 (661)	100.0 (280)

Gamma = .508, $X^2 = 103.93$, $p < .001$

Similar information on the probability of contact with the juvenile court is presented in Table 10. Although the number of juveniles reporting one or more juvenile court appearances during the 1975-76 school year ($N = 181$) is lower than the number reporting police contacts ($N = 270$), the pattern of the relationship between type of delinquency and court appearance shown in Table 10 is very similar to that revealed in Table 9. As before, there is a strong association between type of delinquency reported and the probability of one or more court appearances ($\text{Gamma} = .508$). Still, it is equally obvious that the vast majority of those in the sample, regardless of the type of delinquency they report having engaged in, never appear before the juvenile court.

Although we will move to a more elaborate consideration of these bivariate relationships soon, one conclusion is clear. Juvenile delinquency is a remarkably "safe" type of behavior in the sense that it seldom elicits any contact between the delinquent and representatives of the juvenile justice system. That finding, of course, will surprise nobody. It is certainly not offered as a criticism of either of these two jurisdictions. Full enforcement of the law, whether in the juvenile or the adult system, has always been recognized as a practical impossibility and, at least in a democratic society, the infringements upon

civil liberties which would be a prerequisite for a system of full enforcement have almost always been viewed as too costly a price. That is not to say, however, that our apparent inability to detect more than a small fraction of offenders and to react to an even smaller number of behavioral incidents can or should be ignored when we concern ourselves with the impact of legal sanctions on the attitudes and behavior of those who are sanctioned. To the contrary, even taken by themselves, these data tell us much that is quite relevant to the problems we are addressing. A few of these points are sufficiently important that they merit special attention before we move into any further analysis.

Perhaps the most important implication is that contacts with the police and courts are very unlikely to have the desired effect of lessening levels of delinquency among those to whom the police and courts respond. To have such an effect the juvenile justice system would have to be far more efficient; it would have to be capable of identifying and reacting to a larger fraction of the offending juveniles. Here we see that more than two-thirds of those involved in serious forms of delinquency, those who are prime targets for those in the juvenile justice system, have no contact with that system. If we are willing to assume that those who engage in delinquency derive something they value from such involvement (the acquisition of goods, gaining status

among their peers, the alleviation of frustration, doing something exciting, gaining attention, or the legion of other reasons delinquency theorists posit as correlates of delinquency), the obvious fact that these or other gains can be obtained with little risk can hardly be viewed as an encouragement to become non-delinquent. To the contrary, one would be on firmer ground were he to argue that involvement in a behavior which carries at least some risk is reinforced and encouraged when the risk is taken and no price is paid.

This does not mean that juveniles are likely to become career criminals because the juvenile justice system is incapable of showing them that delinquency does not pay. That would be absurd. Juveniles become adults, and when they do so, even when they begin to anticipate doing so, the expectations and standards by means of which both they and others judge their behavior change. Most will move away from what may now be relatively high levels of illicit behavior. Most will later look back on such behavior, as many of us look back on our own adolescent misconduct, with feelings of amusement. Indeed, many will be perhaps too willing to recount too many of their exploits to their own children, each time noting their good fortune at never being arrested or appearing in juvenile court. What it does mean is that the juvenile justice system is likely to have little to do with whether the vast majority of juveniles who are

engaging in delinquency will or will not continue to do so.

But what of those whose misconduct is detected? After all, Tables 9 and 10 show that 12.0 percent of those in the sample had at least one contact with the police during the period of the study and that 8.0 percent had some contact with the juvenile court. The next section of the report will devote considerable attention to assessing the impact of these contacts, so little needs to be said here. Still, there are implications beyond those to be examined elsewhere in the report. In noting them, it must be emphasized that these comments are necessarily speculative. Still, many students of delinquency have emphasized the potentially negative influence of a juvenile justice system which appears unjust in its procedures and inequitable in the sanctions it imposes.⁵ These data show that most of the juveniles in this sample report at least some delinquent involvement, but that only a relatively small number came into contact with either the police or the juvenile court. Consequently, it seems very likely that those who did have some contact with the juvenile justice system will view their encounters as more a function of discriminatory enforcement of the law, or perhaps of simply bad luck, than of their own behavior. In other words, many are almost certain to view their encounters as reflections of something which is being done to them, not as reactions to something they have done. As has already been noted, this is a possibility that the data presented here can neither verify nor refute. It is, however,

strongly supported by the author's frequent contacts with both juveniles and adults who have been incarcerated. In such settings, individual responsibility for behavior is often disavowed, not because the person claims to have not engaged in the behavior, but because he or she was only one of many who did so. The fact that most are not apprehended or punished despite their involvement in similar behavior is, in effect, used as a device to both avoid blame and challenge the legitimacy of the system which has, in their eyes, capriciously singled them out for special attention. When this does occur, much delinquency theory implies that the outcome of intervention efforts will be counterproductive.

Extra-Legal Correlates of Processing

Notwithstanding these and other related issues, the data in Tables 9 and 10 show us that, while the probability of either a police or court contact is quite low, both are highly correlated with type of delinquent involvement. Much of the criticism that has been directed at the juvenile justice system, however, is premised more on the contention that the system operates in a discriminatory fashion than on any notion that it does not efficiently identify those who have engaged in delinquent behavior. In particular, many have argued that such variables as age, sex, race, and socioeconomic status are associated with decisions made by the police and juvenile courts.⁶ Unfortunately, the available data either provide inadequate information on such possibil-

ities or are analyzed in a fashion that hinders any straightforward interpretation. For example, as has already been noted, most researchers have been forced to rely on official records data even though this and other analysis clearly demonstrates that those with official records represent only a small fraction of those who engage in delinquent behavior.

Further, when only simple bivariate relationships are reported it is impossible to determine whether the apparent associations are direct, indirect, or spurious. Previous research on the relationship between race and police decisions to take a suspect into custody provide a good illustration of this type of problem. Some studies have identified a correlation between these two variables, the suggestion being that blacks are more likely to be arrested than whites. More sophisticated studies, however, challenge that interpretation.⁷ They note, among other things, that the demeanor of a suspect plays an important role and that demeanor is strongly related to race. Blacks may show less deference to the police than whites; when less deference to police authority is shown, the probability of arrest increases. Indeed, when the deference variable is held constant, it may be possible to explain the apparent relationship between race and arrest probabilities.

In this analysis a special concern was with removing the potentially confounding effects of type of delin-

quent involvement. The research question we wished to pose concerned the extent to which several social and demographic characteristics had an impact on the likelihood of police and court contacts independent of the influence of variations in type of delinquency. The results of the analysis are reported in Tables 11 and 12.

Table 11 provides the relevant information on the correlations between the four independent variables and a dichotomized measure of police contacts (no contacts versus one or more contacts) before and after type of delinquency was held constant. Thus, the coefficients in the column labeled "Original Relationship" reflect the relationships between the independent and dependent variables before any controls are employed; those in the column labeled "Conditional Associations" refer to the same relationships when those children reporting different types of delinquency are considered separately. Because of the relatively small number of juveniles reporting police and court contacts, however, it was necessary to categorize the control variable in a manner different from the way it has been employed previously. Specifically, in Tables 9 and 10 type of delinquency had five categories (no delinquency, only minor types of delinquency, only moderately serious types of delinquency, a combination of both minor and moderate types, and serious delinquency). In Tables 11 and 12 this variable was dichotomized ("Lo" = no delinquency, only minor

delinquency, only moderately serious delinquency, and a combination of both minor and moderately serious delinquency; "Hi" = serious delinquency).

TABLE 11

ASSOCIATIONS (GAMMA) BETWEEN SOCIAL BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS AND POLICE CONTACTS WITH CONDITIONAL ASSOCIATIONS WHEN TYPE OF DELINQUENCY INVOLVEMENT IS HELD CONSTANT

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Original Relationship</u>	<u>Conditional Relationship</u>
Age	-.044*	Lo Delinquency = .107* Hi Delinquency = -.206*
Race	.299	Lo Delinquency = .280 Hi Delinquency = .374
Sex	-.481	Lo Delinquency = -.414 Hi Delinquency = -.276
Socioeconomic Status	-.028*	Lo Delinquency = -.071* Hi Delinquency = -.041*

*Indicates non-significant association.

The findings presented in Table 11 show that age and socioeconomic status (as measured by the occupational prestige of the juveniles' parents) are not significantly related to police contacts before or after the introduction of the control variable. Consistent with much earlier research, however, there is a moderately strong relationship between sex and police contacts which remains significant even after the type of delinquency variable is held

constant. In each of the conditional tables we find that males are significantly more likely to report police contacts. What is surprising is the finding that white students were more likely to report police contacts than their non-white counterparts. This is consistent with the previously presented findings that whites reported more delinquency involvement than blacks and that delinquency involvement was, in turn, significantly related to the probability of police contacts.

TABLE 12

ASSOCIATIONS (GAMMA) BETWEEN SOCIAL BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS AND JUVENILE COURT CONTACTS WITH CONDITIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OBTAINED WHEN TYPE OF DELINQUENCY INVOLVEMENT IS HELD CONSTANT

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Original Relationship</u>	<u>Conditional Relationship</u>
Age	.417	Lo Delinquency = .539 Hi Delinquency = .277
Race	.111*	Lo Delinquency = .116* Hi Delinquency = .080*
Sex	-.313	Lo Delinquency = -.255 Hi Delinquency = -.116*
Socioeconomic Status	.127*	Lo Delinquency = .063* Hi Delinquency = .241*

*Indicates non-significant association.

Shifting our attention to the role played by these variables in determining the likelihood of court contacts, Table 12 reveals findings which are quite different from those

reported in Table 11. Despite the fact that males were much more likely to report one or more court appearances and that socioeconomic status is uncorrelated with court appearance, each of which was noted in Table 11, the other relationships shown in Table 12 are contrary. Age, which was not correlated with police contacts, is much more strongly related to court contact, and this relationship remains significant after the delinquency variable is held constant. Regardless of type of delinquency involvement, older juveniles are more likely to report court appearances. On the other hand, while Table 11 shows that whites were more likely to report police contacts than blacks, Table 12 shows that race is unrelated to court contacts.

Summary and Conclusions

Although our primary concern in this report is with the impact of sanctions rather than their differential imposition, this segment of the report has addressed two important issues associated with the differences in the likelihood of police and court contacts. Given our concern with the consequences of these contacts, the most important of the findings reported here may be simply stated. The vast majority of juveniles, regardless of the type of misconduct they report, have little objective reason to fear that their behavior will come to the attention of the juvenile justice system. The system is simply not able to identify or respond

to more than a small fraction of those who reported delinquent activities. Consequently, the objective risk associated with delinquent involvement is low. Because of that, there is very little reason to anticipate that other portions of the analysis presented in this report will be able to show that contacts with the juvenile justice system, whether measured in terms of actual contacts or the perceived risk of contacts, will have the effect of strongly reducing degrees of involvement in delinquency. Indeed, juveniles are almost certain to recognize the improbability of being identified and sanctioned by officials of the juvenile justice system. Those who are responded to may very well view intervention efforts as manifestations of an unfair, inequitable, arbitrary system. Such views can weaken or break any bonds to conformity which might otherwise tend to inhibit delinquent activity. Those whose behavior goes undetected are, in effect, being rewarded for misconduct. We may well have, in short, a situation within which the juvenile justice system is damned if it does and damned if it does not. Juveniles who escape detection may well find that delinquency provides tangible or intangible rewards, rewards which encourage additional delinquency; those who are detected are likely to view official response as being so unfair and inequitable that their bonds to the conventional order are so weakened that they are pushed toward rather than deterred from further misconduct.

The analysis presented in this section of the report does go beyond the relatively simple task of identifying the probability of police and court contacts. It also provides information on how those probabilities are influenced by both levels of delinquent involvement and the sex, age, race, and socioeconomic status of these students. How we can best interpret those findings is problematic. Regardless of their particular philosophy of how the juvenile system should operate, most would view the strong association between type of delinquent involvement and likelihood of contacts with the police and/or juvenile court as evidence of a positive nature. After all, most of the treatment and social control goals of the system are best served when those involved in serious or frequent delinquency are given special attention. The influence of the several social and demographic variables, however, is much more difficult to interpret, particularly in light of the fact that the factors which affect the probability of police contacts are frequently different than those which affect the likelihood of court contacts.

On a simplistic level one might conclude that any correlations between these variables and contact with any component of the juvenile system attests to the fact that the system operates in a discriminatory fashion. Being placed in legal jeopardy, one might argue, should be associated with what a child has done, not with his or her

social and demographic characteristics. Perhaps this is a tenable position to take. In many ways, at least from my perspective, it is tempting to accept it. In the introductory portion of this report, for example, I suggested that my personal preference would be to move toward a type of juvenile justice system within which procedural constraints common in the criminal justice system would be employed in such a way as to diminish significantly any reliance on extra-legal factors in the decision-making process. The fact that these data reveal correlations between extra-legal variables and the probability of both police and court contacts could be interpreted as a demonstration of the need for the incorporation of such constraints. When behavior is similar, one could easily argue that males should not confront more risk than females, older juveniles no greater risk than younger children, whites no greater risk than blacks, and so on.

There is, however, a catch, a logical jump, which is implicit in taking this position. Rightly or wrongly, those working within the juvenile justice system have been charged with the responsibility for taking factors other than the behavior of a juvenile into consideration when determining how a particular case should be handled. Decisions are supposed to be tailored to the needs of the individual juvenile. Indeed, even in the adult system such information is employed in the determination of an appro-

priate sentence (though, hypothetically, not in such pre-sentencing phases of processing as the decision to arrest, to charge, to prosecute, and the determination of guilt or innocence). Thus, particularly with regard to the information provided here on correlates of contact with the juvenile court, it is very difficult to determine whether the associations we have identified reflect the proper use of discretionary powers or their abuse. For example, officials of the system might well contend that those who are most likely to have contacts with the juvenile court (those in the sample who are older, male, white, and so on) are disproportionately represented because responsible officials believed that they would profit from that type of intervention and that it would not be beneficial to intervene in the lives of other categories of juveniles (at least not in the same fashion).

Perhaps we should assume that the presence of the correlations we have found reflect what many juvenile justice system officials would contend is the proper exercise of discretion and that it is in no way an indication of unequal justice or discrimination. Given the magnitude of the delinquency problem which those in these two jurisdictions must confront and the very minimal resources which are at their disposal they certainly deserve the benefit of any doubts that might arise in the course of this analysis. Unfortunately, doing so does not really resolve the problem

identified here. The reasons for this are numerous, but a few of the more obvious ones will serve to illustrate the point.

First, as has already been noted, so few juveniles are identified as delinquents that the consequences of intervention may well be negative for both those who are identified and those who are not.

Second, on the basis of the data reported here and elsewhere, there is ample reason to believe that the variables which directly influence the probability of contacts with the system change when our attention shifts from one component of the system to another. Tables 11 and 12, for example, show that race is correlated with police contacts, but not with court contacts and, conversely, that age is unrelated to police contacts, but it is significantly related to court contacts. This strongly implies that those social and demographic characteristics which may provide important decision-making criteria for one category of officials are not viewed as relevant by another category of officials. This, in turn, may well suggest that the juvenile justice system is not a system at all, that its separate components are not integrated in such a way that it warrants the label "system."

Third, if these data reflect the application of agreed upon screening standards adopted to maximize the positive consequences of official intervention, where is the

objective evidence which shows that, for example, older juveniles or males benefit more from a juvenile court appearance than do those who, while similarly delinquent, are younger or female? In other words, one could rather easily argue, without challenging the existing philosophy of the juvenile court, that screening criteria are being employed without any systematic evidence on their utility as a means by which the goals of the system can be more effectively attained. Unless such a demonstration is possible, they should not be employed if for no other reason than that they may well tend to further bolster the perception, held by both juveniles and critics of the juvenile court, that our system of juvenile justice is unjust and inequitable.

Many of these observations go beyond the data presented here and the primary focus of this report. On balance, however, many of them raise serious questions about the impact of intervention by officials of the juvenile justice system. Perhaps too crudely put, they tend to suggest that the system identifies so few delinquents that it is likely to do little to deter potential offenders. Further, those who are identified are selected for processing in such a way as to weaken the ability of the system to lessen the likelihood of their continued involvement in delinquency. Those issues are central to the goals of this project, our primary interest being whether contact with the

juvenile justice system has a significant effect on the attitudes and behavior of those contacted. It is on that set of problems that we will now focus our attention.

PART V: LABELING, DETERRENCE, AND DELINQUENCY

Introduction

Until now our attention has been devoted to the volume of delinquency in these cities, its distribution across categories of the juvenile population, and the likelihood that particular types of both juveniles and delinquency would elicit some response by the juvenile justice system. The issues posed by these topics, of course, are salient concerns for those interested in juvenile delinquency. They are not, however, our principal problems here. Instead, both of the grants awarded by the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reflect a special concern with the potential consequences of sanctions on the subsequent attitudes, values, and behavior of those whose behavior has encouraged some official response. Stated in a more narrow fashion, our primary goal in initiating this study was to determine whether the imposition of sanctions has a beneficial or a counterproductive effect.

Without wishing to labor over this problem in any

great detail, I should note from the outset that the pursuit of this goal poses a complex set of conceptual, methodological, and statistical problems. Moreover, so many feel so strongly about various aspects of the general problem to be addressed that I approach this segment of the analysis with much trepidation. I view my position as being somewhat analogous to that of the prisoner who, having been sentenced to death, was given the opportunity to choose whether he would be shot or hanged. According to the story, the determination was to be made on the basis of whether the next statement made by the condemned man was true or false. If the statement were true, he would be shot; if it were false, he would be hanged. (The prisoner is reported to have then said, "Well, I'll be hanged.")

Nevertheless, the nature of the problem and the method employed in attempting to resolve it merits some preliminary comment before moving toward any detailed discussion of the analysis and findings. The problem, simply put, is to determine whether the imposition of sanctions has a significant impact on delinquent involvement and, if so, the direction of the effect. All other things being equal, advocates of the deterrence paradigm argue delinquent involvement will decrease when the actual or perceived costs of such involvement increase. Those more closely associated with the labeling perspective arrive at a contrary conclusion.

They contend that the imposition of sanctions is sufficiently stigmatizing that those who receive them are pushed toward rather than deterred from additional misconduct.

As was discussed in greater detail in Part II of this report, neither of these perspectives have been elaborated in a sufficiently formal fashion that one can approach a comparison of their explanatory power in a direct, unambiguous manner. To the contrary, statements of both leave us with assertions that border on the tautological. If, for example, someone is the recipient of a sanction, the deterrence paradigm implies that the probability of further misconduct will be reduced. However, when this implication is not supported it can be suggested that the sanction was "obviously" not sufficient to make the behavior excessively costly. Similarly, advocates of the labeling perspective have not clearly defined the difference between sanctions and labels. Thus, they can view negative evidence as an indication that the recipient of sanctions was not really labeled. This semantic slipperiness is intolerable if either perspective is to be taken seriously. Although qualifications can and should be made, the imposition of sanctions will be followed by less of the behavior, more of the behavior, or no change in the incidence of the behavior.

Methodological and Statistical Considerations

Much of the problem revolves around the complex task of removing the potentially confounding effects of the sizable number of variables which may be associated with both the decision to impose sanctions and delinquent involvement. In a laboratory setting these difficulties may be overcome in a comparatively simple fashion. Subjects may be assigned to a variety of experimental and control groups in a fashion which insures their equivalence at the beginning of the experiment, sanctions of varying types and/or magnitudes can then be imposed on those in the experimental group(s), and the experimenter can determine whether the frequency of particular types of behavior are influenced and, if so, in what direction. The advantage of such a design is that any influences which might affect the response of subjects to the experimental variable are randomly distributed across both experimental and control groups and, obviously, which subjects will or will not receive sanctions is uncorrelated with such factors as their previous behavior or their social background characteristics.

The problem being addressed here does not lend itself to an experimental approach. Even those issues which might be incorporated into an experimental design would, were they to be addressed in that fashion, raise particularly serious questions regarding external

validity. Consequently, we are left with no option other than to hold as many potentially confounding influences constant as we can and, having done so, to evaluate the impact of sanctions on the subsequent behavior of those who have been sanctioned.

There is no question about the fact that reasonable people differ considerably on the logic and method which they feel are best suited to the problem at hand. Indeed, in the course of this study we have consulted with a variety of skilled criminologists, methodologists, and statisticians. Few agreed with one another on all of the issues that had to be confronted, and I am confident that the approach which was adopted will be viewed as appropriate by some, less than satisfactory by others, and simply inconclusive by still others. In any event, the method employed here is sufficiently complex that some detailed consideration of the approach must be provided as a preface to the analysis which follows.

First, the choice of both independent and dependent variables deserves some preliminary explanation. Recall that the general problem to be addressed pertains to the contrary predictions of the deterrence and labeling paradigms. Sanctions play a major role in each, so the initial problem was to insure that adequate measures of sanctions were included. Two basic sanctioning variables are incorporated into the analysis: legal sanctions, which are measured by a weighted index of police and/or juvenile

court contacts, and school sanctions, which are measured by a weighted index of sanctions imposed by school officials. Similar measures were also developed for the legal and school sanction variables to reflect sanctions imposed prior to 1974 and those imposed during the period between 1974 and 1975.

Sanctions are not the only variables emphasized by these two models. In particular, the deterrence model implies that a variety of additional factors will influence an actor's evaluation of the appropriateness of engaging in delinquency. Salient among these influences are the actor's assessment of the celerity, certainty, and severity of sanctions. The clear implication is that delinquency is less likely when juveniles feel that it is relatively certain to be detected, that it will be responded to quickly, and that the punishment imposed will be considerable. Further, advocates of the deterrence perspective would certainly agree that individuals who hold similar views regarding the celerity, certainty, and severity of punishment do not necessarily agree on their perceptions of the costs associated with being sanctioned. Quick, certain, and severe sanctions are more likely to influence the behavior of those who view such sanctions as costly. Thus, the analysis incorporates two additional variables beyond the measures of sanctions described

previously. One is a scale which measures variations in perceptions of the celerity, certainty, and swiftness of formal sanctions; the other provides a measure of perceived costs of being sanctioned.

Similarly, sanctions are not the only influences emphasized by the labeling paradigm and, not unlike the additional considerations urged by the deterrence model, it is necessary to take these variables into account here. Unfortunately, advocates of the labeling model have been less than clear in discussing these additional influences. By implication, at least, they appear to be suggesting that becoming delinquent is a multi-stage process that begins when juveniles are responded to by agents or agencies capable of assigning them to an altered status in some on-going system of action, a status which encourages both the juvenile and those with whom he or she interacts to view the person who has been sanctioned in a new and negative manner. This, in turn, encourages the juvenile who has been sanctioned to view himself as a delinquent and, over time, to develop negative evaluations of, among other things, conventional behavior and the institutions of conventional society. This stimulates still more misconduct, which elicits further sanctions, which promote an even greater delinquent self-conception, and so on.

Because of the heavy emphasis on social processes, it is virtually impossible to test the labeling model in

any cross-sectional design. However, the longitudinal aspect of this study allows for some adjustments in this regard. The inclusion of prior sanctions as a variable has already been discussed. In addition, it is important that potential consequences of those earlier sanctions also be held constant. This will be pursued by incorporating measures, all of which are based on responses to the questionnaire administered in the Fall of 1975, of self-concept as delinquent, attitudes toward the law, and attitudes toward both the police and the courts. Further, because the consequences of prior labeling might be expected to have impacted on the involvement of these juveniles in pro-social types of behavior, a multidimensional index of degree of involvement in school, social, and community activities at the beginning of the study is also incorporated into the analysis.

In short, quite a number of independent variables associated with one or both of the two theoretical models are included in this analysis. This is important to understand that these variables and their possible association with delinquency are not our primary concerns. The intent is to take them into consideration in such a way as to remove their collective influence so that an assessment of the impact of legal and school sanctions may be obtained in as unambiguous a manner as possible. Stated differently, what

we want to determine is the influence of sanctions after the effect of other relevant variables is removed. Doing so poses one further complexity. Simply put, most would quickly agree that the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. This suggests that those with histories of delinquent involvement are likely to remain involved in delinquency if all other things remain equal. This is not a very novel idea, despite the fact that some of those associated with the labeling perspective either ignore or are incapable of accounting for patterns of delinquent involvement which emerge or continue even in the absence of societal reactions. Still, what we wish to examine here is not delinquency that is merely a continuation of an already established behavioral pattern, a pattern that could be interpreted purely in terms of projecting delinquency at the second data collection point from what we learned about the level of misconduct at the initial point. Instead, holding all other things constant, including the baseline measure of delinquency, we are most concerned with identifying the linkage between sanctions and any changes which took place during the course of the study.

What we have, then, is a research problem which requires that we isolate the effect of the legal and school sanctions variables. Doing so demands that we both remove the potentially confounding influences of other variables

central to each of the theoretical models under consideration and eliminate that aspect of delinquent involvement which could be predicted purely on the basis of knowing how involved each child was when the study began. This is a tedious analytical task, and unfortunately, one for which there is no generally agreed upon solution. The method employed here is quite conservative in the sense that it maximizes the probability of finding that legal and school sanctions would have no significant impact.

It is important that the underlying logic of our approach be emphasized and that the reader keep it carefully in mind. It can best be understood as a series of statistical operations designed to isolate the influence of the sanctioning variables. The general method employed is that of stepwise multiple regression analysis. Unlike the more common uses of that technique, however, the order in which the variables enter the equation is not a reflection of their ability to account for variance in the dependent variable. Instead, the baseline measure of delinquency was forced into the equation first. The residual variance (in other words, that portion of the Spring delinquency involvement that could not be perfectly predicted by the Fall delinquency variable) is, by definition, a reflection of positive or negative changes in each respondent's level of delinquent involvement. On the second step of the multiple regression analysis the measures of delinquency involvement more than

a year prior to the beginning of the study as well as the measure of legal and school sanctions received more than a year prior to the study were entered. Similarly, the third step of the equation called for the entry of the baseline measures of self-concept as delinquent; perceptions of the celerity, certainty, and severity of sanctions; attitudes toward the law; attitudes toward the police and courts; and perceptions of the costs of formal legal sanctions. The net effect of this multi-stage procedure was to create a set of residuals equal to the variance in the Spring measure of delinquent involvement that could not be explained by the combined effects of all of the above variables.

For those not familiar with multiple regression analysis the forced entry of variables into the regression equation may appear to be much ado about nothing. After all, if what we are interested in is being able to maximize the quality of our predictions of delinquency, why not simply allow each variable to enter the equation in the order of its apparent explanatory power and note the overall proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that we are able to account for?

Numerous reasons could be offered, and the general statistical issues involved are discussed far more adequately elsewhere than is possible here.¹ One or two comments,

however, may prove instructive. First, our primary concern is not with determining the amount of variance in delinquent involvement that we can explain (though it should be quickly noted that the R^2 statistics which are reported do reflect the proportion of variance attributable to the set of variables in the equations that are reported). Instead, we are more interested in whether the measures of sanctions have a statistically significant effect, how strong that effect is relative to that of the other predictor variables, and the amount of variance in Spring delinquency involvement that is uniquely determined by these sanctioning variables.

Second, it is true that the standardized regression coefficients are often employed to answer the two initial questions, and, because they are computed when the effects of all other predictor variables have been held constant, the order in which the variables enter the equation does not influence their value. The problem is that the magnitude of these coefficients becomes an imperfect indicator of the relative importance of predictor variables when one is confronted, as is the case here, with a set of intercorrelated independent variables. Further, when the independent variables are intercorrelated it is very difficult to distinguish between variance that is uniquely explained by one predictor and that shared by several predictors.²

Overall, the method employed here has all of the

advantages of more standard applications of regression analysis. It provides information about the net regression coefficients, both standardized and unstandardized, as well as the proportion of variance in the Spring measure of delinquency involvement that can be attributed to this set of predictor variables. Further, because the sanctioning variables with which we are primarily concerned are forced into the regression equation after all of the other variables have been entered, this method provides a more precise measure of the unique proportion of variance that can be accounted for by legal and school sanctions. Further still, because any common variance the sanctioning variables may share with the other variables has been accounted for when the other variables entered the equation, our interpretation of the influence of legal and school sanctions is certain to be conservative.

The Impact of Sanctions

The initial regression analysis employed fourteen predictor variables, and the procedure dictated that they be entered into the equation on one of four separate steps. The first step, which was designed to remove that proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that could be explained by the baseline delinquency measure, included only one variable: level of delinquency involvement in 1974-75. The second step called for the entry of three

variables: delinquency involvement prior to 1974, number of school sanctions imposed prior to 1974, and the number of legal sanctions imposed prior to 1974. On the third step of the computations eight more variables were entered: number of school sanctions imposed during 1974-75, number of legal sanctions imposed during the same period, and the baseline (Fall) measures of non-delinquent behavior, perceptions of the celerity/certainty/severity of sanctions, perceptions of the costs of labeling, self-conception as delinquent, attitudes toward the law, and attitudes toward the police and courts. Finally, the fourth step called for the entry of the measures of school and legal sanctions imposed during the 1975-76 academic year.

Because of the expectation that many of these predictor variables would be intercorrelated with one another, there was every reason to believe that at least some of these variables would have statistically insignificant effects on delinquency involvement. In order to provide an objective basis for the deletion of redundant variables from further consideration, any variable which yielded a regression coefficient that was not significant at the .01 level was not considered in any further analysis. Five of the fourteen variables failed to meet this inclusion criterion: legal sanctions prior to 1974, school sanctions prior to 1974, perceptions of the costs of labeling, the baseline

measure of non-delinquent behavior, and the attitudes toward police and courts scale. Thus, only the remaining nine predictor variables were included in the regression analysis which is summarized in Table 13.

TABLE 13

SUMMARY OF INITIAL MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON SPRING DELINQUENCY INVOLVEMENT

<u>Predictor Variable</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>R² Change</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>Simple r</u>
1974-75 Delinquency	.286	.286	.400	.366	.535
Delinquency Prior to 1974	.313	.026	.175	.108	.335
Law Scale	.323	.010	-.064	-.046	-.333
Delinquent Self- Concept	.326	.003	.080	.035	.324
Deterrence Scale	.327	.001	-.053	-.053	-.201
School Sanctions, 1974-75	.327	.000	-.064	-.058	.248
Legal Sanctions, 1974-75	.327	.000	-.023	-.078	.271
School Sanctions, 1975-76	.435	.108	.338	.293	.480
Legal Sanctions, 1975-76	.481	.046	.076	.240	.449

Although Table 13 does not convey the visual complexity commonly encountered with multivariate contingency tables, the volume of information presented there is substantial. Thus, the reader should go to some pains to avoid the tendency most of us have to read the narrative portion of research reports without devoting more than superficial attention to the tables on which the discussion is based.

Perhaps the most obvious and most striking finding is that this relatively small set of independent variables, four of which measure nothing other than different facets of legal and school sanctions, are capable of explaining almost one-half of the variance in delinquency. When much criminological research has been able to account for only ten percent or so of the variance in dependent variables, the R^2 of .481, which is equal to a multiple correlation coefficient of .693, may be properly described as very substantial. More importantly, the findings are quite consistent. Regardless of whether we assess the importance of school and legal sanctions imposed during the 1975-76 school year in explaining delinquency reported for the same time period by focusing our attention on the zero-order correlations, the standardized regression coefficients, the R^2 changes associated with the entry of the sanctions variables, or the proportion of the total explained variance which is uniquely attributable to the two sanctions measures, our conclusions are identical. Both types of sanctions have a unique, strong, and statistically significant effect on the delinquency variable. The greater the number of legal and school sanctions, the higher the level of delinquency involvement and the more delinquent the nature of changes observed between delinquency involvement in 1974-75 and 1975-76. This is precisely what is predicted by the labeling

model, and conversely, it is directly contrary to the predictions which may be derived from the deterrence paradigm.

Unfortunately, the world is not always as simple as it may sometimes appear at first glance. Specifically, it is not possible to draw any causal inferences from the information presented in Table 13. True, there is no question about the strong effect of the two sanction variables, and their influence obviously remains significant when other relevant factors are held constant. On the other hand, as was noted in Part III, there is no way to establish the temporal order of sanctions and delinquency. This, in turn, means that there is no unambiguous way to determine whether delinquency came before or after the imposition of the sanctions. Either ordering of the variables would be both possible and plausible.

One solution to this problem is possible. Because we do have a measure of legal and school sanctions imposed during 1974-75, it is possible to replicate the regression analysis presented in Table 13 in such a way as to assess the effect of sanctions imposed prior to the 1975-76 school year on delinquency reported during the school year, and the potentially confounding influence of sanctions imposed during the school year may be taken into account by forcing those variables into the regression equation immediately after the baseline measure of delinquency involvement during 1974-75. That extension of the analysis is presented in

Table 14.

TABLE 14

SUMMARY OF REVISED MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON SPRING
DELINQUENCY INVOLVEMENT

Predictor Variable	R^2	R^2 Change	b	Beta	Simple r
1974-75 Delinquency	.286	.286	.400	.366	.535
School Sanctions, 1975-76	.403	.117	.338	.293	.480
Legal Sanctions, 1975-76	.453	.049	.076	.240	.449
Delinquency Prior to 1974	.467	.014	.175	.108	.335
Law Scale	.470	.003	-.064	-.046	-.333
Deterrence Scale	.472	.002	-.053	-.053	-.201
Delinquent Self- Concept	.473	.001	.080	.035	.324
Legal Sanctions, 1974-75	.478	.006	-.023	-.078	.271
School Sanctions, 1974-75	.481	.002	-.063	-.058	.248

Most of the statistical information summarized in Table 14, of course, duplicates that presented in Table 13. All that we have really changed is the order in which the variables enter the regression equation so that we can better isolate the impact of sanctions imposed during 1974-75 on delinquency reported for the 1975-76 school year. Thus, the simple correlations, regression coefficients, and the final R^2 reported in Table 14 are necessarily identical to those presented previously. The findings regarding the effect of sanctions on delinquency, however, are quite different. Although the zero-order correlations

show that there is a positive relationship between delinquency and both school sanctions ($r = .248$) and legal sanctions ($r = .271$), the standardized regression coefficients, each of which is statistically significant, are negative. In other words, after the influences of the other predictor variables are taken into account, increases in the frequency of school and legal sanctions are associated with decreases in delinquency. This is exactly the opposite of what we see regarding the impact of sanctions imposed during the school year. Further, while the measures of both sanctions variables for 1975-76 had a strong unique effect on delinquency, the unique effect of sanctions imposed during the previous year are very weak (neither adds a substantively meaningful increment to the explained variance; both of the standardized regression coefficients are very weak).³

In short, we find ourselves between the proverbial rock and a hard place. When we attempt to isolate the effect of sanctions imposed during one year on delinquency involvement in the following year, we find weak support for the deterrence model; if we more or less ignore the ambiguous temporal ordering between sanctions and delinquency, we find strong support for the labeling theory hypothesis that both school and legal sanctions are positively related to delinquency. Any attempt to accept one or the other

finding necessarily rests on some very thin ice, but I think one possibility deserves consideration.

Specifically, the regression procedure employed in the construction of both Table 13 and 14 dictated that the measure of delinquency reported for 1974-75 be forced into the equation as the first variable. As was explained previously, doing so has the advantage of creating a set of residuals which are equal to changes in levels of delinquency involvement between 1974-75 and 1975-76. Thus, as the other variables enter the equation they are not being used to explain delinquency per se. For example, when the measure of legal sanctions imposed during 1974-75 entered the regression analysis summarized in Table 14, it was being used to account for that proportion of the variation in changes in delinquency involvement which had not been explained by the predictor variables which were forced into the equation after the measure of delinquency reported for 1974-75. The negative regression coefficients, therefore, show that those on whom sanctions were imposed in 1974-75 became less delinquent in the following year. That is quite different from saying that sanctions imposed during one time period are associated with high or low levels of delinquency at some later point in time. For example, a juvenile who was very heavily involved in delinquency during 1974-75 and on whom sanctions were imposed might have become somewhat less delinquent in the following year (remember

that the magnitude of the regression coefficients was very low), but he or she could still be far more involved in delinquency during that following year than those who received fewer or no sanctions. This possibility may be examined by deleting the 1974-75 measure of delinquency involvement from the regression equation, thereby allowing us to determine the ability of the predictor variables to explain variations in levels of delinquency involvement during the 1975-76 school year rather than focusing on changes between 1974-75 and 1975-76. The results of doing so are summarized in Table 15.

TABLE 15

SUMMARY OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON SPRING DELINQUENCY INVOLVEMENT WITHOUT BASELINE DELINQUENCY MEASURE

<u>Predictor Variable</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>R² Change</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>Simple r</u>
School Sanctions, 1975-76	.230	.230	.351	.304	.480
Legal Sanctions, 1975-76	.324	.093	.083	.263	.449
Delinquency Prior to 1974	.368	.044	.261	.161	.335
Attitudes Toward the Law	.393	.024	-.144	-.104	-.333
Deterrence Scale	.398	.005	-.093	-.076	-.201
Self-Concept as Delinquent	.404	.006	.202	.087	.324
School Sanctions, 1974-75	.405	.000	.035	.031	.248

The findings shown in Table 15 may be simply summarized. First, even without taking prior delinquency into account, we are still able to explain a major portion of the variance in delinquency reported for the 1975-76 school year ($R^2 = .406$). Second, while legal sanctions had a weak but statistically significant effect previously, their impact was so weak in this segment of the analysis that the variable was deleted. Most importantly, when our attention shifts from changes in delinquency to degree of delinquency involvement reported for the school year, the sign of the regression coefficient for the school sanctions variable becomes positive. In other words, those who received school sanctions during 1974-75 were more involved in juvenile delinquency during the next school year than those who received no school sanctions.

So what do Tables 13-15 tell us about the effect of sanctions on juvenile delinquency? Unfortunately, there does not appear to be any unambiguous answer to that question. Obviously each table shows that those who receive legal or school sanctions are more involved in delinquency than those who do not. The zero-order correlations between both sanction variables and delinquency are positive and statistically significant. The strongest findings are those reported in Table 13, which shows that sanctions imposed during the 1975-76 school year are

linked to increased delinquency. As was already noted, however, the apparent support for the labeling model which Table 13 provides is lessened because of our inability to specify whether sanctions were imposed prior to or after involvement in delinquency. Table 14, which reflects the outcome of an adjustment for the time order problem, shows a much weaker effect of both types of sanctions. Further, the direction of the relationship revealed in Table 14 supports the deterrence model rather than the labeling theory propositions. The problem with Table 14 is that we are relating sanctions imposed during one time period with behavior reported for the following year. Theoretically, however, as the amount of time between the imposition of sanctions increases, the effect of sanctions on behavior diminishes. Thus, those employing something akin to an operant conditioning model might contend that the support for the deterrence paradigm revealed in Table 14 would have been stronger had we been able to make a more precise adjustment for the time lag between the imposition of sanctions and measures of subsequent behavior.

Despite the thin ice, the preponderance of the evidence reported in these tables and related statistical information we obtained as a by-product of these regression analyses provides more support for the labeling paradigm than for deterrence theory. The labeling model describes a social

process within which sanctions are imposed, those sanctions are followed by shifts in attitudes toward self and the institutions of conventional society, those changes result in still more proscribed behavior, and then the cycle begins again. Here and elsewhere we see something very similar to that kind of process taking place. Much of that will be examined in subsequent segments of this part of the report. Without anticipating that extension of the analysis at this point, one or two examples are sufficient to make the general point. Specifically, an examination of the intercorrelations between the predictor variables employed in Tables 13-15 shows that those reporting school or legal sanctions during 1974-75 were more involved in juvenile delinquency in 1975-76 than those who had received no sanctions ($r = .248$ and $.271$, respectively). They were also more likely to view themselves as delinquent at the beginning of the 1975-76 academic year ($r = .237$ and $.252$, respectively), to have negative attitudes toward the law ($r = -.228$ and $-.242$, respectively); and to report still more school sanctions ($r = .347$ and $.219$ respectively) and legal sanctions ($r = .160$ and $.352$, respectively) during 1975-76. Similarly, there is a significant relationship between juvenile delinquency reported during the 1975-76 school year and the Fall measures of delinquent self-concept ($r = .324$), attitudes toward the law ($r = -.333$), school sanctions imposed during 1975-76 ($r = .480$), and legal sanctions imposed during 1975-76 ($r = .449$).

The Effect of Sanctions on Self-Concept and Attitudes Toward the Criminal Justice System

All of this makes sense in terms of labeling theory. At the same time, however, when we attempt to isolate the effects of sanctions on delinquency we do not find the kinds of unique effects many labeling theorists have attributed to sanctions. From a methodological point of view the evidence presented in Table 14 is a good deal more sound than presented in Table 13 because it more adequately handles the problem of an unambiguous temporal ordering of the independent and dependent variables. Regardless of how one wishes to cut that cake, the independent effect of school and legal sanctions is very weak. Indeed, the effect of the legal sanctions variable was so weak that it was deleted from consideration in Table 15. Thus, while I feel that the data are more supportive of the labeling perspective, the independent effect of both types of sanctions is never as strong as either labeling or deterrence theorists often suggest. On the other hand, we have not considered the effect of sanctions on other relevant dependent variables that are of central importance to the labeling theory. For example, it is at least possible that the effect of sanctions on delinquency is not as direct as has been suggested in much delinquency theory. Instead, sanctions may have a strong effect on other attitudes and values which, in turn, are determinants of delinquency.

Thus, we will now focus our attention on the relationship between sanctions and three additional dependent variables: self-conception as delinquent, attitudes toward the law, and attitudes toward the police and courts.

To do so we will rely on the same statistical method employed previously with one modification. Because interest will center on whether sanctions imposed by either school or juvenile justice system officials during the 1975-76 school year are linked to changes on each of these three variables, it is necessary to remove the influence of the values each had when they were measured in the Fall of 1975. As was the case with the analysis of delinquency, this can be accomplished by forcing the baseline measure of each of these dependent variables into the regression equation on the first step. This leaves us with residual variance on each that is equal to that proportion of the variance in them that is not perfectly predicted by the baseline variable values. On subsequent steps the other variables employed earlier were also entered (prior delinquency involvement, sanctioning history, perceptions of the costs of labeling, perceptions of the swiftness/certainty/severity of sanctions, and so on). Thus, in each case the baseline measure of the dependent variable plus the other predictor variables were forced into the multiple regression equation prior to the entry of the two sanction

variables. Those not having a significant effect, as determined by the statistical significance of the standardized regression coefficients, were deleted and the equations were then recomputed.

TABLE 16

SUMMARY OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON SPRING MEASURE OF SELF-CONCEPT AS DELINQUENT

<u>Predictor Variable</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>R² Change</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>Simple r</u>
Baseline Self-Concept as Delinquent	.190	.190	.279	.268	.436
Delinquency Prior to 1974	.206	.016	.052	.071	.227
Law Scale	.244	.038	-.119	-.190	-.395
Legal Sanctions, 1974-75	.250	.006	.005	.034	.225
Fall Non-Delinquent Behavior	.253	.003	-.226	-.053	-.155
Legal Sanctions, 1975-76	.270	.018	.018	.126	.267
School Sanctions, 1975-76	.274	.004	.037	.070	.244

Focusing our initial attention on the Spring measure of self-conception as a delinquent as the dependent variable, Table 16 shows that seven of the fourteen independent variables have significant beta weights: the baseline measure of delinquent self-concept, delinquent involvement prior to 1974, legal sanctions imposed during 1974-75, attitudes toward the law, non-delinquent behavioral involvement in the Fall of 1975, legal sanctions received during the 1975-76 school year, and school sanctions

received during the same period. Taken as a set, these variables are able to account for a moderately strong portion of the variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .274$). Relative to the summary information provided in Table 13, however, they account for a good deal less variance in delinquent self-conceptions than in self-reported delinquent behavior. Further, the baseline measure of non-delinquent behavior, which was not significantly linked to self-reported delinquency, has a weak but significant impact here, and one of the sanctioning history variables, which was significant previously, has an insignificant effect.

Despite the smaller amount of variance in delinquent self-concept attributable to this set of independent variables, the role played by the two sanction variables must not be ignored. Legal sanctions, which are measured by a composite of the frequency of both police and juvenile court contacts during the school year, yielded the third largest beta coefficient; both sanctions variables have an effect on self-concept as delinquent that is significant at less than the .001 level after the influences of the other variables were held constant; and both types of sanctions account for a unique, though small, proportion of variance in the dependent variable.

Perhaps more importantly, sanctions of either type have what are arguably counterproductive consequences.

Consistent with the assertions of the labeling theorists, sanctions are linked to increases in self-concept as delinquent. This should be of considerable concern for those in the justice system as well as to academic criminologists. Recall, for an example of this importance, that the baseline measure of delinquent self-concept had a zero-order correlation of .324 with the Spring measure of delinquent involvement and that its independent impact on delinquency was statistically significant. Here we find that changes in the directions of more delinquent conceptions of self are significantly linked to the imposition of sanctions.

On the other hand, while supportive of the labeling theory hypothesis that a portion of the negative impact of sanctions is attributable to their ability to significantly alter the self-concept of those who are sanctioned, these findings should be interpreted with considerable caution. Simply put, the strength of the relationship between sanctions and self-concept is not nearly as strong as many labeling theorists seem to imply. The fact that the baseline measure of delinquent self-concept accounts for less than twenty percent of the variance in the Spring measure of the same variable suggests that there was a good deal of change on this dimension during the course of this study. If no changes had taken place, the Fall and Spring measures would have been perfectly corre-

lated with one another. This substantial proportion of variance in the Spring measure of delinquent self-concept that cannot be attributed to the baseline measure is not greatly reduced, however, by the introduction of additional predictor variables. The additional statistical information presented in Table 16 supports the same conclusion. The sanction variables, for example, have significant but relatively weak regression coefficients. Similarly, even the zero-order correlations between self-concept and legal sanctions ($r = .267$) and school sanctions ($r = .244$) are not strong. Consequently, while sanctions do have some influence on self-concept as a delinquent, there are clearly other more important determinants of that dependent variable that have not been included in the analysis.

TABLE 17

SUMMARY OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON SPRING MEASURE OF ATTITUDES TOWARD THE LAW

<u>Predictor Variable</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>R² Change</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>Simple r</u>
Baseline Law Scale	.365	.365	.451	.438	.605
Legal Sanctions					
Prior to 1974	.373	.008	-.008	-.032	-.213
Delinquency Prior					
to 1974	.376	.004	-.034	-.028	-.224
Delinquent Self-					
Concept	.389	.012	-.166	-.097	-.403
Attitudes Toward					
Police and Courts	.398	.009	.045	.082	.408
Fall Non-Delinquent					
Behavior	.402	.004	.438	.063	.199
Deterrence Scale	.405	.003	.053	.059	.251
Legal Sanctions,					
1975-76	.415	.010	-.020	-.084	-.251
School Sanctions,					
1975-76	.420	.005	-.068	-.079	-.265

TABLE 18

SUMMARY OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON SPRING
MEASURE OF ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POLICE AND COURTS

<u>Predictor Variables</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>R² Change</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>Simple r</u>
Baseline Police/ Court	.431	.431	.610	.609	.656
Delinquent Self- Concept	.434	.004	-.124	-.040	-.255
Fall Non-Delinquent Behavior	.437	.002	.631	.049	.173
Consequences of Label	.437	.001	-.054	-.026	-.048
Legal Sanctions, 1975-76	.444	.006	-.028	-.065	-.194
School Sanctions, 1975-76	.446	.003	-.091	-.058	-.242

Much the same kind of interpretation may be employed as our attention shifts to the impact of sanctions on both attitudes toward the law and attitudes toward the police and courts. Both Tables 17 and 18 show that the proportion of variance explained by the independent variables increases considerably in both cases, but the preponderance of that variance is attributable to the influence of the respective baseline measures of the dependent variables. If we assume that both dependent variables represent measures of attitudes toward the juvenile justice system, these tables reveal at least two important findings. First, these attitudes appear to be a good deal more stable than is the case with the self-concept variable. In both cases the baseline

measures have strong correlations with the Spring measures. Second, although both sanction variables have a significant and independent impact on each of the dependent variables, the strength of the linkage is not particularly strong. Several bits of information attest to this. For example, the zero-order correlations are only moderately strong, the standardized regression coefficients are relatively weak, and only a small fraction of the total explained variance is uniquely attributable to the influence of sanctions. Thus, as with the self-concept variable, the prediction that the imposition of sanctions will influence attitudes toward the juvenile justice system is supported, but the strength of that influence is clearly not pronounced.

Summary and Conclusions

The intent of this segment of the analysis has been to isolate the effects of sanctions imposed by public school and juvenile justice system officials on the attitudes, self-conceptions, and delinquent behavior of the 2,249 junior and senior high school students from whom we obtained data at the beginning and end of the 1975-76 school year. The importance of doing so seems obvious. On a purely theoretical level, advocates of the deterrence and labeling paradigms arrive at quite contrary conclusions regarding the efficacy of imposing sanctions as a means of insuring social control. Further, the broad appeal of the

labeling theory based contention that intervention by formal agencies often does far more harm than good through stigmatizing the juveniles contacted by them has had an extremely pervasive effect on the structure and policies of the juvenile justice system. The contemporary push for the diversion of many types of non-serious and status offenders certainly provides an excellent illustration of this interface between social policy and delinquency theory.

Unfortunately, pityfully little hard empirical evidence has been obtained to assess the viability of propositions central to either deterrence or labeling theory. Instead, the bulk of research on deterrence has concerned itself with the relationship between very crude measures of the certainty and severity of punishment (e.g., arrest rates, conviction rates, and average sentence lengths) and equally crude measures of general deterrence (e.g., the rates of various types of crimes reported to the police). Similarly, the preponderance of research on labeling theory has concerned itself with the differential attribution of potentially stigmatizing labels rather than with the consequences of such labels.

The consequence of all of this has been that we have two more or less plausible models which attempt to provide an explanation of how sanctions influence attitudes and behavior, but we lack any meaningful basis upon which to

assess the predictive utility of either. Further, the problem has been aggravated by the claims made by advocates of both models regarding the social and theoretical importance of their contrary points of view. At least from my perspective, I think this is especially true of those associated with the development of labeling theory. Having emerged in part as an alternative to "traditional" criminological perspectives, many statements of the labeling paradigm lapsed into little more than a verbose critique of those who wished to apply systematic, quantitative techniques to the study of social phenomena. To the extent that these self-proclaimed advocates of deviant or minority groups within American society became better examples of social philosophers than of behavioral science theorists, we are now witnessing a near explosion of publications from right wing ideologues who are making equally exaggerated claims regarding the applicability of deterrence theory.

If the analysis presented in this portion of the monograph does anything, it should illustrate the extent to which labeling and deterrence theory have been overstated by some criminologists. A balanced interpretation of all of the findings would provide very little support for fundamental assertions of deterrence theory. The only exception to this is the finding, presented in Table 14,

which indicates that those who received either school or legal sanctions in 1974-75 became somewhat less delinquent during the following school year. Even then, however, the juveniles who had received one or both types of sanctions during 1974-75 were more delinquent during the 1975-76 academic year than were those who had received no sanctions. Many of the propositions of importance to labeling theory, however, were supported. Those who received school or legal sanctions were likely to remain in the most delinquent segment of the sample; they were likely to become more negative in their attitudes toward the law, the police, and the juvenile court; they were likely to adopt self-identifications as delinquent, and they were likely to confront still more school and legal sanctions, thus presumably initiating the cycle described by labeling theory once again. Despite this, however, the magnitude of the effects of sanctions reported in this analysis never reach the levels implied in even the more modest statements of labeling theory. Thus, while the linkages we have observed do support labeling theory in a statistical sense, they directly challenge the substantive case so commonly incorporated into that model.

PART VI: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

As was suggested earlier, juvenile delinquency continues to be one of the social problems about which large numbers of people think we can and should do something. Toward that end, the structure and functioning of the juvenile justice system have been the subject of much theory, research, and criticism. A substantial fraction of the criticism, and more than a little of the theory and research, appears to stem from the realization that almost a century of work designed to create a viable, effective means of dealing with delinquency has done little to lessen its incidence. If anything, the frequency and seriousness of delinquency has grown. For example, recent statistical information shows that the rate of juvenile court appearances in the adolescent population increased from 19.8 per 1,000 in 1957 to something in excess of 37.5 per 1,000 today.¹ People are now beginning to ask pointed questions about why this is the case.

At least two general views have been advanced in response to these questions. While both are often highly

correlated with such factors as political conservatism and liberalism, they also have a basis in contemporary criminological theory. Stripped of their terminological complexity, these views imply quite different responses to delinquency. One perspective is that of deterrence theory. Its advocates contend that human behavior, including delinquent behavior, is shaped by many types of contingencies. Some of these are viewed as variables which may be manipulated by social control agencies, including those which comprise the juvenile justice system. If all other things are more or less equal, they contend, fluctuations in the risks associated with proscribed behavior will alter the utility value of the behavior to actors who might find the behavior attractive. Practically speaking, advocates of such views observe that some of the factors which may cause delinquency or other undesired behavior are exceedingly difficult if not impossible to manipulate (e.g., such structural factors as institutionalized racism, economic inequalities, and access to legitimate opportunities). Still, they feel that steps can be taken to lessen the magnitude of such problems as delinquency before the broader structural problems are fully resolved. Specifically, many contend that we can so organize our responses to crime and delinquency that we can significantly increase the swiftness and certainty of our reactions to those who engage in these types of behavior. Further, we can adjust the severity of our responses in a way designed to make the final costs/rewards balance associated with the behavior

sufficiently unattractive that the rate of the behavior will diminish.

This, of course, over-simplifies the more complex propositions of the deterrence point of view. It does, however, convey one point of central importance to that model. People make choices. Given the availability of conventional options, the likelihood that non-conventional choices will be made will be inversely related to the costs associated with the non-conventional options. One aspect of costs, and one which hypothetically is subject to manipulation by our criminal and juvenile justice systems, is linked to such factors as the swiftness of societal responses to proscribed behavior, the certainty of those responses, and the severity of the sanctions which follow swift and certain reactions. Thus, even if other factors which may be causally related to delinquency remain unchanged, variations in the real or perceived risks associated with delinquency are expected to lessen its incidence. More importantly for our purposes here is the fact that the deterrence perspective clearly encourages the juvenile justice system to intervene in the lives of juveniles as a means of deterring them from additional misconduct and of showing others that the costs of engaging in similar behavior are unacceptably high.

This, of course, is not at all what an equally simplified version of labeling theory would tell us. Indeed, the labeling theory point of view, which is clearly one that has large numbers of advocates among those involved in the juvenile justice system, cautions us to avoid formal reactions to

juveniles whenever possible. The basic notion, which was described in detail previously, is that any formal intervention carries the possibility of stigmatization with it. Specifically, while the intended consequence of intervention may typically reflect a desire to provide individualized treatment, the unintended result may more often constitute the beginning of a self-fulfilling prophesy. We may, in brief, stigmatize the juvenile to the extent that his definition of self, the definitions of him held by significant others, his conventional opportunities, and his attitudes toward conventionality are adversely affected. Consequently, those associated with the labeling model seldom view the juvenile justice system in very favorable terms. First, they commonly argue that those who are singled out for special treatment greatly over-represent those who lack access to social, economic, and political power. Second, they view the inability of the juvenile justice system to successfully treat those they do identify as at least indirect evidence in support of their hypothesis that societal reactions push those who are labeled from "primary" to "secondary" deviance.

The Focus of this Study

As has been indicated time and time again in previous segments of this monograph, the contrary hypotheses of the deterrence and labeling models have so infrequently been subjected to empirical tests that we really know very little about the effect of sanctions on the attitudes and behavior of either juveniles or adults. What we do know suggests that the case advanced by both models is quite probably exaggerated. No

form of behavior, including juvenile delinquency, is likely to be explained by the limited range of variables incorporated into these two perspectives. Thus, the primary goal of this study was to obtain a large volume of data from a representative sample of public school students at both the beginning and the end of the 1975-76 school year. Many of the attitudinal and behavioral variables central to the labeling and deterrence models were measured at both points in time, and the analysis was designed in such a way as to allow a careful examination of the effect of sanctions imposed by school officials and contacts with elements of the juvenile justice system on subsequent involvement in juvenile delinquency, self-conceptions, attitudes toward the law, and attitudes toward the police and courts.

The findings which have been presented in the three analysis sections of this monograph do not support any hypothesis that the juvenile justice system has reached a point in its development where it can efficiently identify juveniles who are involved in delinquency; that it has eliminated biases associated with the age, sex, race, and social circumstances of juveniles; and that formal responses to juveniles, whether they come from public school officials, the police, or the juvenile court, have the desired consequence of stimulating more conventional attitudes and behavior among those who are singled out for special treatment. To the contrary, virtually all of the

findings suggest that the opposite is more common. First, the risk associated with involvement in delinquency, including relatively serious forms of misconduct, is low. Whether judged in terms of the probability of police or of court contacts, the vast majority of delinquency and delinquents remains undetected. Second, although the relationships noted between the probability of police and court contacts and the social and demographic characteristics of juveniles is never as high as some critics of the system have implied, such factors as age, sex, and race do appear to play a role in the decision-making process. In the absence of any compelling evidence that these and other characteristics which have been linked to discretionary decision-making by the juvenile justice system are the products of a carefully regulated process implemented to serve the individualized needs of juveniles, it can be argued that the presence of these correlates of decision-making are an affront to the notions of fairness, equity, and due process which are fundamental to our system of justice.² Finally, the preponderance of the evidence reported here suggests that sanctions imposed by public school officials, contacts with the police, and contacts with the juvenile court have consequences which are counter-productive. Specifically, they appear to be followed by continued involvement, perhaps even intensified involvement, in delinquency, negative changes in the self-conceptions of juveniles, and negative changes in juveniles'

attitudes toward the law, the police, and the courts. In short, consistent with the assertions advanced by the labeling theorists, intervention appears likely to be harmful (though I should quickly add that the magnitude of the effects noted is nowhere as strong as many labeling theorists would have us believe).

Implications of the Study

All of this constitutes little more than a re-statement of the interpretations of findings presented previously. For many readers the most relevant questions revolve more around the implications these findings may have for the operation of the juvenile justice system. As a criminologist who has a university appointment and, more importantly, no responsibility for the daily operation of the juvenile justice system, anything I might suggest is very likely to be dismissed. The governing rule is simple. Practitioners respect the opinions of other practitioners; academic criminologists commonly fail to respect anyone's opinion (including that of another criminologist). Still, a few general concluding remarks seem to be supported by the data reported here and a variety of previous studies.

First of all, there is something to the philosophical view that one should change what can be changed, accept what cannot, and hope for the wisdom to know the difference between the two. Virtually nowhere is this the case with the juvenile justice system. Instead, many continue to adhere to the essentially tautological belief that elements

of the system can mold the lives of children if they are given sufficient time, adequately trained personnel, discretionary powers, financial resources, and so on. This, in turn, becomes both a defense and an offense. The system responds to its critics by contending that it can do no better given its limited resources; it then counterattacks by lobbying for more resources on the same grounds. Even when more liberal resource allocations fail to facilitate the attainment of the stated goals of the system, at least two responses can be employed to save the day if not the battle: (1) were it not for the efforts of the juvenile justice system, the problem would be even worse than it is now; (2) if we "save" even a single child, we are a success. Few will challenge either point. To do so would imply a willingness to do without the juvenile justice system altogether or to put a price tag on the worth of a child. It would be easier to challenge participatory democracy, motherhood, and apple pie.

The problem, however, is not that simple. No single system, however abundant its resources might be, can effectively counter the influences which are causally linked to juvenile delinquency. Indeed, most students of delinquency would agree that, at best, the various elements of the juvenile justice system can do little more than react to delinquent behavior once it occurs. Stated somewhat differently, there are a variety of psychological, social psychological, and structural factors which can either push

juveniles toward involvement in delinquency or render such involvement more attractive than conventional options. Viewed in that fashion, delinquency is, in effect, a symptom of those other factors, and many of them are not correctable by those responsible for the operation of the juvenile justice system. For example, there is ample reason to believe that delinquency is related to such factors as parent-child relationships, peer group pressures, academic performance, access to legitimate opportunities (and access to illegitimate opportunities), population density, urbanization, unemployment, and all manner of variables over which representatives of the juvenile justice system have little or no control. One option, of course, is simply to deny or to ignore these influences. Instead, the system can and does contend that it can somehow identify and respond to the individual needs of a particular child. In other words, while giving some lip service to the relevance of broader causal factors over which the juvenile justice system has no meaningful influence, the daily operation of the system can be designed in a fashion which reflects the belief that it can respond to the unique, highly individual requirements of particular children. Should attempts at doing so fail, the implication is that better results could be obtained if we were in a better position to individualize our responses. Thus, we hear demands for more staff, more money, more research, more time, and so on if the goals of the system are to be

fully realized. More importantly, such contentions encourage us to look at virtually anything other than the viability of the basic premise that individualized efforts are potentially efficacious.

To begin with, though this is a point not addressed in this research, the essentially clinical point of view on which notions of individualized justice and treatment are grounded is suspect for at least two obvious reasons. One is clearly that it ignores basic causal factors which are not unique to the special circumstances or personality structure of an individual juvenile. Even more basic, however, is the fact that the operation of the juvenile justice system only infrequently reflects the actual application of an individualized treatment model. Instead, that model provides the system with a specialized language and a vocabulary of motives by means of which it can describe its activities. As students of the juvenile justice system have noted time and time again, the real (as opposed to the professed) activities of the system are far less individualized and far more bureaucratic. The police, intake officials, and the juvenile court are required to process large numbers of people as rapidly as possible. Given their limited resources and inadequately developed "processing technologies," it is virtually inevitable that they rely upon crude categorizations of "typical" offenders and "processing stereotypes" if the machinery of the system is to avoid

grinding to a halt.³

It would not be appropriate to pursue this line of reasoning in more detail here. The point is simply that the very loosely interconnected set of agencies which we refer to as the juvenile justice system often claim to have adopted a treatment philosophy which (1) often ignores more factors related to delinquency than it emphasizes; (2) provides at least as much by way of a ready defense against critics of the system as it does a plan by means of which it can move toward the acquisition of its formal goals; and (3) is seldom really translated into real courses of action or programs. Further, studies of the type reported here tend to emphasize the fact that the juvenile justice system, regardless of its philosophy and methods, is not capable of identifying more than a tiny fraction of those involved in juvenile delinquency and that the consequences of the responses which are made do not serve the ends of the system. To the contrary, the bulk of the evidence reported in this study suggests that the consequences of intervention by either school or juvenile justice system officials are more likely to have counterproductive results.

This overview of the findings and implications of the study has obviously included no positive comments on the structure or functioning of the juvenile justice system. The reason for this is quite simple. I can find nothing in the findings that imply anything very

complementary. Instead, about the most supportive findings are those which imply, for example, that the counter-productive consequences of intervention by the police and juvenile court officials are never as dramatic as some labeling theorists would have us believe. At least partly because those associated with the operation of the juvenile justice system have become so accustomed to criticism from academic researchers that negative comments are easily ignored, that is most unfortunate. Indeed, a careful inspection of the findings of this study can yield some suggestions for policy-making which could, I think, prove useful even though the comments regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of the system will certainly be difficult to swallow for those whose professional lives have been invested in trying to make the system work. In these concluding remarks I will attempt to briefly outline some of the policy implications I think make sense.

1) The most general implication seems to be that the goals of the system should better reflect what the system can reasonably expect to attain. While there is certainly nothing negative about very general statements of ideals, it is imperative that the system state precise operational goals if it is to be able to monitor the extent to which its activities are either efficient or effective. Only in that fashion will it ever be possible to become accountable; to determine which programs, policies,

and decisions serve agreed upon goals; and to identify potential changes in organizational arrangements that might prove useful. Such precise statements of goals, careful evaluation research, and thoughtful re-structuring of organizational arrangements to better serve the purposes of various elements of the juvenile justice system are only infrequently encountered anywhere in the juvenile or criminal justice systems. Consequently, administrative officials often have little or no information of a quantitative type on the impact of their efforts, and policy-making remains necessarily based more on speculation and intuition than on hard empirical evidence. That situation is seldom found in other kinds of organizations, and most would find it impossible to continue were it not for a careful and systematic monitoring of exactly what kinds of organizational efforts had what kinds of effects on the success or failure of the organization.

2) Much of the delinquency and many of the delinquents are either ignored or informally disposed of by officials in the cities within which this study was conducted, and much the same could be said about virtually every other jurisdiction in the country. Cases are screened by the police, by specialized juvenile divisions of larger police departments, by those responsible for various diversion programs, by juvenile court intake officials, and so on. Often no records of contacts are

made and, when they are, one element of the so-called system remains uninformed about the contacts initiated by other elements. The police, to use a particularly blatant example of the problem, make a determination of whether to intervene and of how to dispose of a case. Much previous research shows that they exercise unusually broad discretionary powers in their determination of whether the case merits intervention, the creation of a formal record of police contact, and any further processing.⁴ Equally important, such determinations are commonly premised on the judgment of individual officers rather than any officially promulgated departmental or system policies.⁵ I can see no way to justify such activities on any ground other than they may keep the system from being flooded with cases. Further, the consequences of such individualized discretionary powers are uniformly negative. They open the door for blatant forms of discrimination and the abusive use of discretionary power. They negate the concept of a carefully integrated system of juvenile justice. Practically speaking, they often make a joke out of the operation of many segments of the system. For example, a juvenile court intake official may make the decision to refer a juvenile to a diversion program because the juvenile has been referred for processing because of a relatively non-serious first offense. In fact, however, the police may have used their "warn and release" powers multiple times

in the past, with or without any record of such dispositions having been made, and only decided to refer the juvenile to the intake unit when their patience was exhausted. Similarly, a juvenile court judge may premise his relatively mild disposition of a case on the official record of the juvenile which shows no prior court appearances. In fact, the juvenile may have an unofficial record as long as your arm. Such problems are subject to correction through rules and policies that can be made and enforced by administrative officials.⁶

3) A portion of the above comments encourages systematic intervention when illicit behavior is detected, the maintenance of careful records of such contacts, the availability of such records to each segment of the juvenile justice system, and the making of dispositions of cases in accord with policies promulgated by administrative staff members. To the extent that doing so would better fit within the context of a deterrence point of view than the alternative to it, these recommendations may seem contrary to the findings reported in this report. I hope that is not the case. Instead, it reflects my conclusion, which cannot be assessed with the data reported previously, that many of the negative consequences of formal intervention and processing are as much a reflection of the method of processing as of processing per se. Specifically, I would argue that juveniles (and adults) who find themselves being

processed by officials whose decisions reflect little more than personal preferences are likely to view those officials and the system they purport to represent as arbitrary, capricious, unfair, and discriminatory. This, in turn, can easily foster the feeling that one is the victim of the system rather than the realization that one has violated a rule and is being justly responded to for having done so. And why should this not be the case? One need not be a delinquent to recognize the practical reality police decisions are as much a reflection of personal preference as of departmental policies, than juvenile court intake decisions are commonly linked as much to the social circumstances of a given child as to what he or she has done, and that judicial dispositions are often as easily predicted by the characteristics of the juvenile court judge as they are by those of the alleged offender.⁷ Anyone, like me, who has seen a young girl whose sexual involvements prompted her parents to declare that she is beyond their control, thus prompting a juvenile court judge to commit her to an institution, on the same day that the judge placed a young male whose parents had widely retained private counsel to defend him against a charge of grand larceny, which he admitted being guilty of, on probation is most unlikely to come away from that experience with particularly positive evaluations of the equity or the wisdom of our system of

juvenile justice. Thus, the third general recommendation is that immediate attention be given to the negative impact that ill-conceived efforts at "individualized justice" can have on the subsequent attitudes, values, and behavior of those processed through the system.

Conclusions

On balance, then, the results of this study lead to the conclusion that the juvenile justice systems of the two cities within which the research was conducted, systems not at all unlike those to be found in most other communities, are in a good deal of trouble. Most delinquency, serious or otherwise, escapes attention. The systems are, therefore, inefficient in the sense that they are incapable of identifying many of those juveniles whose attitudes and behavior officials would like to influence. Those who are identified are in some ways likely to be processed because of who they are rather than what they have done, and there is no evidence that these extra-legal correlates of processing are associated with any differential distribution of individual needs or treatment potential. Finally, those efforts of both the public schools and the juvenile justice system which are reflected in the measures of school and legal sanctions employed here and which presumably imply efforts at changing the attitudes and behavior of juveniles do not appear to serve that end. Instead, they appear to be more likely to produce counterproductive effects.

The general recommendation derived from these findings is far easier to state than to accomplish. Ironically, it has more to do with treating the system than with treating offenders. More specifically, the suggestion is that the negative consequences of intervention by the juvenile justice system may be as much a reflection of the structure of the system as of any delinquency proneness among those it processes. The system, after all, is a system in name only. A real system would include a more or less rationally interrelated and interdependent parts structured and re-structured in the service of agreed upon system goals. A real organizational system, when applied to the processing of people, must have carefully articulated goals, a systematic means of determining which policies and programs serve those goals, officially promulgated regulations which insure that those being processed will be treated equitably and fairly, and so on. Nowhere am I aware of these kinds of concerns being taken seriously on anything other than a verbal level. Until they are, I can see no way for progress to be made, regardless of the availability of new programs, increased financial resources, additional personnel, and the other kinds of things those associated with the juvenile justice system claim would enhance their effectiveness. Unfortunately, I am not optimistic about the likelihood of change. We have become so accustomed to the present state of affairs, particularly the fragmented agencies which we so improperly

refer to as our criminal or juvenile justice system and the very broad discretionary powers we allocate to system officials, that meaningful changes seem highly improbable.

FOOTNOTES

PART I: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1. Whether these and other court decisions have had the intended effect on juvenile court operations is another question altogether. See, for example, N. Lefstein, V. Stapleton, and L. Teitelbaum, "In Search of Juvenile Justice: Gault and Its Implementation," 3 Law and Society Review 491-562 (1969); D. Duffee and L. Siegel, "The Organization Man: Legal Counsel in the Juvenile Court," 7 Criminal Law Bulletin 544-553 (1971).
2. Most readers are already familiar with the National Crime Panel surveys sponsored by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. These efforts to develop more accurate crime statistics have proven to be highly useful. For an early example of research on disparities between official and self-reported rates of crime, see P. Ennis, Criminal Victimization in the United States: A Report of a National Survey, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Office (1967).
3. C. Thomas and C. Sieverdes, "Juvenile Court Intake: An Analysis of Discretionary Decision-Making," 12 Criminology 413-432 (1975); C. Thomas and W. Fitch, "An Inquiry into the Association between Respondents' Personal Characteristics and Juvenile Court Dispositions," 17 William and Mary Law Review 61-83 (1975); C. Thomas and R. Cage, "The Effect of Social

Characteristics on Juvenile Court Dispositions," 18 The Sociological Quarterly 237-252 (1977); C. Thomas and W. Fitch, "The Exercise of Discretion in the Juvenile Justice System: Correlates of Pre-Appearance Decision-Making," University of Toledo Law Review, in press.

4. One particularly good overview of this position may be found in O. Ketcham, "The Unfulfilled Promise of the Juvenile Court," 7 Crime and Delinquency 97-110 (1961).
5. Much of the directly and indirectly relevant literature is reviewed in R. Hawkins and G. Tiedeman, The Creation of Deviance: Interpersonal and Organizational Determinants, Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill (1975), particularly pp. 240-279.

PART II: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. C. McCaghy, Deviant Behavior: Crime, Conflict, and Interest Groups, New York: Macmillan (1976), page 85.
2. See, for example, E. Schur, Labeling Deviant Behavior: Its Sociological Implications, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall (1971); R. Scott and J. Douglas (eds.), Theoretical Perspectives on Deviance, New York: Basic Books (1972); and R. Hawkins and G. Tiedeman, The Creation of Deviance: Interpersonal and Organizational Determinants, Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill (1975).

3. E. Lemert, Social Pathology, New York: McGraw-Hill (1951); Human Deviance, Social Problems, and Social Control, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall (1972).
4. H. Becker, Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance, New York: Free Press (1963); The Other Side: Perspectives on Deviance, New York: Free Press (1964).
5. K. Erikson, Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance, New York: John Wiley (1966).
6. J. Kitsuse, "Societal Reaction to Deviant Behavior: Problems of Theory and Method," 9 Social Problems 247-256 (1962).
7. Ibid., page 247.
8. E. Rubington and M. Weinberg, Deviance: The Interactionist Perspective, New York: Macmillan (1973), page vii.
9. Becker, Outsiders, supra, note 4, page 14.
10. Ibid., page 34.
11. E. Lemert, "Primary and Secondary Deviation," in S. Traub and C. Little (eds.), Theories of Deviance, Itasca, Illinois: F. E. Peacock (1975), page 170.
12. T. Scheff, Being Mentally Ill, Chicago: Aldine (1966), page 88.
13. F. Tannenbaum, Crime and the Community, Boston: Ginn (1938), page 17.
14. Schur, supra, note 2, page 8.

15. C. Tittle, "Deterrent or Labeling?," 53 Social Forces 399-410 (1975); C. Wellford, "Labelling Theory and Criminology: An Assessment," 22 Social Problems 332-345 (1975).
16. Becker, Outsiders, supra, note 4, page 14.
17. See, for example, G. Waldo and T. Chiricos, "Perceived Penal Sanction and Self-reported Criminality," 19 Social Problems 522-540 (1972); R. Henshel and R. Silverman (eds.), Perception in Criminology, New York: Columbia University Press (1975); M. Erikson, J. Gibbs, and G. Jensen, "The Deterrence Doctrine and the Perceived Certainty of Legal Punishments," 42 American Sociological Review 305-317 (1977).
18. See, generally, R. Akers, Deviant Behavior: A Social Learning Theory Approach, Belmont, California: Wadsworth (1977).
19. J. Gibbs, Crime, Punishment, and Deterrence, New York: Elsevier (1975).
20. M. Maestro, Cesare Beccaria and the Origins of Penal Reform, Philadelphia: Temple University Press (1973), page 33.
21. For example, see Hawkins and Tiedeman, supra, note 2.
22. See studies cited supra, note 17.
23. A. Mahoney, "The Effect of Labeling upon Youths in the Juvenile Justice System," 8 Law and Society Review 583-614, page 611.

24. C. Thomas and W. Fitch, "An Inquiry into the Association between Respondents' Personal Characteristics and Juvenile Court Dispositions," 17 William and Mary Law Review 61-83 (1975); C. Thomas and R. Cage, "The Effect of Social Characteristics on Juvenile Court Dispositions," 18 The Sociological Quarterly 237-252 (1977).

PART III: THE PROBLEM OF DELINQUENCY

1. Those familiar with self-reported delinquency research may find the fact that only 70.52 percent of those in the sample reported delinquency involvement as unusual, much prior research suggesting that a larger fraction of the population has been involved in at least some misconduct. It should be emphasized, however, that this figure reflects involvement in one of the thirteen types of delinquency included in our self-report inventory and, more importantly, it is based on delinquency reported for the 1975-76 academic year. Much of the prior research, for example, asks respondents if they have ever engaged in a particular type of behavior and if so, how often.
2. This is a conservative estimate because reports of nine or more involvements in a particular type of delinquency were coded as nine.
3. Compare, for example, the official statistics and victimization reports summarized in M. Hindelang, M. Gottfredson, C. Dunn, and N. Parisi, Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1976, Washington, D.C.: Law Enforcement

Assistance Administration (1977), pages 357-522.

4. See, for example, R. Quinney, Criminology: Analysis and Critique of Crime in America, Boston: Little, Brown (1975), pages 15-32.
5. For a brief overview see D. Gibbs, Delinquent Behavior, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey (1976), pages 23-31.

PART IV: THE PROBLEM OF DETECTING DELINQUENCY

1. See, for example, R. Terry, "The Screening of Juvenile Offenders," 58 Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science 173-181 (1967); T. Thornberry, "Race, Socioeconomic Status, and Sentencing in the Juvenile Justice System," 64 Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology 90-98; (1973) J. Williams and M. Gold, "From Delinquent Behavior to Official Delinquency," 20 Social Problems 209-229 (1972).
2. D. Black, "The Social Organization of Arrest," 23 Stanford Law Review 1104-1110 (1971); D. Black and A. Reiss, "Police Control of Juveniles," 35 American Sociological Review 63-77 (1970); and, more generally, C. Thomas and W. Fitch, "Police Discretion," University of North Dakota Law Review, in press.
3. C. Thomas and C. Sieverdes, "Juvenile Court Intake: An Analysis of Discretionary Decision-Making," 12 Criminology 413-432 (1975); D. Gibbons, Delinquent Behavior, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall (1976), pages 61-67.
4. See studies cited supra, note 1.

5. In particular see D. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, New York: John Wiley (1964).
6. See studies cited supra, notes 1 and 2.
7. Black, supra, note 2.

PART V: LABELING, DETERRENCE, AND DELINQUENCY

1. For a basic discussion see H. Blalock, Social Statistics, New York: McGraw-Hill (1972); for a more thorough treatment see F. Kerlinger and E. Pedhazur, Multiple Regression in Behavioral Research, New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston (1973).
2. Kerlinger and Pedhazur, ibid.
3. We recognize the possibility that the general effects of sanctions described in the text might not remain the same if we focused our attention on particular categories of the sample. Thus, the regression analysis was repeated for males, females, blacks, whites, those with above and below the median age for the sample. The results are essentially the same, so there is no need to report summary tables of these separate regression analyses. It may be useful, however, to report the overall R^2 statistics we obtained as a general measure of the explanatory power of the variables under consideration: males, $R^2 = .450$; females, $R^2 = .506$; blacks, $R^2 = .392$; whites, $R^2 = .513$; above median ses, $R^2 = .527$; below median ses, $R^2 = .486$; less than sixteen years old, $R^2 = .394$; sixteen to eighteen years old, $R^2 = .315$.

PART VI: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

1. M. Hindelang, M. Gottfredson, C. Dunn, and N. Parisi, Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1976, Washington, D. C.: Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (1977), page 572.
2. C. Thomas and W. Fitch, "An Inquiry into the Association between Respondents' Personal Characteristics and Juvenile Court Dispositions," 17 William and Mary Law Review 61-83 (1975).
3. See, for example, R. Emerson, Judging Delinquents: Context and Process in Juvenile Court, Chicago: Aldine (1969); E. Lemert, Social Action and Legal Change: Revolution within the Juvenile Court, Chicago: Aldine (1970); and R. Emerson, "Role Determinants in Juvenile Court," Chapter 16 in D. Glaser (ed.), Handbook of Criminology, Chicago: Rand McNally (1974).
4. See, for example, D. Black, "Production of Crime Rates," 35 American Sociological Review 733-748 (1970).
5. K. Davis, Police Discretion, St. Paul: West Publishing (1974).
6. Ibid.

APPENDIX A

As was indicated in the text, each set of potential attitude items were item analyzed by incorporating them in a factor analysis. Only those items which yielded a factor loading of at least .30 on the first factor of the unrotated factor matrix were included in the final attitude scales. The only exception to this general procedure is the method employed in constructing the deterrence scale. In that case there were three scales: perceptions of the severity, certainty, and swiftness of punishment. Each of the three sets of attitude items were factor analyzed separately, and those which met the basic inclusion criteria were then employed in the construction of an overall measure. Thus, many would view the deterrence measure as an index rather than a unidimensional scale.

The individual items, response distributions, factor loadings, and other relevant information is provided below.

PERCEIVED CONSEQUENCES OF LABELING

My parents would just kill me if I was ever arrested.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	25.1	21.0	21.1	22.5	10.2	.325
Spring	24.7	21.2	21.3	24.2	8.6	.327
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.28	1.33				
Spring	3.29	1.31				

The lives of kids who get into trouble for breaking the law are ruined.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	9.6	23.7	24.5	33.5	8.7	.558
Spring	7.8	19.8	25.7	36.2	10.4	.555
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	2.92	1.14				
Spring	2.78	1.12				

I'd probably lose a lot of my friends if I ever got into trouble with the police, had to go to court, or anything like that.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	8.8	17.9	18.4	35.5	19.5	.328
Spring	7.6	14.3	18.7	38.2	21.2	.357
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	2.61	1.23				
Spring	2.49	1.19				

Once you've gotten a police record, you don't have much of a future to look forward to.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	9.1	23.7	20.8	35.0	11.4	.725
Spring	7.4	19.3	23.8	37.8	11.7	.713
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	2.84	1.18				
Spring	2.73	1.12				

Once you've gotten into trouble with the police nobody will give you a fair chance.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	6.0	17.1	26.0	41.0	10.0	.512
Spring	5.4	11.7	29.8	42.5	10.6	.532
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	2.68	1.06				
Spring	2.59	1.01				

DETERRENCE SCALE

Severity Scale

If you are caught for breaking the law for anything that's very serious, the punishment is really stiff.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	11.8	33.3	27.0	22.1	5.7	.555
Spring	9.4	23.7	34.5	25.5	7.0	.622
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.23	1.10				
Spring	3.03	1.07				

People who are convicted for breaking the law are generally punished pretty severely.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	5.4	26.1	35.3	27.5	5.7	.589
Spring	4.2	18.8	40.8	28.8	7.4	.646
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	2.98	.99				
Spring	2.84	.96				

*Even if you get caught for breaking the law, you usually get off pretty light around here.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	4.7	17.9	41.8	27.7	7.9	.427
Spring	5.6	17.3	47.0	22.2	7.8	.458
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.16	.97				
Spring	3.09	.96				

Certainty Scale

*A lot of people do things that are illegal, only the ones who are either unlucky or stupid ever get caught.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	11.3	28.1	20.2	28.0	12.4	.433
Spring	10.6	26.5	22.8	27.3	12.8	.433
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.02	1.23				
Spring	3.05	1.21				

*Indicates reversed item scoring.

Certainty Scale (continued)

*If you're careful, I think you could break just about any law and get away with it.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	6.6	14.2	22.3	37.7	19.2	.596
Spring	6.4	17.2	23.7	35.7	16.9	.639
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.49	1.15				
Spring	3.40	1.14				

*Most people who do things that are minor violations of the law never get caught.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	6.0	25.3	32.8	31.2	4.7	.345
Spring	7.1	27.2	34.5	26.4	4.8	.445
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.03	1.00				
Spring	2.95	1.00				

Swiftness Scale

Anyone who gets involved in serious criminal behavior can usually expect to be caught for it very quickly.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	9.2	36.4	28.8	20.9	4.7	.399
Spring	7.2	28.9	34.9	23.5	5.5	.405
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.25	1.04				
Spring	3.09	1.01				

Most people who break the law are caught and brought to trial very quickly.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	3.2	16.1	37.8	32.7	10.3	.513
Spring	2.2	13.7	43.0	30.9	10.2	.502
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	2.69	.97				
Spring	2.67	.91				

*People who get involved in minor kinds of illegal behavior are very often not caught for a long time if at all.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	10.8	38.0	34.5	13.9	2.8	.318
Spring	10.8	36.8	36.5	13.0	2.8	.395
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	2.60	.95				
Spring	2.60	.94				

DELINQUENT IDENTIFICATION

I guess I'd have to agree with anyone who thinks I do a lot of things that could get me arrested.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	3.5	18.8	12.8	28.5	36.4	.688
Spring	4.5	11.3	14.4	32.6	37.3	.770
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	2.24	1.23				
Spring	2.13	1.16				

*Anybody who thinks that I'm a bad person or a delinquent is just wrong.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	32.6	34.1	22.3	6.0	4.9	.333
Spring	36.0	37.2	12.6	8.8	5.4	.381
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	2.17	1.10				
Spring	2.10	1.15				

*I'm not the kind of person who will ever have to worry about getting into any kind of trouble with the police.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	19.7	42.7	20.2	13.0	4.3	.546
Spring	22.1	33.3	25.2	15.1	4.4	.537
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	2.39	1.07				
Spring	2.47	1.12				

*Indicates reversed item scoring.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE LAW

We all have a moral duty to abide by the law.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	35.9	51.3	8.7	3.1	1.1	.494
Spring	37.0	50.4	8.8	2.6	1.2	.515
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	4.18	.80				
Spring	4.20	.79				

Trying to be the kind of person who does not break the law is an important thing to me.

Fall	33.2	37.2	20.6	7.2	1.7	.667
Spring	29.3	37.8	23.5	7.4	2.0	.711
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.93	.99				
Spring	3.85	.99				

*It's alright to break laws that are silly or unfair.

Fall	3.2	8.2	18.4	51.1	19.2	.564
Spring	3.2	8.4	21.2	47.8	19.4	.640
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.75	.96				
Spring	3.72	.98				

*It's O.K. to break the law once in awhile as long as you don't get caught.

Fall	3.6	11.3	16.5	40.6	28.0	.655
Spring	4.3	9.2	21.1	40.2	25.3	.673
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.78	1.08				
Spring	3.73	1.07				

It would be hard to keep your self-respect if you did things that were against the law.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	15.3	38.7	25.2	16.1	4.8	.590
Spring	11.8	38.0	26.3	18.5	5.5	.583
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.44	1.08				
Spring	3.32	1.07				

To intentionally break any law is wrong.

Fall	32.1	42.2	13.1	8.4	4.2	.493
Spring	31.3	39.4	16.7	8.4	4.1	.507
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.90	1.08				
Spring	3.86	1.08				

*Indicates reversed item scoring.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POLICE AND COURTS

*The courts deal unfairly with people who come from minority groups.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	6.6	14.9	38.0	27.7	12.9	.400
Spring	6.4	11.6	42.2	26.2	13.5	.438
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.25	1.07				
Spring	3.29	1.05				

Judges and juries try to be as fair as they can be in the decisions that they make.

Fall	16.8	42.6	27.5	9.6	3.6	.582
Spring	14.4	39.8	32.8	9.0	4.0	.584
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.60	.99				
Spring	3.52	.98				

The police do the best they can to protect all of us.

Fall	18.9	40.8	20.3	13.2	6.8	.626
Spring	17.3	38.7	24.5	13.0	6.5	.648
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.52	1.14				
Spring	3.47	1.12				

*The juvenile courts do more to hurt people than to help them.

Fall	4.4	8.6	34.9	37.1	14.9	.517
Spring	4.4	7.5	39.1	37.3	11.6	.548
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.49	.99				
Spring	3.44	.95				

*The police around here would rather hassle people than help them.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	8.7	13.4	30.1	34.6	13.2	.636
Spring	9.2	15.5	32.9	32.1	10.3	.691
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.30	1.12				
Spring	3.19	1.11				

*Anybody who thinks that the courts in this city are fair is wrong.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	3.7	9.0	38.4	39.6	9.4	.586
Spring	3.2	8.7	44.7	34.7	8.7	.562
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.42	.91				
Spring	3.37	.88				

*Many of the police here are too willing to use force and violence.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	8.5	17.5	39.6	26.6	7.8	.517
Spring	8.1	16.2	42.1	25.9	7.6	
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.08	1.04				
Spring	3.09	1.02				

*The police don't show people the kind of respect they deserve.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	9.7	20.6	33.6	29.0	7.0	.626
Spring	9.5	20.5	33.7	29.8	6.5	.538
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.03	1.08				
Spring	3.03	1.07				

The courts deserve our respect and support.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	23.3	44.9	24.4	5.2	2.2	.517
Spring	22.6	45.8	24.4	4.3	2.8	.630
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.82	.92				
Spring	3.81	.93				

I think that the police in this city are doing a good job and they deserve our thanks.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	12.0	31.3	36.0	14.7	5.9	.651
Spring	10.9	31.3	38.8	13.1	5.9	.562
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.29	1.05				
Spring	3.28	1.02				

If I had to go to court for something that I had done, I'm confident that I would be treated fairly.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	8.9	37.6	38.8	10.7	3.9	.607
Spring	9.6	33.0	43.5	10.1	3.7	.591
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.37	.93				
Spring	3.35	.92				

*You'll never be treated the way you should be in court unless you have a good lawyer.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Factor Loading
Fall	7.1	14.6	41.4	29.7	7.3	.463
Spring	6.5	16.1	44.1	27.2	6.0	.453
	Mean	Standard Deviation				
Fall	3.16	1.00				
Spring	3.10	.96				

*Indicates reversed item scoring.

