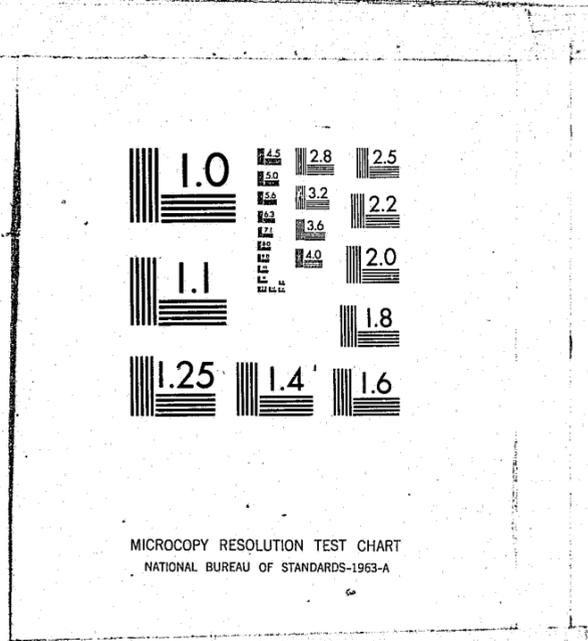


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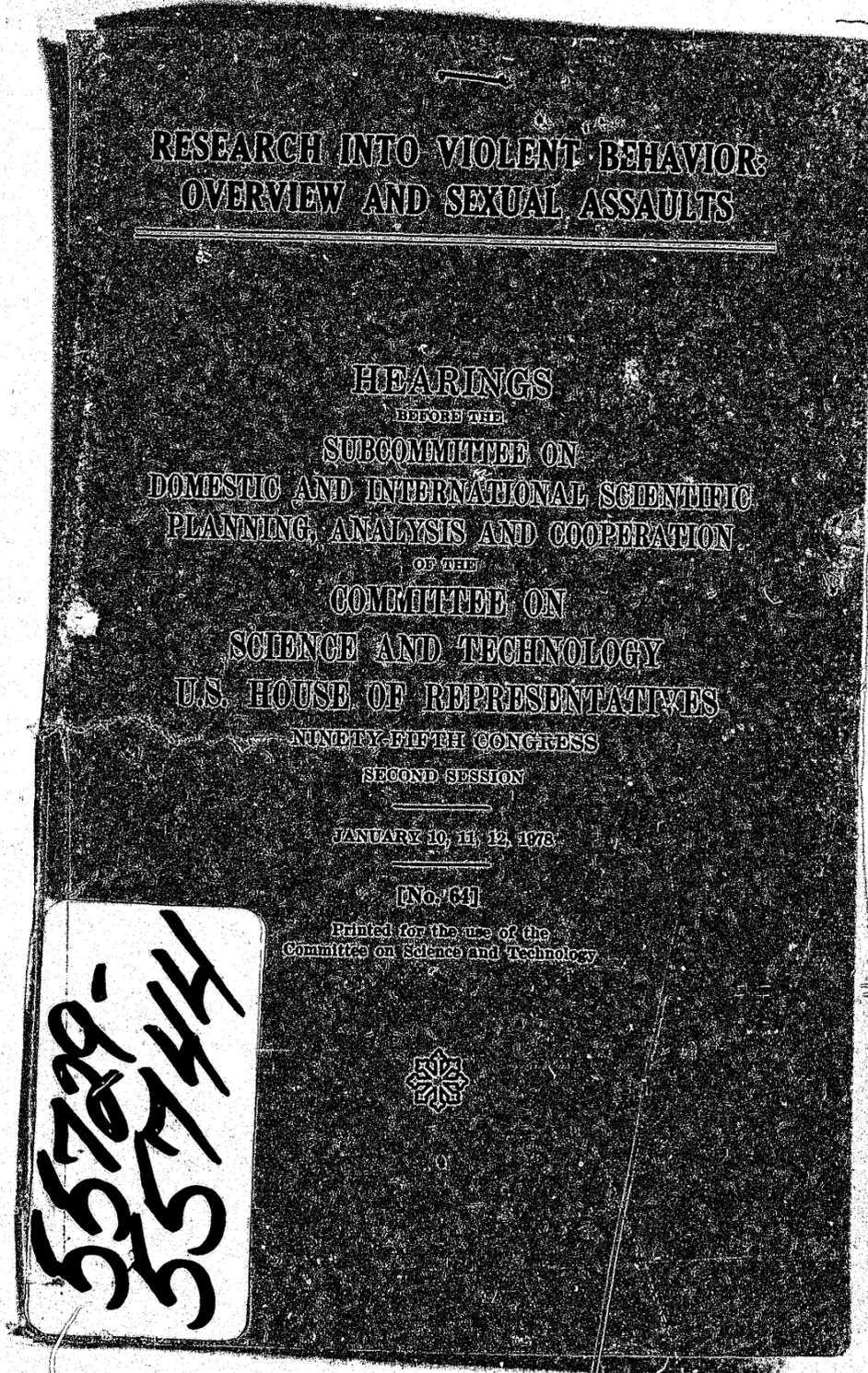
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(III)

## RESEARCH INTO VIOLENT BEHAVIOR: OVERVIEW AND SEXUAL ASSAULTS

### HEARINGS BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC PLANNING, ANALYSIS AND COOPERATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES NINETY-FIFTH CONGRESS SECOND SESSION

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OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH INTO VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

Testimony of  
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Domestic and International Scientific Planning, Analysis,  
and Cooperation (DISPAC),  
Chairman, James H. Scheuer,  
Subcommittee of the Committee on Science and Technology  
U. S. House of Representatives

Held in Room 305  
26 Federal Plaza  
New York City  
January 10, 1978

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Until 1970, the most comprehensive survey of violence in America was published in the thirteen Task Force volumes of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, under the chairmanship of Milton Eisenhower. Volumes 11, 12 and 13 were devoted to Crimes of Violence, while the earlier ones dealt with historical violence, assassinations and political violence, firearms, the police, the mass media and other types of violence in American culture.

None of us testifying now can hope to update these materials between 1970 and 1978. Many, if not most, of the insights, correlations, findings of that Commission are still valid about criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault. And surely the references to the history of labor, race and urban violence in the 19th and early 20th Centuries remain valid. Perhaps since 1969-70, the continued increase in rape and its higher public visibility, and juvenile crime are among the most notable changes, and my colleagues who will testify after me will offer clarity and comprehensiveness to that assertion.

I might also add that there has been a considerable increase in the criminological literature dealing with violence and the violent offender. In a research project<sup>1</sup> funded by the National Science Foundation (RANN Division), our Center for Studies in Criminology and Criminal Law at the University of Pennsylvania has been evaluating empirical research and theory in criminology in the United States between 1945 and 1972, a total of 4267 documents. The annual growth

rate in such literature has been around 7 per cent. However, during the first seven-year period, 1945 to 1951, only 10.8 per cent of all the works published from 1945 to 1972 appeared; whereas, in the last seven-year period, 1966 to 1972, over 50 per cent were published.

With respect to crimes of violence, the annual growth rate of publications has been higher than for all criminal analyses, or slightly over 9 per cent. Of about 840 publications on violent crime, the proportion of publications by each seven-year group was as follows: 1945-51--8.1 per cent; 1952-58--10.8 per cent; 1959-65--18.1 per cent; 1966-72--63.0 per cent.

When the emphasis is on the violent offender rather than violent offenses, a similar and equally dramatic concern is registered in the later years, for nearly seven out of ten publications since 1945 appeared in the years 1966 to 1972, an annual growth rate in the research literature of over 11 per cent, higher than for any other offender group except drug offenders (growth rate annually of 11.95%).

My obvious reason for mentioning this project in this context is to report that the rising public concern and the apparently rising rates of violent crime are also reflected in the increasing amount of criminological research and theoretical literature on the violent offender and violent crime.

The extent to which that literature informs us about public policy is not clear, however. Most of the research is descriptive rather than explanatory, little is directed to major social policy suggestions, and probably little is disseminated in any coordinated way to public administrators, legislators or members of the judiciary.

Because I have been asked to present an overview of violence, I shall leave to my colleagues, John Monahan, Alfred Blumstein and Lynn Curtis, the presentations of specific research findings regarding juvenile violence, sexual assaults, deterrence, and the prediction of dangerousness. For my remarks, I draw upon, inter alia, early papers of my own, the National Violence Commission, a forthcoming Vera Institute report, and some current longitudinal data of some birth cohorts.

My first comments are socio-cultural, followed by brief remarks on biological and physiological research, with conclusions about future research needs.

## II. SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS OF VIOLENCE

In the sociology of crime and criminality emphasis is placed on cultural and group forces that produce actors who represent forms of deviance from the dominant value, or moral demand, system. The individual offender is not ignored; he is simply clustered with other individuals alike in attributes deemed theoretically or statistically meaningful. His "uniqueness" is retained by the improbability that on several attributes or variables he will appear identical to everyone else. Hence, researchers resort to means, medians, modes, to probability theory, inferential statistics and mathematical models for analyzing predominant patterns and regularities of behavior. Biological and psychological factors are not ignored, but when a mono-disciplinary perspective is used by sociologists, the bio-psychological is suspended, postponed or dismissed after consideration. Biological needs and psychological drives may be declared uniformly distributed and hence of no utility in explaining one form of behavior relative to another. They may be seen as differential endowments of personalities that help to assign, for example, a label of mental incapacity to a group of individuals, some of whom have also violated the criminal codes.

But neither the biology of many biographies nor the psychology of many personalities helps to explain the overwhelming involvement in crime of men over women, slums over suburbs, youth over age, urban over rural life. It is this latter set of macroscopic regularities to which the sociological perspective addresses itself.

Defining violence is difficult and should be distinguished from aggression in general. The thirteen Task Force volumes of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence struggled with these terms in 1968 and 1969. I shall use the term violence to refer to the intentional use of physical force on another person, or noxious physical stimuli invoked by one person on another. The physical force may be viewed as assaultive designed to cause pain or injury as an end in itself, sometimes referred to as "expressive violence," or as the use of pain or injury or physical restraint as a coercive threat or punishment to induce another person or persons to carry out some act, commonly called "instrumental violence." Violence may also be legitimate (a parent spanking a child, a police officer forcefully arresting a suspect, a soldier killing during war) or illegitimate (criminal homicide, forcible rape, aggravated assault). In general, this statement concentrates on illegitimate violence, but behind illegitimate violence are cultural dimensions that involve the acceptance of violence.

There is no society that does not contain in its normative system some elements of acceptable limits to violence in some form.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the use of physical force by parents to restrain and punish children is permissible, tolerated, encouraged, and is thereby part of the normative process by which every society regulates its child rearing. There are, of course, varying degrees of parental force expected and used in different cultures and times, and there are upper limits vaguely defined as excessive and brutal. The battered child syndrome is an increasingly recorded phenomenon in American society.

The point is, however, that our norms approve or permit parents to apply force for their own ends against the child. The applicator of force is a form of violence and may be used consciously to discipline the child to the limits of permitted behavior, to reduce the domestic noise level, to express parental disapproval, and even unconsciously as a displacement for aggression actually meant for other targets. This model of parent-child interaction is a universal feature of all human societies. The model is one that the child himself comes to ingest; i.e., that superior force is power permitting manipulation of others and can be a functional tool for securing a superordinate position over others, for obtaining desires and ends.

The violence in which the child engages is but an expressed extension of this basic model. The use of physical restraint and force is not a feature only in lower-class families, although studies have shown that its persistent use, and use in greater frequency over a longer span of childhood, is more common in that social class. The substitutions, by middle-class parents, of withdrawal of rights and affection, of deprivation of liberty, and of other techniques are designed to replace the need for force. And by these substitutions an effort is made to socialize the child to respect other forms of social control. They are also ways of masking the supreme means of control, namely physical force.

Violence and the threat of violence form the ultimate weapons of any society for maintaining itself against external and internal attacks. All societies finally resort to violence to solve problems that

arise from such attacks. War is aggressive force between nations and is legitimized within each. The recognition of relativity in the moral judgments about violence is quite clear in the case of war. When our colonies collected themselves together in the 18th Century to sever ties, we called the action revolution and good, in historical retrospect, despite the violence it engendered. When some states in the 19th Century sought to divide the nation, we called the action civil war and bad, and lamented the bloodshed. The Nazis gave justice to our bombs and enlisted the world's generation of youth to react violently to violence. There are other international conflicts in which nations have been involved and for which the label of legitimacy has been seriously questioned by substantial numbers within their own territories. And when this happens a society becomes more conscious of the process of socializing its own youth to accept violence as a mode of response, as a collective and problem-solving mechanism. When war is glorified in a nation's history and included as part of the child's educational materials, a moral judgment about the legitimacy of violence is firmly made.

A recent study by Dane Archer and Rosemary Gartner<sup>3</sup> adds confirmation to this thesis. The idea that waging war might increase the level of domestic violence in warring societies is not new, but a new study from a Comparative Crime Data file, includes time series rates of homicide for 100 nations beginning in 1900. Post-war homicide rates were analyzed after fifty "nation-wars" compared to changes experienced by thirty control nations without wars. Seven rival theoretical models were examined: (1) Social Solidarity Model, which claims a war-time

decrease in domestic homicide and a post-war return to normal levels; (2) Social Disorganization Model, a post-war increase will occur mainly among defeated nations; (3) Economic Factors Model, which attributes post-war homicide increases to a worsened economy; (4) Catharsis Model, predicting post-war decrease because of war-time killing; (5) Violent Veteran Model, which claims post-war homicide increases due to returning combat veterans; (6) Artifacts Model, which attributes post-war changes to demographic and other social forces; (7) Legitimation of Violence Model, which predicts post-war increases to the pervasive war-time presence of officially sanctioned killing. The authors conclude, after careful analysis of each of these competitive hypotheses: "Most of the combatant nations in the study experienced substantial postwar increases in their rates of homicide. These increases did not occur among a control group of noncombatant nations. The increases were pervasive and occurred after large and small wars, with several types of homicide indicators, in victorious as well as defeated nations, in nations with improved postwar economies and nations with worsened economies, among both men and women offenders, and among offenders of several age groups. Postwar increases were most frequent among nations with large numbers of combat deaths."

"These findings indicate, first, that postwar homicide increases occur consistently and, second, that several theoretical explanations are either disconfirmed by evidence on postwar changes or are insufficient to explain them. The one model which appears to be fully consistent with the evidence is the legitimation model, which suggests that the presence of authorized sanctioned killing during war has a residual effect on the level of homicide in peacetime society."<sup>4</sup>

### III. THE EXTENT OF CHILD AND YOUTH VIOLENCE

The true or real extent of child violence is little known if not unknowable. Neither official public records of the police and juvenile courts, nor the files of child guidance clinics and private physicians, not nationally collected, yield adequate or valid indexes of the total amount of violence among children. Individual research projects may give us hints about racial, sexual, age and other differentials, but these studies do not inform us about the volume of violence in this age group in our population. From what data we do have, even time series are suspect because of changes in reportability, recoding and the increases in social control agencies that are concerned with such issues. However, using the rubric of "the best available scientific evidence" we seek to piece segmental information and findings together to form a Weberian Verstehen, a meaningful whole, while trying to avoid an ideological or theoretical adversary position in defense of a particular thesis.

Studies in criminology make reference to what is known as "hidden delinquency" or the "dark figures of crime." Most of these studies ask junior and high school children in anonymous questionnaires whether they have committed a variety of offenses, how often and approximately when.

The increasingly methodologically refined studies of hidden delinquency have not clearly and consistently reported a significant reduction in the disparity of social classes for crimes of violence. The incidence and frequency of crimes of violence appear to remain

considerably higher among boys from lower social classes when the appropriate questions are asked about these offenses over specific periods of time. In their recent study of delinquents, Fannin and Clinard reported: "One of the more important of the tests was a comparison of the frequency with which reported and unreported robberies and assaults were committed by members of the two class levels (middle and lower). The vast majority of all lower class delinquents, 84 percent, had committed at least one such offense compared to 28 percent of the middle class (probability less than 0.01); 28 percent of the lower and eight percent of the middle class had committed 10 or more violent offenses. Class level was also related to the frequency of fighting with other boys. Lower class delinquents fought singly and in groups significantly more often (probability less than 0.05) than middle class delinquents, with 20 percent of them averaging five or more fights per month compared to 4.0 percent."<sup>5</sup>

Official data on child violence may be found in the Uniform Crime Reports, published by the Department of Justice. These are police statistics reported voluntarily to the FBI about crimes known to the police and about persons arrested. Keep in mind that we know something about offenders only when there are arrests and that of the more serious crimes known, only about 20 per cent result in arrest; of the crimes of violence--homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault--about 45 per cent result in arrest. Whether it is easier for the police to arrest juvenile than adult suspects is still debatable but generally believed to be true.<sup>6</sup>

The latest annual police statistics are available for 1976 and show a continuing increase in juvenile violence. For Index Crimes (violence and theft), 16 per cent of all persons arrested in 1976 were under the age of 15 and 42 per cent were under 18 years of age. Juveniles are arrested three times more often for property than assault crimes, but still comprise 22 per cent of all persons arrested for violent criminality. Increases in violent crime have been greatest for this young age group.<sup>7</sup> Between 1960 and 1974, national arrests for violence among persons 18 years and older have increased 126 per cent, but among persons under 18 years of age have increased twice that amount, or 254 per cent! Between 1967 and 1976, violent crime for persons 18 years and over increased 65 per cent; for those under 18, the increase was nearly 100 per cent.<sup>8</sup>

In my own study of criminal homicide<sup>9</sup> covering five years in Philadelphia,<sup>10</sup> I noted that the rate of offenders per 100,000 for both races reached a peak in the age group 20-24 (12.6), but that the age group 15-19 was not far behind with a rate of 9.4. Males in this young age group of 15-19 were seven times more homicidal (22.7) than females (3.1). But it was younger Black males who most dramatically and with statistical significance exceeded any other race-sex-age group. The peak age for Black males was 20-24 with a rate of 93 compared to white males at 8.2. For Black males 15-19, the rate was next highest (79.2) compared to white males (4.6), Black females (2.9) and white females (only 0.4).

A similar study of rape in Philadelphia<sup>11</sup> over a two-year period showed similar racial differences but with the juveniles ages 15-19

representing the highest rates for both races. The overall rape rate per 100,000 for all ages was 180, but for the peak age group, 15-19, was nearly 800. Black males in this young population had a rate of 2656, white males only 162, the former sixteen times greater.

The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence presented data on crimes of violence in 1969 that covered ten years, based on a national sample from seventeen major cities. Combining the crimes of homicide, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault, the rate for all ages 10 and over was 189, but for ages 15-17 the rate was as high as 408, and even for children aged 10-14, the rate was 123, nearly as high as the rate for all ages 25 and over (127). In fact, the greatest percentage increase in all crimes of violence was for children aged 10-14. For this group, the increase from 1958 to 1967 was 222 per cent, compared to 103 per cent for ages 15-17 and 66 per cent for all ages. In short, violent crimes committed by children have been increasing between three and four times faster than violence in general.<sup>12</sup>

In a forthcoming report of the Vera Institute to the Ford Foundation, Paul Strasburg<sup>13</sup> has collated data on violence from recent Uniform Crime Reports, and points out that the most criminally active juvenile ages are 13 to 17, an age group that accounted for 92 per cent of juvenile arrests for violent crimes in 1975. Comprising 10 per cent of the population, the 13-to-17 year group was arrested for 21 per cent of crimes of violence: 17 per cent of rapes, 32 per cent of robberies, 16 per cent of aggravated assaults, and 9 per cent of homicides.

Moreover, juvenile arrests for violent crimes have risen sharply, or 293 per cent, from 1960 to 1975: robbery--375 per cent, aggravated assault--240 per cent, homicide--211 per cent, rape--102 per cent. As stated elsewhere, juvenile violence appears to have increased more than twice that of adults.

The following table is revealing by showing that the greatest increase between 1970 and 1975 has been in the age group 15 to 17 (35%), with the younger age group 11 to 14 (25%) a close second, while ages 18 to 24 increased least (13.4%).

Finally, like violent crimes in general, juvenile violence is more common in urban than in suburban or rural areas. For fifty-eight cities with over 250,000 population, the Uniform Crime Reports showed 51 per cent of all major violent crimes although these cities were only 23 per cent of the U. S. reporting population.

ARRESTS NATIONALLY PER 100,000 BY AGE GROUP AND CRIME, 1970 AND 1975<sup>14</sup>

|   | Homicide | Forcible Rape | Robbery | Aggravated Assault | Total Violent Crime |
|---|----------|---------------|---------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <u>1970</u>   |          |               |         |                    |                     |
| Age 11-14   | 1.6      | 5.0           | 73.7    | 49.5               | 129.8               |
| Age 15-17   | 15.5     | 29.4          | 224.2   | 160.0              | 429.1               |
| Age 18-24   | 29.9     | 37.1          | 209.1   | 206.6              | 481.8               |
| <u>1975</u>   |          |               |         |                    |                     |
| Age 11-14   | 1.7      | 5.9           | 85.4    | 69.4               | 162.4               |
| Age 15-17   | 15.8     | 28.2          | 301.2   | 234.8              | 580.0               |
| Age 18-24   | 33.6     | 38.2          | 238.5   | 237.2              | 547.5               |
| <u>Percentage Changes in Arrest Rates (1970-75)</u> |          |               |         |                    |                     |
| Age 11-14   | +6.2     | +18.0         | +15.8   | +40.2              | +25.1               |
| Age 15-17   | +1.9     | -4.0          | +34.3   | +46.7              | +35.1               |
| Age 18-24   | +15.8    | +2.9          | +14.0   | +14.8              | +13.4               |

IV. VIOLENT CRIME IN A BIRTH COHORT

Evidence about juvenile crime has been analyzed by the Center for Studies in Criminology and Criminal Law at the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>15</sup> The data constitute a unique collection of information in the United States about a birth cohort of boys born in 1945. Approximately 10,000 males born in that year and who resided in Philadelphia at least from ages 10 to 18 have been analyzed in a variety of ways. Using school records, offense reports from the police and some Selective Service information, the Center has, among other things, followed the delinquency careers of those boys in the cohort who ever had any contact with the police. Comparisons have been made between delinquents and nondelinquents on a wide variety of variables, thus yielding findings that are not tied to a single calendar year. The entire universe of cases is under review, not merely a group that happened to be processed at a given time by a juvenile court or some other agency. Computing a birth-cohort rate of delinquency as well as providing analyses of the dynamic flow of boys through their juvenile court years has been possible. The time analysis uses a stochastic model for tracing delinquency of the cohort and includes such factors as time intervals between offenses, offense type, race, social class, degree of seriousness of the offenses.

Some of the findings from this Philadelphia study are particularly pertinent for more understanding about youth and crimes of violence. Of the total birth cohort of 9946 boys born in 1945, about 85 per cent were born in Philadelphia and about 95 per cent went through the

Philadelphia school system from first grade. From the entire cohort, 3475, or 35 per cent, were delinquent, meaning that they had at least one contact with the police. Of the 7043 white subjects, 2017, or 28.64 per cent were delinquent. It is a dramatic and disturbing fact that just slightly more than half of all Negro boys born in the same year were delinquent, more than were nondelinquent. This higher proportion of nonwhite delinquents constitutes one of the major statistical dichotomies running throughout the analysis of the cohort, and particularly of the delinquent subset.

Of special significance is the fact that only 627 boys were classified as chronic offenders, or heavy repeaters, meaning that they committed five or more offenses during their juvenile court ages. These chronic offenders represent only 6.3 per cent of the entire birth cohort and 18 per cent of the delinquent cohort. Yet these 627 boys were responsible for 5305 delinquencies, which is 52 percent of all the delinquencies committed by the entire birth cohort.

Chronic offenders are heavily represented among those who commit violent offenses. Of the 815 personal attacks (homicide, rape, aggravated and simple assaults), 450 or 53 per cent were committed by chronic offenders; of the 2257 property offenses, 1397 or 62 per cent were from chronic offenders; and of 193 robberies, 135 or 71 per cent were from chronic offenders. Of all violent offenses committed by nonwhites, 70 per cent were committed by chronic boys; of all violent acts committed by whites, 45 per cent were performed by chronic boys. Clearly, these chronic offenders represent what is

often referred to as the "hard-core" delinquents. That such a high proportion of offenses--particularly serious acts of violence--are funnelled through a relatively small number of offenders is a fact that loudly claims attention for a social action policy of intervention.

Besides crude rates of delinquency, the birth cohort study also scores seriousness of offenses. Derived from an earlier study of psychophysical scaling by Sellin and Wolfgang, entitled The Measurement of Delinquency,<sup>16</sup> these scores denote relative mathematical weights of the gravity of different crimes. The scores represent a ratio scale such that a murder is generally more than twice as serious as rape; an aggravated assault, depending on the medical treatment necessary, may be two or three times more serious than theft of an automobile, and so on. The scale has been replicated in over a dozen cities and countries and proved useful in the cohort analysis. Each offense from the penal code committed by members of the cohort was scored. This process permitted us to assign cumulative scores to the biography of each offender, to average seriousness by race, socioeconomic status (SES), age and other variables.

A further refinement shows the types of physical injury committed by each racial group. The frequency distributions as well as the weighted rates show that more serious forms of harm are committed by nonwhites. No whites were responsible for the fourteen homicides. The modal weighted rate for nonwhites is to cause victims to be hospitalized (although the modal number is in the "minor harm" category).

The modal weighted rate (WR) and number for white offenders is for minor harm. By using the weighted rate, based on the judgmental scale of the gravity of crime, the fourteen homicides represent more social harm to the community during the juvenile life span (WR = 125.4) of nonwhite boys than all the combined 456 acts of physical injury committed by white boys during their juvenile years (WR = 142.3). The same can be said about the fifty-nine acts of violence committed by nonwhites that resulted in hospitalization of the victims (WR = 142.3).

In short, if juveniles are to be delinquent, a major thrust of social action programs might be to cause a change in the character rather than in the absolute reduction of delinquent behavior. It could also be argued that concentration of social action programs on a 10 per cent reduction of white index offenses (N = 1400; WR = 483.63) would have a greater social payoff than a 10 per cent reduction of nonwhite nonindex offenses (N = 3343; WR = 382.45).

To inculcate values against harm, in body or property, to others is obviously the major means to reduce the seriousness of delinquency, both among whites and nonwhites. We are simply faced with the fact that more social harm is committed by nonwhites, and the resources and energies of social harm reduction efforts should be employed among nonwhite youth, especially the very young.

An examination of age-specific rates, especially weighted ones, by race, clearly reveals that the incidence of nonwhite offenses at young ages is equal to or more serious than that of whites at later

ages. For example, the average crude rate per 1000 nonwhites ages 7-10 (83.32) is higher than the rate for whites between 14 and 15 years of age (72.24). In fact, for the single year when nonwhites in this cohort were 16 years old, their weighted rate of delinquency (633.49) was higher than the rates for whites accumulated over their entire juvenile careers (587.84). It may be said that nonwhites in their sixteenth year inflict more social harm, through delinquency, on the community than do all whites from age 7 to age 18. The incidence (weighted) of nonwhites at age 11 (112.80) is just slightly less than that for whites at age 15 (120.79) or 17 (122.50), a striking indication of the relatively high rate of delinquency at a very youthful age among nonwhites. Another way of pointing clearly at this fact is to draw attention to the greatest weighted rate difference between whites and nonwhites, which is at ages 7 through 10. Here the average weighted rate for nonwhites (83.32) is 11.4 times greater than the rate for whites (7.33). At age 11, nonwhites have a weighted rate 6.3 times higher than whites; thereafter the difference fluctuates, dropping to a low of 3.6 times higher for nonwhites at age 15.

V. CHANGES IN RATES OF CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

Using UCR data,<sup>17</sup> it can be said that since 1960 crimes of violence have increased by at least 180 per cent. The fear of crime, as indicated in a variety of localized studies, has probably increased in even greater proportions than the recorded reality of crime. That many crimes are unrecorded, that reporting procedures have varied over this time and more crimes may be reported now, particularly rape, than in earlier days, are issues that are difficult to test empirically.

Nonetheless, there appears to be some consensus among the community of criminologists who examine criminal statistics that the amount of real criminality has increased considerably and significantly during the past fifteen years. That there have been equally high rates of crime and crimes of violence recorded in earlier eras of the history of the United States has been asserted by using such long-time series data as Buffalo and Boston provide and recorded in the Task Force Reports of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence.<sup>18</sup> Crimes of violence in the latter part of the 19th Century were as high or higher than even the currently reported rates of crimes of violence.

The issue, however, is that within the memories of the current living population of the United States, since the early 1960s, there has been such an upsurge in crimes of violence, or street crimes, that social concern, governmental budgets and public policy are increasingly affected.

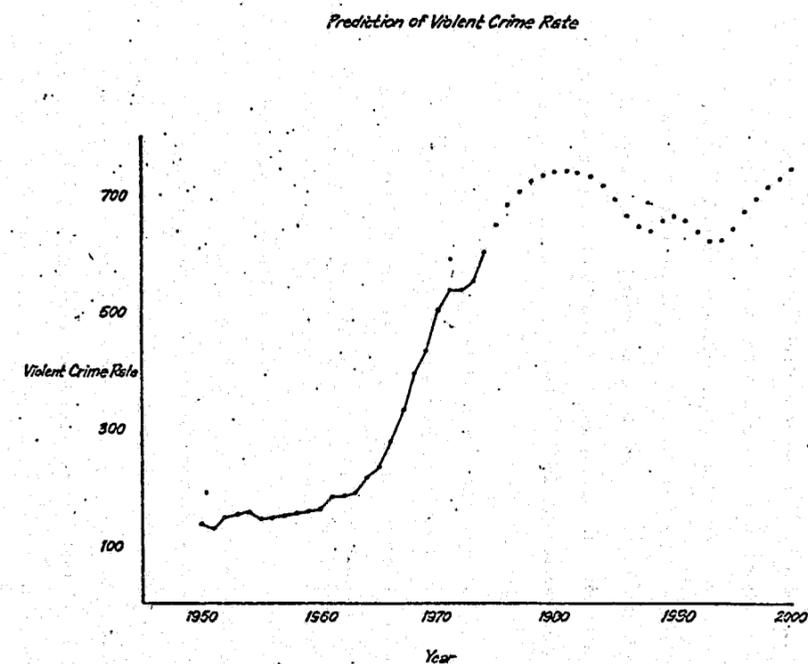
Explanations for the assumed increase are varied but usually embrace such issues as unemployment, broken homes, inadequate education, housing, racial injustice, relative deprivation, lack of law enforcement, leniency in the courts, etc. Our purpose here is not to be explicative, but descriptively analytical.

We do know that there have been significant demographic changes directly related to the changing crime rates. High fertility rates immediately after the Second World War, known as the "baby boom," produced a significant alteration in the age composition of the United States population, such that a swelling of the age group between 15 and 24 occurred in the early 1960s.

For example, in 1940 and 1950, 15-24-year-olds constituted 14.7 per cent of the total population. By 1960, 1965, and 1970, the proportions of the same age group were respectively 13.6 per cent, 15.7 per cent, and 17.8 per cent.<sup>19</sup> Because this age group is the most "criminogenic," meaning that this age-specific group contributes more than any other to the rates of crimes of violence for the total population, it has been asserted that the sheer increase in this age group has been the major contributor to the increase in crimes of violence. Studies designed to factor out statistically the contribution of this demographic change have generally supported the assertion that no matter what social interventions may have been made to control, prevent, or deter crime; the changing age composition of the population has been importantly responsible for the increase in crimes of violence.

In an econometric-type model of crime rates over time in the United States, James Fox has shown how the 14-21 year age group has contributed significantly to the rising rates of crimes of violence in the United States.<sup>20</sup> But he has also shown with carefully controlled demographic projections to the year 2000 what changes are most likely to occur. In the United States we are now at our lowest rates of fertility, and the reduction of fertility has already begun to be reflected in the reduced increase in crimes of violence. In 1976 we began to notice both relative and absolute decreases in crimes of violence. The rate of increase dropped and in many major cities across the country there was an absolute decrease in crimes of violence. The proportion of the youthful group in the total population has decreased and the earlier "baby boom" generation is in the late twenties and early thirties, ages at which the commission of violent crime normally decreases. We should be witnessing from now through the mid-1980s a decline or stability in the amount of crimes of violence.

However, the post-war "baby boom" children, now grown, are getting married and will produce high fertility rates again despite the relative decline in the number of children per couple. Consequently, the 15-24 year age group will rise again in the 1990s, producing once more a rise in the amounts of violence. These claims are made without reference to any effect which greater amounts of law enforcement activity or changes in the criminal justice system may have on the reduction of crime. As a matter of fact, the weight of empirical evidence indicates that no current preventative, deterrent, or rehabilitative intervention scheme has the desired effect of reducing crime.



Source: James Alan Fox, *An Econometric Analysis of Crime Data* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), 1976, Figure 8.1, page 80.

Another point needs to be made about the changing rates of crimes of violence since the early 1960s. It is not simply the increase in crimes of violence that has promoted public fear and increased expenditure of public funds to combat crime; it is the expansion of crimes of violence to groups that have "the power to enforce their beliefs," namely the large middle class and the upper class in American society who have increasingly become victims of crimes of violence.

The major crime control system in Western civilization has traditionally been that of residential segregation. From the time of the ancient Greeks in Athens through classical Rome, the middle ages on the continent of Europe, and in the United States, the slaves, the "criminal classes," the beggars of society and the lower socio-economic classes--to use the more current traditional phrasing of social scientists--are the groups attributed with being the major crime committers of theft and physical injury and have always been residentially kept within their own densely populated, propinquitous areas. Kept on the other side of the river, the canal, the railroad tracks, the "criminal classes" have been segregated and crime committed among these groups has either not been well recorded or reported, or it has been considered to be of relative inconsequence to the social structure that has been politically and economically powered by the aristocrats, nobility or bourgeoisie.

In the United States, the under class, which has always included a high proportion of Blacks since the days of slavery, has conveniently

been residentially segregated from the middle class. Rapes, robberies, homicides committed intragroup among the lower classes have been relatively unimportant to those groups in legislative, executive and judicial power. With the increasing importance attributed to equality of opportunity, the breakdown of racially restrictive covenants in 1949 by a Supreme Court decision and the value placed upon political equality, the traditional residential segregation crime control system has been altered. Moreover, technological changes affording greater opportunities for physical as well as social mobility and interaction between groups have contributed to the breakdown of barriers that formerly existed. Consequently, as there has been an increase in the amount of social interaction between social and ethnic classes and groups there has been an increase in the amount of intergroup and interclass crime which has contributed to the greater victimization of middle and upper classes. Burglaries, muggings, rapes and killings among the groups that define and rate the seriousness of crime and have the power to enforce sanctions have increased their concern with crimes of violence.

So long as the poor and the Blacks were raping, robbing and killing one another, the general majority public concern with crimes of violence was minimal. Public visibility of concern with such crimes has been related to the more generalized victimization as well as to the rise in the rates of such crimes.

It should be noted that there has been an officially-recorded decrease in crimes of violence since 1975. In 1976 there was an

8.3 per cent decrease in criminal homicide, no change in rape, a 10 per cent decrease in robbery, substantially no change in aggravated assault--an overall decrease of 4.5 per cent.<sup>21</sup> Based on projections as indicated, this trend should continue or become stabilized through the 1980s for crimes of violence.

#### VI. SUBCULTURE OF VIOLENCE

Within our broader cultural context there is what I have called elsewhere a "subculture of violence", meaning a set of values, attitudes and beliefs congealed in pockets of populations characterized by residential propinquity and shared commitment to the use of physical aggression as a major mode of personal interaction and a device for solving problems.<sup>22</sup> In this subculture, generated primarily in a lower socioeconomic class disadvantaged in all the traditionally known ways, the use of violence is either tolerated and permitted or specifically encouraged from infancy through adulthood. From child-rearing practices that commonly use physical punishment and that contain many elements of child abuse, to childhood and adolescent play and street gang and group behavior, to domestic quarrels and barroom brawls, physically assaultive conduct is condoned and even part of expected response to many interpersonal relationships. Machismo, but more than this, is involved in the value system that promotes the ready resort to violence upon the appearance of relatively weak provoking stimuli. The repertoire of response to frustration or to certain kinds of stimuli (including name-calling, challenges to the ego) is limited often to a physically aggressive one and the capacity to withdraw or to articulate a verbal response is minimal.

Within the subculture of violence the cues and clues of this stimulus-response mechanism are well known to the culture carriers and thus promote social situations that quickly escalate arguments to altercations and apparently quick-tempered aggression to seemingly trivial encounters. This subculture of violence is culturally transmitted from generation to generation and is shared across cohorts of youth who will fight instead of flee, assault instead of articulate, and kill rather than control their aggression.

This proposition of a subculture of violence suggests that violence is learned behavior and that if violence is not a way of life it nonetheless is normal, not individual pathological behavior. And the greater the degree of commitment to the subcultural values the less freedom, the fewer the number of alternative responses the individual has to cope with social encounters. Homicide, rape, aggravated assault have historically been crimes predominantly intragroup, within the family, among friends and acquaintances, neighbors and the intimate social network. More physical mobility and intergroup interactions have increased the number of victims outside the subculture, the number of victims who are strangers to the offenders and have consequently promoted wide public fear of random assaults and victimization.

#### VII. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A special note should be made about domestic violence. In new studies in Detroit and Kansas City by the Police Foundation, the following findings are important:

There appears to be a distinct relationship between domestic-related homicides and aggravated assaults and prior police interventions for disputes and disturbances. The Kansas City study found that in the two years preceding the domestic assault or homicide, the police had been at the address of the incident for disturbance calls at least once in about 85 percent of the cases, and at least five times in about 50 percent of the cases. The study showed similar results regarding the number of police calls to the residence of either victims or offenders.

Analysis of Kansas City data showed that violence frequently was preceded by threats. The analysis found that when threats were made, physical violence occurred in slightly more than half the cases studied; if physical force had been involved in a disturbance, threats had been made in almost 80 percent of the cases.

The Detroit study likewise showed the importance of threats as predictors of violence; the study found that 53 out of 90 homicides involving family members were preceded by threats.<sup>23</sup>

Unfortunately, in most of these previous disturbance calls, the police did nothing more than prevent immediate physical injury and there were few arrests or court convictions. When asked if charges were not brought whether the family members expected to repeat their disturbance behavior, two-thirds said yes. And apparently future disturbances often result in family homicide. The best set of variables to predict a future domestic killing or

aggravated assault includes the presence of a gun, a history of previous disturbance calls and the presence of alcohol. Moreover, when physical force was used in a family disturbance, known threats to do so had preceded it in 8 out of 10 cases.

My major reason for mentioning this study is to suggest that with appropriate intervening counseling, referral and treatment of family disturbance calls, there is a probability of reducing not only domestic homicide but family violence in general.

#### VIII. BIO-PHYSIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL BASES OF VIOLENCE

As a sociological criminologist, I shall not attempt to summarize or even properly highlight research on violence and biology. Excellent recent summaries of biological and psychophysiological factors in criminality have been presented by Saleem Shah and Loren Roth,<sup>24</sup> by Robert Figlio,<sup>25</sup> and in a new volume entitled Biosocial Bases of Criminal Behavior by Sarnoff Mednick and the late Karl Otto Christiansen,<sup>26</sup> mostly based on longitudinal data from Denmark.

Most of the recent findings concerned with genetics (XYY), brain disorders, abnormal EEGs, hormone levels, etc. are inconclusive or contradictory, and leave little evidence for policy decisions except to offer more research. The following conclusions<sup>27</sup> are pertinent here.

"1) Brain tumors, particularly those affecting the limbic system, have been shown to cause unprovoked violent behavior in some individuals. Surgical removal of the affected area sometimes eliminates these violent outbursts while, oftentimes, also causing unpredictable and undesirable behavior changes. Stereotactic destruction of focal areas of the brain, especially the amygdala, have made the behavioral changes somewhat more predictable.

"In extreme cases of violent psychosis when medication and psychotherapy have failed this kind of radical treatment may be the only remaining avenue for possible relief from attacks of uncontrollable violence. However, this kind of intervention is fraught with social and political implications because of its lack of reportability, predictability and reversibility.

"2) Although the evidence is mixed, temporal lobe epilepsy seems uncorrelated to violent crime, ictally, interictally or postictally. Delinquency prevention standards, therefore, should not deal with this malady.

"3) Electroencephalograms are open to differing interpretations: that is, the reliability is not routinely high. The relationship of "abnormal" EEGs to violent behavior has not been established except in cases where severe limbic disturbances are present. Therefore, we do not advocate EEG screening in a "fishing net" approach to uncover these disturbances in a population.

"4) Studies of hormone levels and behavior also exhibit indeterminate findings. The administration of estrogen reduces the libido in male sex offenders, while testosterone has been shown to reduce the symptoms of institutionalized male XXY offenders. However, the findings are inconclusive and not supportive of a policy decision.

"5) In the area of minimal brain damage as it relates to hyperkinetic behavior, learning disabilities, psychomotor instability and school behavioral problems, we may without reservation, offer some recommendations. Minimal brain damage has been related convincingly to cerebral damage incurred during the prenatal, perinatal and early postnatal formative periods of brain development. These traumas are most probably caused by nutritional and/or oxygen deficiencies in utero, or during or shortly after birth and by protein and sensory insufficiency during the early years of child development. The fact that this disability is strongly associated with lower socioeconomic status persons further supports the hypothesis that this malformation is related to various kinds of deprivation.

"We suggest that policies be considered which will a) provide adequate prenatal medical care and nutrition to ensure that the uterine environment will be supportive to the developing fetus; b) provide adequate medical assistance during birth so that perinatal complications will be minimized; and, c) provide adequate protein diets and social and intellectual stimulation to the developing infant and young child.

"6) With regard to heredity and crime, XXY and XYY syndromes and crime, physique and delinquency, we may state that there is insufficient evidence to support any policy decision which would be relevant to these topic areas.

"Crime is socially defined. The labeling of an individual as a criminal because he has violated some proscription is a social act. The behaviors which we have reviewed are not, in themselves, criminal actions. Aggressive behavior, violent behavior, fits of rage, hyperactivity and impulsiveness are not criminal unless they occur at a certain time and place where such will be deemed illegal. Thus it must be remembered that a biological structure, an individual, develops, exists in (and cointeracts with) his environment, but that environment is of paramount importance in influencing the behavior of its individual members. The persistence, growth and pervasiveness of crime in a society is, thus, a social phenomenon, not a personal or individual construct. The causes of crime are not to be found in individual biologies but rather in societal interaction."

An elaborate study<sup>28</sup> of criminality among 3586 twin pairs from the Danish Twin Register, reported in 1977, does show that monozygotic, or identical twins, have a higher concordance of criminal behavior (35% among males, 21% among females) than among dizygotic or fraternal twins (13% males, 8% females). This finding does not yet clarify the heredity v. environment issue because of the prenatal, perinatal and postnatal similarities of environment for identical twins. But the evidence is not without genetic inference.

Moreover, in another Danish study of 4139 men for whom sex chromosome determinations were made and reported in 1977, the prevalence rates of XYY was 2.9 per 1000, and of XXY, 3.9 per 1000. After examining their criminality, the authors concluded: "The data from the documentary records we have examined speak on society's legitimate concern about aggression among XYY and XXY men. No evidence has been found that men with either of these sex chromosome complements are especially aggressive. Because such men do not appear to contribute particularly to society's problem with aggressive crimes, their identification would not serve to ameliorate this problem."<sup>29</sup>

Yet there are fascinating sociological data that remain in a descriptive posture without clear policy implications. For example, there is a newly reported study,<sup>30</sup> again from Denmark, on 1145 adopted males aged 30-44, relative to their criminality and the criminality of their biological and adopted fathers. A clear tendency can be noted from the fact that 10.5% of adoptees have a criminal record when neither the biological nor adopted father is known to the police, compared to 36.2% when both fathers are criminal. "It is also apparent," say the authors, "that the adoptive

father's criminality appears to have little effect when the biological father has a clean record (11.5% criminal adoptees), whereas the effect of criminality of the biological father when the adoptive father has a clean record remains considerable (22.0% criminal adoptees)."<sup>31</sup> The conclusion must be: "This could be interpreted as suggesting that the environmental factors associated with a rearing agent's criminality were only effective in producing criminality in the male offspring in the case in which a genetic predisposition already existed."<sup>32</sup>

Such findings are welcomed by sociologists and psychologists, for they form part of the sophisticated cumulative knowledge of science. They are important to our efforts to promote interdisciplinary research, perhaps the most important need for studies of crime and violence at this stage of our independent scientific disciplines.

IX. CONCLUSION

A new Encyclopedia of Ignorance has just been published but most of the focus appears to be in the physical sciences. In criminology and criminal justice, we could use a similar statement about our ignorance regarding violence in general and crimes of violence, and violent offenders in particular. Most of what we know is segmental negative information, namely, that certain kinds of relationships do not exist. What is most needed is promotion of research that seeks to interrelate biological factors with endocrine levels, nutrition and protein deficiency with familial and macrosocial forces.

Unless or until such interdisciplinary research is done, our social policies about criminal violence must remain focused on benevolent, benign efforts to improve life conditions in general, but cannot be specifically oriented to the predisposing bio-physiological aggressive factors that might be very important in helping to reduce their manifest appearance under interaction with specific environmental conditions.

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**END**