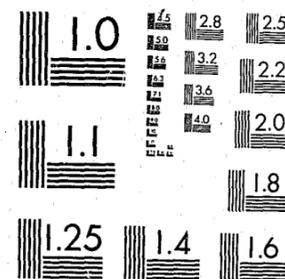


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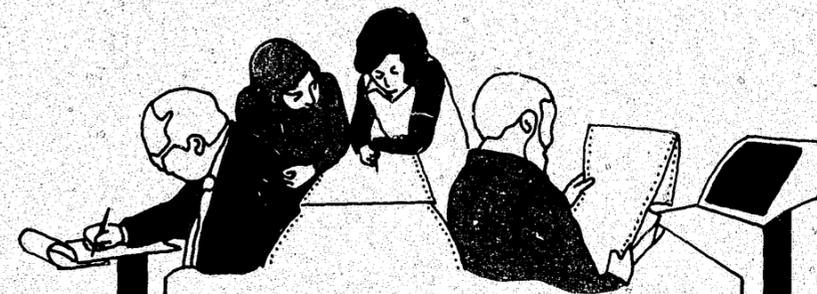
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**HOW WELL
DOES IT WORK?**
Review of
Criminal Justice
Evaluation,
1978

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice
NCJ# 64122

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Delinquency Prevention and Control Programs

The Need for a Conceptual Framework and Evaluation Strategies

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The Need for Evaluation

The need for evaluation of juvenile delinquency prevention and control programs cannot be overstated. An examination of the juvenile justice system indicates a decided lack of comprehensive information on the effectiveness of such programs. Existing evaluation materials are generally of poor quality and provide little information on the effectiveness of intervention strategies. Project directors in many cases are unaware of how to design evaluation measures and generally resort to descriptive accounts of program strategies based largely on "intuitive" measures.

The lack of evaluation materials on delinquency prevention was confirmed by William Wright and Michael Dixon after a comprehensive review of delinquency prevention efforts published in the literature over 1964 to 1974. After reviewing some 6,600 abstracts of programs, the authors were able to find only 96 reports which contained some form of empirical data on project effects. While these projects included both prevention and treatment strategies, the authors conclude:

...that the evaluation literature is low in both scientific validity and policy utility, and that no delinquency prevention strategies can be definitely recommended.¹

The findings of Dixon and Wright are further supported by those of Lundman, McFarlane, and Scarpitti.² After examining some 1,000 citations of delinquency studies published professionally, the authors were able to find only 25 that contained information on the nature and results of the prevention venture. Of these, most could be described as "corrective,"³ and that "in no specific prevention program examined was attention paid to the establishment of punitive or mechanical prevention policies."⁴ In their analysis of these projects, the authors' findings are similar to those of Dixon and Wright, and in their conclusions they argue:

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Delinquency prevention programs have been largely unsuccessful because of inadequate data, inaccurate or incomplete theories, and compromised intervention strategies. We believe, therefore, that the solutions include direct field observation of delinquents, construction of integrated theories which reflect these field data, and assessment of the constraints which currently compromise prevention efforts.⁵

In the following pages, we will discuss some of the issues associated with delinquency prevention and control and suggest a conceptual framework for evaluating such activities.

The Growing Role of Government

Regardless of one's faith in, or skepticism about, crime statistics, there is near universal agreement that the volume of crime increased during the last 2 decades, and that much of this increase resulted from crimes originated by juveniles and young adults. While this increase has to be balanced against the fact that many juveniles "phase out of" delinquent activities when they enter their late teen years, the need to prevent the onset and persistence of delinquency is obvious.⁶ The more successful society is in reducing the number of juveniles entering the juvenile justice system, the greater the likelihood of reducing the number of juveniles who become persistent or chronic offenders.⁷ The importance of prevention in the reduction of the number of such offenders is reflected in the growing concern of the Federal Government in juvenile delinquency and youth crime during the 1960's.

In 1961, the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime was established. This committee soon recommended the enactment of the Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Offenses Control Act of 1961. Originally authorized for 3 years, the act was later extended through fiscal year 1967. In 1967, the importance of prevention in dealing with crime and delinquency was highlighted by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, which stated:

In the last analysis, the most promising and so the most important method of dealing with crime is by preventing it--by ameliorating the conditions of life that drive people to commit crimes and that undermine the restraining rules and institutions erected by society against antisocial conduct.⁸

In the following year (1968), Congress enacted both the Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Control Act and the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act. These were followed by the Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Act of 1972 where, in a similar fashion to the earlier Prevention and Control Act of 1968, funding remained under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). Two years later, Congress enacted the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, which established the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention within the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) of the Department of Justice. The concern of the Federal Government regarding delinquency and the importance directed toward "prevention" is evidenced not only in the title of the act of 1974, but in the attention given to prevention as an important strategy for forestalling antisocial behavior among adolescents and young adults.

In pointing to the major objectives of the Act, Congress noted that its declared policy was:

...to provide the necessary resources, leadership, and coordination (1) to develop and implement effective methods of preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency; (2) to develop and conduct effective programs to prevent delinquency, to divert juveniles from the traditional juvenile justice system and to provide critically needed alternatives to institutionalization; (3) to improve the quality of juvenile justice in the United States; and (4) to increase the capacity of State and local governments and public and private agencies to conduct effective juvenile justice and delinquency prevention and rehabilitation programs and to provide research, evaluation, and training services in the field of juvenile delinquency prevention.⁹

Defining Prevention--Some Conceptual Issues

The purpose of the following discussion is to review some of the varied meanings associated with the concept of "prevention." Before doing so, however, it is important to realize that the confusion and ambiguity associated with prevention is further exacerbated by joining it with the term "delinquency." Both concepts, because of their inclusiveness, have incited a good deal of controversy and debate at the policy or programmatic level.

In an early review of delinquency prevention programs, Witmer and Tufts point to three major conceptions of prevention that dominated the field of delinquency up to the 1950's.¹⁰ The first cat-

egory includes efforts aimed at promoting the "healthy personality development" of all children. Within this broad conceptual level, the prevention (or control) of delinquency was directed toward improving those aspects of society that affect the personality development of children. Obviously, the range of such activities is extremely broad and encompassing, and while commendable, includes a greater array of behavior than delinquency. A second category envisions delinquency prevention as efforts directed primarily toward potential delinquents before they become involved in delinquent behavior. Proponents of this viewpoint not only believe that community resources can be more effectively utilized with predelinquents, but argue that such individuals can be identified through predictive measures. The third category includes programs which stress the reduction of recidivism by lessening the possibility of serious offenses. Prevention efforts under this orientation are directed toward preventing the continuance of delinquency rather than its onset.

After reviewing the efforts based on these categories, the authors argue for a definition of prevention as referring "both to the forestalling of delinquent behavior and also to the reduction in its frequency and seriousness."¹¹ In this way, they have included the essential elements of all three definitions above as opposed to arriving at a more precise definition. Rather than discuss the merits of these approaches, several additional interpretations of prevention will be examined.

In a further critique of delinquency prevention programs prior to the 1960's, John Martin found that delinquency prevention programs correspond to one of the following definitions:

- Delinquency prevention is the sum total of all activities that contribute to the adjustment of children and to healthy personalities in children.
- Delinquency prevention is the attempt to deal with particular environmental conditions that are believed to contribute to delinquency.
- Delinquency prevention consists of specific preventive services provided to individual children or groups of children.¹²

Although the first category is a restatement of Witmer and Tufts' classification, the second definition emphasizing "environmental conditions" reflects the increasing attention paid to the importance of the social system as a causal factor in increasing delinquency. The last definition indicates a growing recognition of the varied types of behavior classified as "delinquency" and

the search for differential treatment strategies. As with Witmer and Tufts, each of these program orientations can be traced to the varied theoretical perspectives oriented toward the etiology of delinquency.

The confusion in delinquency prevention that prevailed in the 1950's and early 1960's led Lejins to write in 1967:

...the field of prevention is by far the least developed area of criminology. Current popular views are naive, vague, mostly erroneous, and for the most part devoid of any awareness of research findings; there is a demand for action on the basis of general moralistic beliefs, discarded criminological theories of bygone days, and other equally invalid opinions and reasons. In scientific and professional circles the subject of prevention has received remarkably little attention. Even the basic concepts in the field of prevention lack precision. There has been very little theory-building, and attempted research under such circumstances has failed to produce any significant results.¹³

In his review of the field of prevention, Lejins argues for the need to distinguish between "prevention" and "control." For Lejins:

Prevention is a measure taken before a criminal or delinquent act has actually occurred for the purpose of forestalling such an act; control is a measure taken after a criminal or delinquent act has been committed.

Since "control measures" may also help to forestall further criminal offenses, Lejins argues that it is a difficult and confusing task to differentiate between control and prevention, unless the concept of control is restricted to:

...any action concerning an offender taken as a result of his having committed an offense...even if it interrupts the continuation of criminal behavior and thereby forestalls future criminal acts.¹⁵

Using this distinction as a base, Lejins describes three types of prevention: punitive, corrective, and mechanical.¹⁶ Punitive prevention, he notes, relies on the threat of punishment to forestall the criminal law, and is based on the premise that a potential offender's awareness of the prospective punishment for an offense will deter him from that behavior. Corrective prevention,

on the other hand, is based on the premise that certain conditions "lead to" or "cause" criminal behavior and it is these conditions which must be eliminated if delinquency is to be prevented. The last category, that of Mechanical prevention, is directed toward making it difficult or impossible for an individual successfully to commit a limited range of offenses. Under this orientation, the primary goal is to "harden the target" to make it inaccessible to the offender. The recognition that prevention includes a wide range of activities is also noted by Eleanor Harlow, who in 1969, distinguished three major prevention strategies:¹⁷

- Primary Prevention is directed toward the criminogenic environment without distinguishing between those persons who have responded criminally and those who have not.
- Secondary Prevention includes programs concerned with delinquency-prone individuals and emphasizing early identification and treatment of predelinquents.
- Tertiary Prevention is corrective in that it is concerned with preventory recidivism.

An examination of Harlow's categories indicates little difference between the early classification of Witmer and Tufts; each interprets prevention as being directed at three types of youth: (a) general population, (b) predelinquent, and (c) delinquent. Obviously, the use of the term "prevention" to include activities associated with all three categories of youth can only add to the confusion associated with the concept.

In a more recent analysis of prevention, Kenneth Polk and Solomon Kobrin argue that the tendency in the past has been to search for the "causes" of crime and to develop prevention programs addressed to these causes.¹⁸ In their analysis the authors argue for an approach that specifies how legitimate rather than illegitimate pursuits are pursued. Delinquency prevention, they argue, should emphasize institutional reform rather than individual change. For them, both from a practical and strategic matter:

The approach to the problem of adolescent deviance, and to delinquency prevention and control, must focus on institutional malfunction.¹⁹

Based on this approach, efforts would be directed toward restructuring existing institutions, while discarding those features that tend to foster delinquent behavior and identities.

Polk and Kobrin go on to argue that since prevention consists of activities developed to reduce the incidence of those be-

haviors that lead to the imposition of the label of delinquency, the most appropriate manner in which this can be accomplished is through the restructuring of the present institutions or the creation of new ones.²⁰

The growing attention to institutional change is also noted by LaMar T. Empey who argues that "...any serious effort at crime prevention would have to consider ways by which socialization per se might be made more effective."²¹ Given this direction, Empey argues that if these institutions are to be more effective, prevention programs should consider the following assumptions as crucial to prevention:

1. the primary focus of prevention efforts should be upon the establishment among young people of a legitimate identity;
2. a legitimate identity among young people is most likely to occur if they have a stake in conformity;
3. the cultivation in young people of a legitimate identity and a stake in conformity requires that they be provided with socially acceptable, responsible, and personally gratifying roles; and
4. a rational strategy of delinquency reduction and control must address the task of institutional change.²²

In an attempt to deal with existing confusion regarding the definition of "prevention," and the most appropriate strategies to accomplish the prevention of delinquency, the National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals recommended the following definition in 1976:

Delinquency prevention is a process of problem identification, resource analysis and strategy building aimed at lowering rates of delinquency through the provision of services to persons or groups with specific and demonstrated needs.²³

While the above definition indicates the importance of "process" in the prevention of delinquency, it also emphasizes the "provision of services" as the major strategy for accomplishing prevention.

These conclusions clearly indicate the need to differentiate among varied patterns of delinquency in both criminological research and delinquency prevention programs.²⁴ In addition to these

definitional issues, it is also important to recognize that a majority of juveniles engage in delinquent acts sometime during their adolescence, most of which are never officially observed or recorded.²⁵ Further, while most adolescents with official arrest records are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, the evidence that delinquency exists among all levels of the economic system is quite substantial.²⁶ The implications of these findings for delinquency prevention programs need to be given serious consideration.

In addition to the confusion generated by the meaning of "delinquency" in research studies, the problem of defining delinquency may also affect the way in which delinquency prevention programs are developed. Spergel, for example, argues that the term delinquency:

...is just as variable and complex as community. In fact, it may be even more variable within a community than across the juvenile-justice system. There appears to be no across the board operational definition of delinquents or predelinquents in community based programs. It is not at all clear what a community program to prevent or to treat delinquents really is or should be.²⁷

Studies, evaluations, and descriptions of prevention and treatment programs nationwide rarely define the range of behavior included under the definition of delinquency nor, except in a few cases, are there well-developed strategies to deal with the differential character of delinquency.²⁸ Further, while many administrators and program staff are able to distinguish between prevention and control in theory, the distinctions are not always explicit in practice. Some agencies, claiming to be "preventive" organizations, are actually involved in the treatment of adjudicated delinquents, while some "treatment" agencies are involved in the development of preventive activities for children considered to be either "predelinquent" or as having high probabilities of being defined as delinquent at some future time. Further, since the term "prevention" is not always precisely defined by practitioners, it is difficult to establish mutually exclusive categories of preventive and treatment activities, thus adding to the confusion that has dominated the field of delinquency prevention for the last 40 years.²⁹

Despite recent efforts to provide overall profiles of the types of projects aimed at preventing juvenile delinquency, little is known about the effectiveness of the wide range of interventions to prevent delinquent behaviors.³⁰ Similarly, there have been virtually no efforts to describe both the actual interventions and the chains of theoretical reasons and assumptions linking these

interventions to underlying principles of causality and social change.³¹ In short, little is known about either what actually takes place nationally under the rubric of juvenile delinquency prevention or how those practices and projects are justified by sound theoretical and operational principles.³²

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING DELINQUENCY PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAMS

A Synthesis of Delinquency Prevention Projects

Although findings from each of the above mentioned studies are based on analyses of reports contained within the professional literature, they are consistent with those obtained in an assessment of delinquency prevention projects conducted by the Center of Vocational Education at Ohio State during 1975, under a grant provided by the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice.³³ The purpose of this assessment was to provide an information base for policymakers by examining and assessing current strategies of delinquency prevention nationwide. The following pages provide a synthesis and assessment of the major findings of this effort.

In order to arrive at a representative sampling of delinquency prevention programs in operation, an extensive search of existing data bases was undertaken. This data search yielded several reference sources to project specific information ranging from approximately 200 to over 5,000 citations. The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration's Grant Management Information Service (GMIS), by far the largest printout, included 2,100 pages of project summaries, with an average of 2.5 summaries per page.³⁴ Unfortunately, the GMIS did not distinguish between primary and secondary prevention programs and consequently further manual screening was necessary.³⁵ When possible, staff keyed decisions to catchphrases such as "predelinquent" and "primary prevention." Eventually, 1,486 programs were identified as prevention programs; of this figure only 20 percent were currently active. After an extensive phone survey, 120 projects were selected as possible candidates for site visits.

Efforts were also directed toward establishing contacts with information sources other than LEAA. Specifically, the staff searched for Federal, State, and local agencies of government involved in delinquency prevention. To add to these difficulties, no centralized source of information exists for cataloging privately funded delinquency prevention projects or programs. Therefore, it is important to note that the analysis is skewed toward federally supported efforts.

Actual site selection procedures for assessing delinquency prevention programs were initiated by an extensive telephone interview survey which focused on individual projects. The purpose of these interviews was to confirm the type of program and to gather program information prior to the final site selection. Many of the projects contacted in this manner nominated additional primary prevention programs with which they were familiar. All projects reviewed by telephone were classified according to the following criteria:

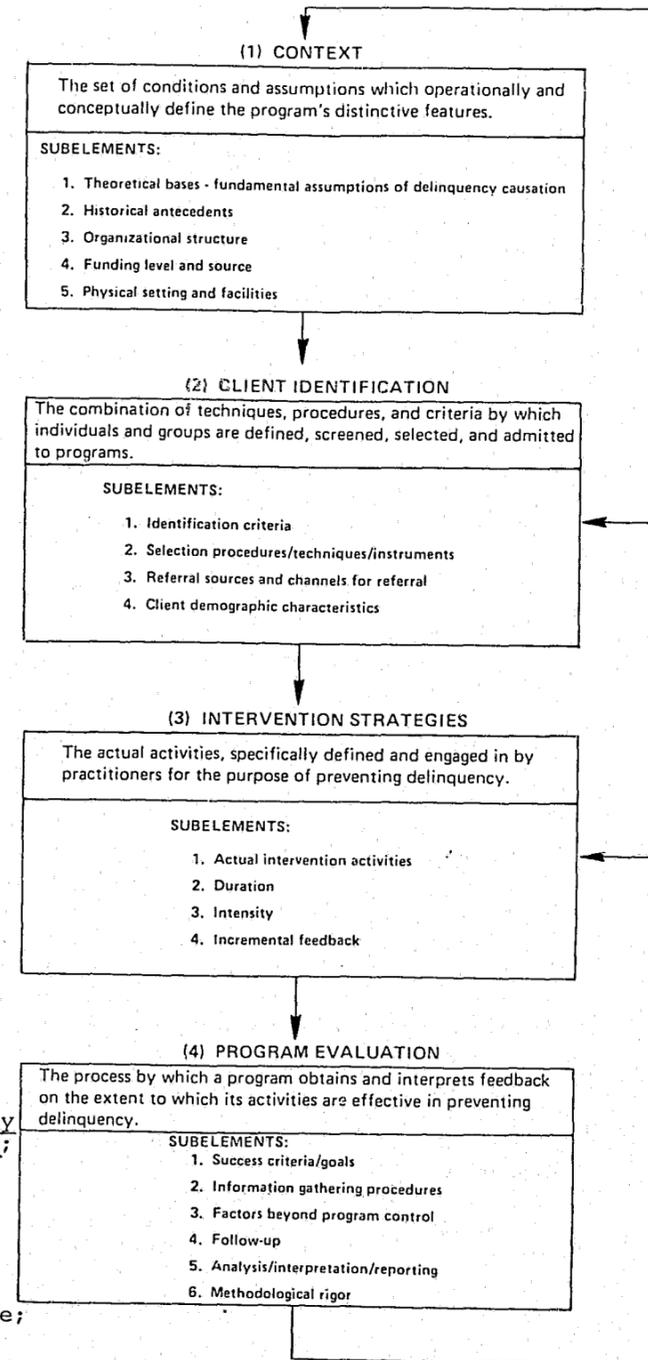
- the type intervention by cluster type (see descriptions below)
- geographic location
- locus of intervention (e.g., family, schools)
- predominate mode of intervention (e.g., case work, counseling)
- target group characteristics (e.g., age, sex, race, and approximate percentage of clients having police or juvenile court records)
- funding source
- maturity (i.e., years in existence)
- staff size
- evaluation.

It is important to emphasize that one crucial criterion for site selection was evaluation. Extreme care was given to visiting sites claiming formal, external evaluations, which offer the most potential for gathering systematic information. From the list of 120 projects, 35 were selected for site visits.

In addition to the importance of evaluation, efforts were made to examine a wide range of projects representative of the dominant strategies being utilized by program staff. Based on an extensive review of literature, research, and evaluation reports of delinquency control and prevention, a conceptual framework for classifying strategies and techniques of juvenile delinquency prevention was developed.³⁶ This framework classifies specific program techniques under one of six major intervention strategy clusters described below.

Counseling: Defined as that range of interventions from psychiatric analysis and psychotherapy to simple advice giving and "active listening." It is the most prevalent

Figure I
Juvenile Delinquency Prevention
Program Elements³⁷



Source: Principles and Guidelines for State and Local Administrators of Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Programs; by Dennis L. Billingsley, Albert P. Cardarelli and Jerry P. Walker; National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice; January 1976, p. 3.

and widely accepted of all intervention strategies, employed by licensed psychologists, social workers, and lay persons alike.

Recreation: Defined as those semiorganized and organized nonwork activities engaged in by youth for pleasure and considered by practitioners as an appropriate youth development activity to prevent destructive behavior.

Police-School-Community Relations: Defined as those programs designed to promote positive attitudes, opinions, and thoughts of individuals in society toward the law in general and law enforcement activities in particular. Most such programs involve law enforcement officials who attempt to minimize the alienation between youth and the law.

Instruction: Defined as those activities that manipulate given resources and skills to bring about an improved grasp and comprehension from diverse sources. Information may be either formal or informal knowledge. It is a strategy that has as its objective an increase in competence for the adolescent, those in traditional positions of instruction (e.g. teachers), or both.

Opportunity Enhancement: Defined as those efforts to generate resources that would provide opportunity to acquire and apply given skills. In practice, opportunity enhancement programs involve job training, vocational counseling, job development and job placement activities to increase the life changes of an individual youth. The key concept of these programs is the provision of opportunity.

Youth Advocacy: Defined as those activities which involve the direct interface with institutions on the behalf of youth. While it may be undertaken for an individual youth, it is usually associated with "class action." Advocacy programs favor changes in organizational structures, procedures, and service patterns as well as changes in the legal institutions. Emphasis is on innovative change and effective delivery of services to clients.

A series of pretests of local prevention programs in Ohio was initiated to determine problem areas in gathering information during site visits. Based on these experiences, a site-review manual was developed which had as its objective the development of a descriptive profile of each project in terms of four broad categor-

ies. These include: (1) the context of the program; (2) the methods of client identification; (3) the intervention strategies used to help prevent delinquency; and (4) the methods of evaluation utilized in the program (see Figure I for a summary of these categories).

Context is defined as the set of conditions and assumptions which operationally and conceptually define the distinctive features of delinquency prevention programs. Included are the physical, financial, historical, organizational, and theoretical characteristics of the program.

Within "context," the matter of fundamental assumptions represents an area requiring special attention and documentation. It was felt that the fundamental assumptions would define the bases upon which target audiences are identified, the intervention strategies which are selected and implemented, and the evaluation logic and procedures which are to be employed.

It should be strongly stressed that it was not expected that any single program would (or should) attempt to articulate and document the fundamental assumptions that account for the full range of all delinquent behavior. Rather, it was anticipated that programs would either "specialize" in mediating particular causative factors within a well-defined and documented range, or would involve staff in prevention practices, exclusive of causative factors, but within an equally well-defined range of activities.

Client Identification is defined as the combination of techniques, procedures, and criteria by which individuals and groups are defined, screened, selected, and admitted to program participation. As previously indicated, the fundamental assumptions of a project indicate the problematic characteristics or causative factors from which the identification criteria and procedures are derived. A review of project summaries prior to site visits indicated that many programs are much less individualized or targeted in identifying characteristics of causation which are to be dealt with by the intervention process. Often termed "nontargeted," these programs are more general in setting criteria than so-called targeted programs. Relative juvenile crime rates, scholastic ability, school dropout rates, crime victim surveys, self-report instruments, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or area of residence are all criteria used for nontargeted group selection.

Intervention Strategies include the full range of actual activities engaged in by practitioners for the purpose of preventing delinquency. Included within the program element of intervention are the subelements of duration, intensity, and sensitivity to incremental feedback. While duration and intensity

are self-explanatory terms, it was anticipated that within programs both would vary by client, and that such variance would be determined by individual client characteristics, staff sensitivity to incremental feedback, and the unique needs of both staff and clients. Sensitivity to incremental feedback presupposes the ideal existence of planned and implemented measurement points during the intervention process. Such "midstream" measurement points allow for decisions to be made regarding the success or appropriateness of the intervention activity, changes in intervention methodology (i.e., possibly referral to another program), client recycling, termination from all intervention efforts, or simply changes in duration or intensity.

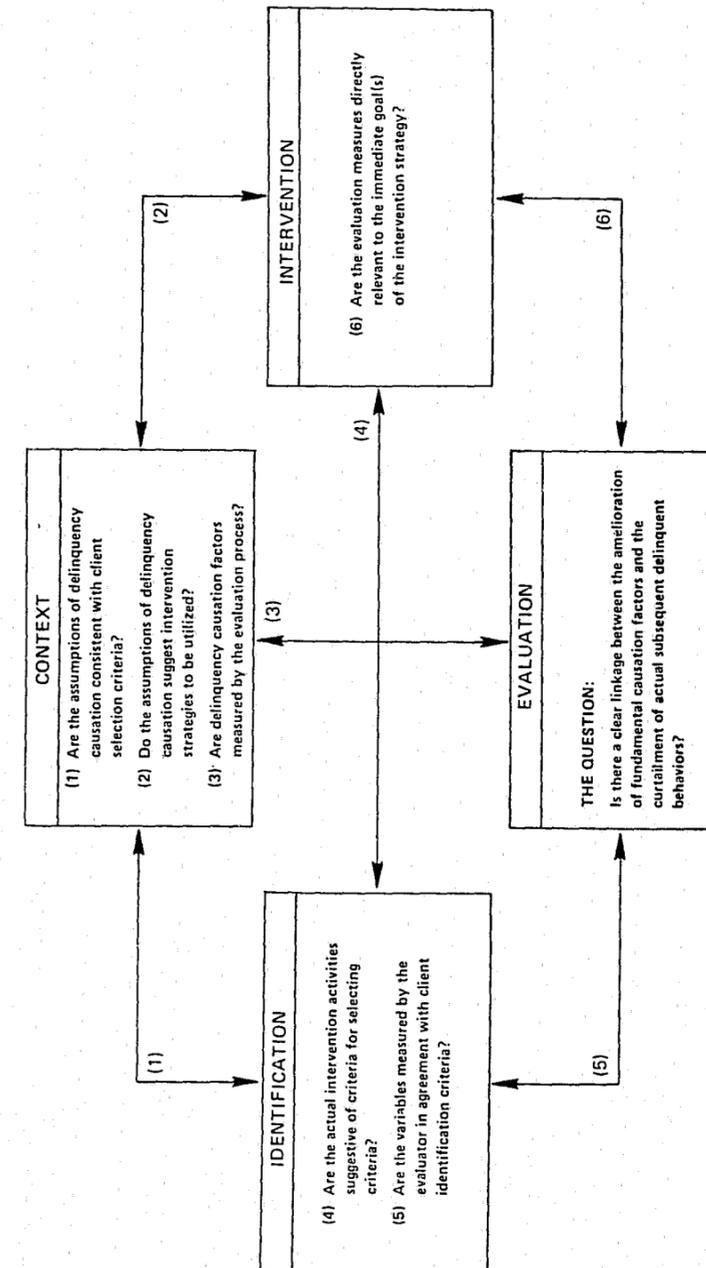
Evaluation is defined as the process by which a program obtains and interprets feedback on the extent to which its interventions have been successful. An ideal program evaluation would attempt to explain both its successes and failures in terms of implications for program improvement. Measures of costeffectiveness or administrative efficiency, although helpful, are not considered to be sufficient evaluation measures. Similarly, monitoring practices, incorporating numbers of clients served by age, sex, ethnicity, education level, and reporting problems are not, in and of themselves, evaluation.

In effect, the evaluation of most programs should be twofold. The evaluator should first focus on the changes and processes that develop throughout the history of the project and whether these changes affect the character and direction of the intervention strategies. Second, the evaluator should determine the impact of the strategies on the extent or character of delinquency.

The difficulties in adhering to these "ideal" evaluation considerations are enormous. When one considers the fact that few programs have managed to conduct impact evaluations which offer convincing evidence that delinquent behaviors have been prevented, it becomes clear that obstacles to a methodologically sound evaluation abound.

The above discussion provides a general description of the four broad elements of juvenile delinquency prevention projects -- context (emphasizing fundamental assumptions), client identification, intervention strategies, and evaluation--which were utilized in the site visits to assess delinquency prevention programs. Implied in each of these definitions are several major logical linkages or interrelationships of program elements (see Figure II). Throughout our assessment the undergirding principle was that if these linkages were clear and strong in their logic, the projects would be much more effective and efficient in their activities.

Figure II
Logical Linkages of Juvenile Delinquency
Prevention Program Elements 38



Source:
Principles and Guidelines for State and Local Administrators of Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Programs; by Dennis L. Billingsley, Albert P. Cardarelli and Jerry P. Walker; National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice; January 1976, p. 8.

An Assessment of Delinquency Prevention Projects

Some of the major findings associated with the site visits are summarized in terms of the four major categories of context, client identification, intervention, and evaluation.³⁹

Context-Fundamental Assumptions

For almost all site visits it was necessary to infer many of the projects' fundamental assumptions about delinquency causative factors. Members of the prevention programs interviewed either did not explicitly state the basic assumptions or philosophies underlying their programs, or simply did not give serious consideration to the issue. Many programs intervene only with strategies with which they are most familiar and proficient--usually counseling--but do not or cannot directly link what they are doing to any basic assumptions about the causes of delinquency. Thus, while the family is seen by almost all projects as a "causative" factor in delinquency, less than one-half of the projects emphasize family intervention strategies. Further, although economic factors are viewed as important causal elements, they are seldom dealt with directly. For example, many program staff argue that attempts to ameliorate the "causes" of delinquency are not feasible within their programs, and therefore are not productive avenues to pursue. In this respect, it becomes clear why many programs which report the same fundamental assumptions differ substantially in the intervention strategies they utilize.

Overall, the site interviews revealed a pattern of ill-defined or inconsistent fundamental assumptions and intervention strategies. Often, prevention program staff paid lip service to particular types of intervention strategies but did not implement them. Lastly, in several cases it was evident that the fundamental assumptions about delinquency causation often were prepared for purposes of grantsmanship and were really not manifested in any part of the program.

Client Identification

In terms of the weaknesses of the prevention program, the process of identifying potential delinquents is second only to the illogic and inconsistency between context and intervention and is due in part to the many dilemmas and paradoxes faced by project directors. Because of the virtual absence of consistent identification criteria, most delinquency prevention projects not only work with nondelinquents but with those who are arrested or adjudicated as delinquent. Although these programs are able to provide an indication as to the proportion of clients within each category, the intervention strategies within the programs

do not discriminate between the so-called nondelinquent youth and those who have "penetrated the system." In fact, several of the projects made a point of not asking questions related to the clients' previous arrests or apprehensions. Inappropriate or neglected identification procedures and criteria result in the inappropriate selection of clients and account in part for the failure of many delinquency prevention programs to demonstrate their success.

The lack of congruency or logical linkages between the identification of clients and fundamental assumptions or intervention strategies brought to light several other important findings. Primary among these is the topic of client selectivity or what is referred to as "the skimming process." Through a variety of means, many of the programs manage to work with "the best of the bad kids," referring the more belligerent, hostile, and aggressive youths to other agencies, or leaving them to fend for themselves. This is an important finding for social policy. The exclusion of those youths most in need of services may preclude the prevention of more serious forms of delinquency and may be instrumental in the development of criminal careers.

Intervention Strategies

Actual intervention techniques were found to conform to the six cluster types as previously speculated. Programs in the field exhibited intervention activities which may generically be titled counseling, instructional, recreational, youth advocacy, opportunity enhancement, and police-school relations.

The general pattern of linkages between a project's fundamental assumptions and its intervention strategies is one in which practitioners espouse a "social-institutional" or "social-interactive" basis for delinquency, but actually utilize intervention strategies which are individual/psychological in nature. Practitioners in all clusters, with the possible exception of youth advocacy, not only are at a loss in effectively addressing the admittedly complex interactive set of social/individual variables giving rise to delinquency, but believe there is little they can do to directly impact on these variables. These findings have important implications for those who wish to establish social policy based on a theoretical framework that is system-specific in nature.

Evaluation

The national evaluation staff found that, without exception, efforts at evaluation are either lip-service or inadequate in execution. In many cases evaluation is nonexistent, with few proj-

ect directors viewing it as a much-needed process. There are only haphazard designs concerning the intensity of program interventions, with program staff concerned more with the duration of the staff-client relationship rather than its intensity. Many project staff resort to the argument that one cannot adequately measure "subjective behavior or attitudes," whereas others claim that there is not enough expertise at their disposal to execute adequate evaluation.

External Linkages and Program Constraints

In addition to the above elements, programs were also assessed in terms of their "external linkages" with the outside world, as well as the external program constraints.

Site visits indicated that most external linkages are based on some formal or contractual agreement. The most common is one with the juvenile justice system for the purpose of referral or transmission of information concerning delinquent individuals. In the vast majority of cases these formal connections are for establishing some type of intervention strategy. This usually takes place when clients are being identified for acceptance to the program and generally terminates immediately thereafter. In several instances, the juvenile justice system contracts and pays for program services. During the intervention and evaluation stages, seldom is there further communication between the programs and the juvenile justice system.

Other formal linkages exist within the community agency referral system, and include welfare, employment, educational, and law enforcement organizations. Again, these are generally utilized at the identification or entry stage of the program, and are usually formal in that services are contracted and paid for either directly or indirectly.

Overall, the current status of linkages of delinquency prevention programs to external agencies, community resources, and other prevention programs can be best characterized as: (a) substantially lacking in cooperation for referral, feedback, and followup purposes; (b) riddled by mistrust and suspicion; (c) competitive (for both clients and funding); and (d) ill-conceived and haphazardly maintained. Program linkages with the juvenile justice system are typically contractual arrangements, serve to "widen the net" of the juvenile justice system, and serve only as a referral channel since little or no subsequent information flows between the system and the program.

In addition to problems resulting from inadequate program linkages, virtually all delinquency prevention projects visited were faced with a wide variety of explicit constraints. Two of

the most important were funding and public relations. In terms of funding, many program staff indicated that the issues of continuity, timing, and criteria were even more pervasive constraints than the actual level of dollar amounts per grant. The issues of shifting funding resources, massive paper work, contradictory criteria, and annual uncertainty were complicated and bitter topics of discussion, and viewed as having important ramifications affecting all program elements.

A further program constraint expressed by community-based practitioners in particular is that of negative political, police, and community relations. It was not uncommon to hear project directors speak of the need to establish better relations with parents and leaders within the community, or to see projects establish "Boards of Directors" from the area's politically powerful residents in an attempt to establish credibility and muster support from the political structure.

CONCLUSIONS

Political and Economic Constraints

It is important to keep in mind that the successful implementation of any program of delinquency prevention may be affected by structural factors of a national character over which program directors have little control. For example, the continued transition of large cities from manufacturing to service economies, coupled with the outflow of manufacturing and retail jobs to the suburbs, has led to higher rates of urban unemployment that is often reflected in family and personal disorganization. The importance of these wider sociocultural and environmental factors in both the causation and prevention of delinquency should neither be ignored or treated lightly, nor be used as "excuses" to avoid the immediate problems associated with their impact. Program staff not only need to be explicit about their domains of competency, but further must be realistic about the changes that are feasible within program structure.

In addition, there are other political or economic constraints that inhibit both program initiation or evaluation. These include the separation of powers among branches, levels, and units of government; fund availability and budgetary process; the nature of bureaucracy; constituencies and special interests; and inadequate policymaker understanding and involvement.⁴⁰

Theoretical Issues: Changing Individuals vs. Conditions

One of the most obvious dichotomies in the field of delinquency prevention derives from practitioners who view the causes and solutions of delinquency in terms of the individual juvenile, in contrast to those who focus on social conditions or factors to which the individual is exposed. Each of these perspectives has direct consequences for the kinds of prevention activities that are undertaken. Either perspective to the exclusion of the other may, however, result in too narrow a focus as noted by Richard Cloward:

The tendency to define the source of many social problems in essentially individualistic terms rather than to focus as well on the way in which institutional inadequacies generate these problems has led us to become too preoccupied with rehabilitation. We have tended to behave as if problems of delinquency, dependency, illegitimacy, and the like can be solved in essentially rehabilitative terms.⁴¹

Although these comments are directed toward perspectives that are essentially "individually oriented," the criticism applies equally well to those sociological perspectives that either do not deal with individual differentiation or responsibility, or with the legal rules that define certain behavior as "deviant" in the first place.⁴²

The Degree of Community Cohesion

One of the major factors to consider in the development and implementation of any prevention program is the degree of community cohesion that exists. During the last 3 decades most large American cities have undergone important economic and cultural changes that raise serious doubts about the existence of any "uniformity of interests" or "communal purpose." Racial conflicts, neighborhood deterioration, and high rates of mobility are only manifest examples of widespread political and economic conflicts in many large cities. They must be given serious consideration prior to the development of any delinquency prevention program. Given the wide variations of neighborhoods throughout the country it is vital for policymakers to recognize that if delinquency prevention programs are to succeed, they must be integrated into community activities rather than developed in isolation from neighborhood residents or agencies.⁴³

Early Intervention vs. Nonintervention

In the field of delinquency prevention, many argue that it is possible to delineate the path of behavior that an individual will take over a period of time and thereby allow increased attention to be directed to those adolescents who are "potentially delinquents." This rationale for early identification is based on the belief that once "potential delinquents" are identified, more effective strategies can be implemented. The nature of the activities will vary from nonintervention to active intervention and treatment.

Attempts at early identification and prediction of predelinquency have not been without criticism from both an empirical and ethical level of analysis.⁴⁴ Thus, the President's Commission advocated in 1967 that prediction studies of individual cases should be approached with caution and concern for:

[I]nherent in the process of seeking to identify potential delinquents are certain serious risks--most notably that of the self-fulfilling prophecy.⁴⁵

Additional arguments against attempts at predicting delinquency gain their impetus from the growing philosophy of "nonintervention" espoused by many practitioners and described by Edwin Schur as that which:

...implies policies that accommodate society to the widest possible diversity of behaviors and attitudes rather than forcing as many individuals as possible to adjust to supposedly common standards.⁴⁶

The belief that early intervention may not only be a negative activity but an inefficient one is not without empirical evidence. Longitudinal studies of juveniles by Wolfgang et al.⁴⁷ indicate that only a small proportion of adolescents become chronic and persistent offenders. These youth not only are responsible for a large proportion of serious offenses, but are much more likely to be arrested as adults. Most youth who engage in some acts of delinquency do not follow this pattern. Official interventions by the juvenile justice system in contrast to positive youth development strategies prior to the onset of delinquency would therefore appear more costly and less effective.

Prevention as Reinforcement of Positive Activities

During the 1960's, with the publication of Delinquency and Opportunity,⁴⁸ and the direction that the President's Committee

on Juvenile Delinquency pursued, greater emphasis was placed on enhancing the opportunities of large numbers of inner-city youth who were seen as most vulnerable to delinquency. Programs similar to New York City's Mobilization for Youth were established and funded in several large cities, with the prime goal of changing those conditions viewed as most conducive to delinquency.⁴⁹ Supported by the political themes of the "New Frontier" and "The Great Society," government spent millions of dollars to provide large numbers of disadvantaged youth with expanded economic opportunities.

Although the initial hopes of these programs were never fully realized for a number of reasons, increased attention was directed toward the ways institutions of social control deal with youthful misbehavior and delinquency. One result of this process has been an increased demand for viewing prevention as a reinforcement of positive attitudes and the development of positive goals rather than the prevention of a wide range of juvenile behaviors, many of which would not lead to an arrest if committed by an adult.

SUMMARY

Given the political and economic constraints that impact on the development and implementation of delinquency prevention programs, much greater priority needs to be given to the expansion of legitimate opportunities and identities in the primary socializing institutions. Linkages between the school, the world of work, and family need to be strengthened and encouraged. In addition, there is a critical need for increased interagency coordination between the schools and neighborhood agencies if delinquency is to be prevented through the encouragement of prosocial activities.

Further, because of the overwhelming evidence showing that most adolescents "phase out of delinquency," special consideration needs to be given to those adolescents who are most in need of services, if they are to make the transition to adulthood with the least amount of negative costs to themselves and society.

The above assessment indicates a pressing need for increased evaluation of delinquency prevention and control programs in the context of a suitable conceptual framework and adequate implementation strategies. Without this we will be increasingly immersed in programs that do not work--or that do work, but we do not know why they work.

It is only through the combination of such competent program design, implementation, evaluation, and modification that the problems of juvenile crime and delinquency will be properly prevented or controlled.

NOTES

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2 For an insightful analysis of delinquency as a "temporary" or "episodic" aspect of adolescence, see David Matza, Delinquency and Drifts (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1964); Edwin Schur, Radical Non-Intervention: Rethinking the Delinquency Problem (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973).

3 The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 58.

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5 Helen L. Witmer and Edith Tufts, The Effectiveness of Delinquency Prevention Programs, Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1954.

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7 John M. Martin, "Three Approaches to Delinquency Prevention: A Critique," in Simon Dinitz and Walter C. Reckless, ed., Critical Issues in the Study of Crime: A Book of Readings (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1968), pp. 161-164.

8 Peter P. Lejins, "The Field of Prevention," in William E. Amos and Charles F. Wellford, ed., Delinquency Prevention: Theory and Practice (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), pp. 1-21.

9 Ibid., p. 2.

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11 Ibid., p. 3

12 Eleanor Harlow, "Prevention of Crime and Delinquency: A Review of the Literature," Information Review on Crime and Delinquency, 1, 6:3,4, (Hackensack, N.J.: National Council on Crime and Delinquency, April, 1969).

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14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 LaMar T. Empey, "Crime Prevention: The Fugitive Utopia," in Daniel Glaser, ed., Handbook of Criminology (New York: Rand McNally, 1974), p. 1106.

17 Polk and Kobrin, Youth Development, note 13 above, pp. 2-3.

18 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Report of the Task Force on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, prepared by the National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, Washington: 1976, p. 25.

19 Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin, Delinquency in a Birth Cohort.

20 See LaMar T. Empey and M. L. Erickson, "Hidden Delinquency and Social Status," Social Forces 44:546-554 (June 1966); Martin Gold, "Undetected Delinquent Behavior," The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 3:27-46 (January 1966); Thorsten Sellin and Marvin E. Wolfgang, The Measurement of Delinquency (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964); H. L. Voss, "Socio-economic Status and Reported Delinquent Behavior," Social Problems, 13:314-324 (Winter 1966); and Robert H. Hardt and George E. Bodine, "Development of Self-Report Instruments in Delinquency Research," Youth Development Center, Syracuse University, 1965.

21 For a collection of materials see, in addition to the above sources: Edmund Vaz, ed., Middle-Class Juvenile Delinquency (New York: Harper and Row, 1967); J. J. Conger et al., Personality, Social Class and Delinquency (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966); Jerome G. Miller, "Research and Theory in Middle-Class Delinquency," The British Journal of Criminology, 10, 1:33-51 (1970); Bertram Spiller, "Delinquency and Middle Class Goals," The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science, 56, 4:463-478 (1965); John P. Clark and Eugene P. Wenninger, "Socio-Economic Class and Area as Correlates of Illegal Behavior Among Juveniles," The American Sociological Review, 27:826-834 (December 1962); and Charles P. Smith, "The Relationship of Socio-economic Characteristics to Parole Success," thesis, (University of Arizona, 1961).

22 Irving A. Spergel, "Community-based Delinquency Prevention Programs: An Overview," Social Service Review, 47 (1):18 (1973).

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25 Michael C. Dixon and William E. Wright, An Evaluation of Policy Related Research on the Effectiveness of Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Programs (Nashville: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1974).

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27 William E. Wright and Michael C. Dixon, "Community Prevention and Treatment of Juvenile Delinquency," Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, January 1977, p. 60.

28 Richard J. Lundman, Paul T. McFarlane, and Frank R. Scarpitti, "Delinquency Prevention: A Description and Assessment of Projects Reported in the Professional Literature," Crime and Delinquency, July 1976, pp. 297-308.

29 Ibid., p. 300.

30 Ibid., p. 300.

31 Ibid., p. 308.

32 For the full results of this study, see The Theory and Practice of Delinquency Prevention in the United States . . ., note 26 above.

33 In addition to the GMIS resource, the following data bases were searched and yielded varying quantities of references, abstracts, articles, and project summaries: The National Criminal Justice Reference Service, the National Technical Information Service, The National Council on Crime and Delinquency, The National Science Foundation, The National Institute of Mental Health, and The

Mechanized Information Center, through which the following data bases were searched: (a) Psychological Abstracts, (b) Educational Resources Information Center, (c) Social Science Information Service, and (d) Multidisciplinary.

34 Primary prevention was defined as those programs functioning in the "pre-apprehension" realm, although it was clearly realized that many such programs would also cater to youth who have committed delinquent acts, as well as those who have been adjudicated as delinquent.

35 See The Theory and Practice of Delinquency Prevention in the United States . . ., note 26 above.

36 Ibid., pp. 145-164, for a detailed review of the findings.

37 Richard A. Cloward, "Social Problems, Social Definitions, and Social Opportunities," in Robert Schasse and Jo Wallach, ed., Readings in Changing Interpretations of Behavior (Los Angeles: Youth Studies Center, University of Southern California, May 1965), pp. 24-51. See also Nathan Caplan and Stephen D. Nelson, "On Being Useful: The Nature and Consequences of Psychological Research on Social Problems," American Psychologist, March 1973, pp. 199-211.

38 See Schur, Radical Non-Intervention, note 2 above.

39 See Amos and Wellford, Delinquency Prevention, note 8 above, pp. 22-36.

40 Challenge of Crime in a Free Society, p. 59.

41 Schur, note 2 above, p. 154.

42 Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin, note 1 above.

43 Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960).

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