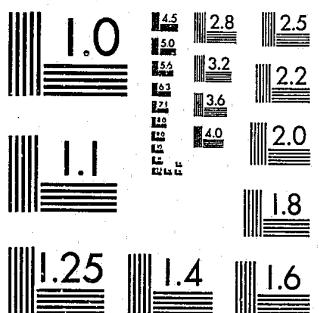


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NATIONAL EVALUATION PROGRAM
PHASE I SUMMARY REPORT

POLICE JUVENILE UNITS

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ABSTRACT

This report presents a summary of the current state of knowledge on police juvenile units by briefly tracing the historical development of juvenile units, presenting the results of a national survey of juvenile units, discussing the primary goals of these units, and outlining a framework within which the operation of such units can be understood and evaluated. The report does not purport, however, to prescribe how a police juvenile unit should be organized and operated.

Along with the limited prior evaluative literature on juvenile unit effectiveness, the results of new research sponsored by this study are presented. Research on the investigative function of two juvenile units, for example, suggests that police juvenile officers gather relatively few items of new information during their case investigations. Research on the screening function of these same units suggests that uniformity in case dispositions among officers in a given unit may exist only for a small number of offenders and offenses.

The report recommends gathering baseline data on juvenile units and developing a plan for monitoring unit operations. It offers several recommendations for future research within the unit and the juvenile justice system as a whole, although it discourages an in-depth national evaluation of police juvenile units.

The report should be of interest to police chiefs concerned with the internal management of their organizations and to juvenile justice administrators concerned with efficient operation of the juvenile justice system.

PREFACE

In August 1976 the Police Foundation was awarded a one-year, National Evaluation Program (NEP) grant by the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (NILECJ) of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) United States Department of Justice, to conduct a study of police juvenile units. This first phase of a possible two-phase assessment required an analysis of the information available about police juvenile units: the major issues; a framework in which to consider these units; a description of the methods, the results, and the effectiveness of projects and programs; and strategies for a local and national evaluation, if further evaluation seemed useful.

This NEP Phase I study focuses on the operations of police juvenile units. Previous studies, in their exploration of juvenile diversion, youth service bureaus, and delinquency prevention, reviewed some aspects of police work with juveniles, but none focused on the juvenile unit or considered the full range of juvenile officer responsibilities. This summary report of unit activities should be considered an abridged version of the final report.

The study was fortunate to have received direction and critical comments from an advisory board of individuals having varying backgrounds and skills:

Sylvia Bacon, Judge, Superior Court of the District of Columbia

Jameson Doig, Professor, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University

Eddie Harrison, Director, Pretrial Intervention Project, Baltimore, Maryland

Malcolm Klein, Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Southern California

Thomas Sardino, Chief, Syracuse, New York, Police Department

Lieutenant R. D. Wilson, Director, Youth Services Program, Dallas Police Department

Sincere thanks are due Phyllis Modley, Jan Hull, and Dick Barnes of LEAA for their accessibility and consistent good judgment, and to Joseph Nay of the Urban Institute, whose ideas on program evaluation were instrumental in forming the approach taken by this study. Advice from the staff of the Police Foundation was helpful and supportive. John Greacen, former director of program, in particular, provided a unique experiential background against which ideas could be tested, and a genuine concern for juveniles which forced staff regularly to question their observations and conclusions. The data-gathering assistance of Neil Bomberg, Karen Schwartz, and Linda Patterson is gratefully acknowledged.

Roberta Rovner-Pieczenik
Project Director

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The role of the police in handling juvenile offenders is in a state of transition. Organizational changes in policing, which include the movement toward team policing and decentralization are minimizing the use of the specialist officer. Statutory changes are narrowing both the scope of police jurisdiction over classes of juveniles (e.g., through laws decriminalizing status offenses) and the discretion available to police in reaching a disposition (e.g., through laws requiring that designated cases be referred to the adult criminal court). Increasing serious juvenile crime, and the perceived failure of the juvenile justice system either to prevent or to control it, has reopened a dormant philosophical debate in which the issue is the need for a separate system of justice for juveniles.

The specialized police juvenile unit is particularly vulnerable to the changes taking place. Most juvenile units were established before 1960 in response to theories now in question and circumstances that may no longer exist. Further, department support for these units has been weak; these units have suffered the derision of nonjuvenile officers. Because police departments are beginning to question whether their specialized juvenile units make a contribution to the handling of juveniles and juvenile cases, it is important to review and evaluate the knowledge available on these units.

National Evaluation Program

Criminal justice policymakers often have been hampered by a lack of sound information on the effectiveness of various approaches and programs. The National Evaluation Program (NEP), sponsored by the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (NILECJ) of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), has attempted to provide decisionmakers with practical information on the benefits and limitations of selected criminal justice programs currently in use throughout the country.

Each NEP assessment concentrates on a specific topic consisting of groups of continuing programs having similar objectives and strategies. The evaluations attempt to identify key issues, develop a context in which to analyze the programs, describe the operations and outcomes of these programs, and generally assess their effectiveness. The initial phase of any NEP is expected to assist policymakers in planning and funding decisions and to provide the basis for LEAA to decide whether to conduct a more rigorous national evaluation of the topic as part of a second phase of the program.

This report of a one-year study by the Police Foundation is the result of an NEP focusing on the operations of the police juvenile unit. Previous NEPs, in their exploration of juvenile diversion, youth service bureaus, and delinquency prevention, were limited in their review of police work with juveniles. None focused on the juvenile unit nor considered the full range of juvenile officer responsibilities. Because most city and county police agencies serving middle- and large-sized cities maintain such a unit, and because this unit is responsible for

deciding whether suspected juvenile offenders should continue through the juvenile justice system, knowledge about the unit's operations is essential to both the police department housing the unit and to the juvenile justice system of which it is a component.

This report differs from previous NEPs in several ways. First, before this study was conducted, there was no way of knowing how many police juvenile units were in operation. Previous NEPs focused on jurisdictions operating programs known to, and, in many cases, funded only by, LEAA. Second, police juvenile units operating within different departments have evolved according to individual department needs and changing community mores, whereas previous NEP studies were concerned with a group of programs having similar objectives and operations. Third, and perhaps most important, a body of evaluations does not exist for police juvenile units as it does for other topic areas. Unlike other criminal justice programs developed in the past fifteen years, in tandem with the increasing sophistication of evaluation techniques and external requirements for assessing program effectiveness, police juvenile units were created by police departments themselves and have not been subject to rigorous examination from external agencies. Recently, however, police departments have begun to look more closely at the role of the juvenile unit within the department.

This study paid particular attention to identifying existing police juvenile units and describing their operations. Because so little information about such units is available, the research team had to explore aspects of unit operation common among police juvenile units around the nation. As a result, the staff developed a body of descriptive

information about police juvenile units rather than simply assessing already existing information.

Scope of Study

The goals of this study of police juvenile units were

1. To summarize the current state of knowledge on police juvenile units;
2. To construct a framework for comparing police juvenile units;
3. To conduct preliminary research on selected policy questions related to police juvenile unit functions;
4. To indicate the issues that merit further study at the local and national levels; and
5. To recommend future research and evaluation designs.

The final report addresses each of these objectives. This document summarizes the final report, presenting a context for understanding police juvenile unit operations, the conclusions of a national survey of juvenile units, some of the results of research on two major unit functions, and several judgments of national trends based on contact with many police departments.

This study defined a police juvenile unit as any organizationally definable unit within a police department having primary responsibility for handling juveniles or juvenile cases.

According to this definition, a department may have more than one juvenile unit. Most agencies consider the youth aid bureau, the juvenile division, the youth section, or the juvenile bureau to be the primary juvenile unit, but many departments delegate authority over juveniles to more than one unit. For example, the Lincoln, Nebraska, Police Department has two juvenile units according to this study's definition: the Youth Aid Bureau, which investigates and screens alleged juvenile

offenders, and the School Resource Program, which operates delinquency prevention programs in the elementary and junior high schools.

Distinguishing the terms, "juveniles" and "juvenile cases," in the definition indicates that not all juvenile units deal solely or primarily with juvenile offenders. On the contrary, many juvenile units sponsor community programs for youths who are not, and may never be, alleged offenders, and other units deal with juveniles who are the victims of offenses perpetrated by either juveniles or adults. In most states, juveniles may be judged delinquent for committing either a criminal or a status offense. The age of majority used in the study reflected the age standard under which each police department operated.

The quantitative and qualitative data presented, with the exception of the national survey results, are most representative of police departments having between 150 and 600 full-time sworn officers, serving middle-sized cities and counties with populations of between 100,000 and 250,000.

Methods of Data Gathering

The data collection methods used for this study involved a research strategy that followed a particular chronology:

- Literature review of police-juvenile operations
- Mail survey of police departments
- Telephone survey of police departments with and without a juvenile unit
- Field visits to police departments with and without a juvenile unit
- Case studies of police departments with and without a juvenile unit

The reason for including departments that did not have a juvenile unit was to highlight questions and issues about operating such a unit that might otherwise have gone unrecognized. The dearth of existing data on juvenile units precipitated original data collection endeavors at each research stage.

Literature Review

The literature review focused on issues that emerged from a telephone survey of 42 national authorities in the area of police-juvenile relations. The individuals telephoned were selected from lists of professors, researchers, and police officers having a national reputation for holding a particular point of view, conducting an important study, or operating an interesting program.* The six key issues reviewed were:

- (1) Should juveniles be handled by generalist or specialist officers?
- (2) What should be the role of the police juvenile unit?
- (3) Should the police follow a legalistic or paternalistic model in their handling of juveniles?
- (4) What role should the exercise of discretion play in handling juveniles?
- (5) What should be the relationship between the police and the other juvenile justice system components?
- (6) What should be the relationship between the police and the community?

Most of the literature reviewed, with the exception of studies of discretion, was based on subjective data, without an empirical base.

*The final report contains the names of the individuals interviewed and the results of the literature review.

Mail Questionnaire

Staff conducted a national survey that consisted of mailing questionnaires to city and county police departments serving a population of 100,000 or more, as listed in the 1976 Municipal Yearbook or the 1975 Uniform Crime Report (N = 165). The questionnaire attempted to pinpoint police departments having a juvenile unit, pursue issues mentioned in the literature review, and gather descriptive information on unit activities. The questions covered such topics as:

- department characteristics
- organization of juvenile specialization
- nature of offenses handled
- status of juvenile officers
- training of juvenile officers
- juvenile unit operations and activities
- juvenile unit jurisdiction
- processing the alleged delinquent
- reports and files used

The covering letter requested the department's participation in the research endeavor and asked that the survey questionnaire be completed by the head of the juvenile unit. Where no unit existed, the planning and research staff was to complete the form.

Of the 165 questionnaires distributed, 137 replies were received (83 percent): 84 percent of the city police departments and 73 percent of the county police departments returned the questionnaire.*

*The response rate for cities and counties is as follows:

<u>Population Categories</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>County</u>
1,000,000+	83%	67%
500,000-1,000,000	60	80
250,000-500,000	88	79
100,000-250,000	79	67

There was no observable difference in the geographic spread of respondents and nonrespondents.

Telephone Survey

A telephone survey was conducted in 30 of the departments that responded to the questionnaire. Sampling departments within population categories ensured a proportional distribution of departments of varying size. Where a juvenile unit existed, the commander of the unit was interviewed. This survey provided detailed information in some areas covered briefly in the mail questionnaire; validated some questions on the mail questionnaire which appeared, on preliminary analysis, to be problematic; and asked questions too sensitive to be asked or answered candidly in a mail survey instrument.

This step brought the staff one step closer to understanding unit operations and provided the data necessary to select departments for field visits.

Field Visits

The function of the juvenile unit and the scope of its jurisdiction over juveniles became the primary criteria for selecting sites to visit. Staff categorized the 30 departments surveyed by telephone according to the unit's primary functions (investigation, screening, program operation) and jurisdiction (all juveniles, some juveniles), and made an effort to select departments for site visits from within each of these categories. Secondary criteria included geographical locale, size of the population served, and size of the police department.

Two staff members visited 12 departments for a period of two days each: Arlington County, Virginia; Baltimore, Maryland; Contra Costa County, California; Duluth, Minnesota; Greensboro, North Carolina; Lincoln, Nebraska; Multnomah County, Oregon; Onondaga County, New York;

Topeka, Kansas; Torrance, California; Tucson, Arizona; and Washington, D.C.* In each department staff members talked with juvenile and non-juvenile police officers, with juvenile justice personnel (prosecutors, probation officers, public defenders, judges), and with representatives of community-based treatment services and facilities. During the visit, the staff members gathered information about the unit's operations, emphasizing its role in both the department and the juvenile justice system; collected statistics on reported offenses, clearances, and arrests; and reviewed policy and procedural manuals and report forms used in the unit.

Case Studies

Although juvenile units perform a variety of activities, the investigation and screening functions were the primary responsibility of most units and seemed suitable for intensive study. Specific juvenile programs operated by different departments varied enough to discourage detailed exploration. Departments also varied according to which division operated a particular program. Although juvenile officers also were involved in administration and public relations, these activities were not usually a unit's primary function.

Staff chose three departments for further study, each serving populations of similar size. In two of the departments a juvenile unit performed the investigation and screening functions common to juvenile unit operations, but the units differed enough to make comparisons interesting. The juvenile unit in Greensboro, North Carolina, emphasized

*A description of each field visit site appears in Chapter III of the final report.

the investigation aspect of its work, handling all alleged juvenile offenders; the unit in Torrance, California, emphasized the screening aspect of its operation, receiving cases after investigation by either or both patrol and detectives. The Multnomah County, Oregon, police department, a department organized according to a team policing model, was selected for the third case study so that staff could make comparisons between the departments that did have a unit and the one that did not.

Research in the two departments that had juvenile units focused on questions about investigation and screening operations. The investigation questions were:

- (1) What kinds of information do juvenile officers collect?
- (2) Does the information juvenile officers collect add to that gathered by other police officers?
- (3) Is the information juvenile officers collect essential for case prosecution?

The screening questions were:

- (1) What alternatives do juvenile officers use?
- (2) What criteria do juvenile officers use to dispose of a case?
- (3) Are similar cases disposed of uniformly?

In Multnomah County these questions were asked of patrol officers and investigators who handle alleged delinquents in the course of their routine police work.

The information gathered at each site focused on five common offenses: assaults, burglaries, larcenies, vandalism, and runaways. Staff members spent a total of eight weeks at each site, observing juvenile

unit officers during their daily activities, debriefing these officers on cases closed during the on-site period, interviewing nonjuvenile officers and other officials in the juvenile justice system, and abstracting data from recently closed case files.

Organization of the Report

This report presents a summary of the information found in greater detail in the final report. It describes the operations of police juvenile units in an analytical framework that will enable a later evaluation of their operations on a local and national level.

Chapter II provides a perspective for looking at police juvenile units. It presents an abridged history of the emergence of the juvenile unit, a review of the existing literature on the juvenile unit, and a tabulation of the responses to some of the questions asked in the national mail survey, and recommends a framework for future research and evaluation. Chapters III and IV assess, respectively, specified research questions on the investigation and screening functions. Information on the program operation function of juvenile units is found in Chapter V. The final chapter, Chapter VI, discusses future evaluation and research needs uncovered during the course of the study.

CHAPTER II

THE JUVENILE UNIT IN NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Historical Background

Police specialization in handling juveniles developed in tandem with the emergence of a separate justice system for youth. Until the close of the 19th century, laws, courts, and correctional institutions did not differentiate between juvenile and adult offenders. By the turn of the century, however, reform-minded groups were instrumental in establishing the juvenile court as a new social institution. Influenced by the concept of parens patriae, the new court was expected to take the role of parents and correct previous criminal justice system abuses of juveniles by: (1) separating children from the formality and harshness of adult criminal court proceedings; (2) diagnosing the problems of youth; (3) providing treatment and rehabilitation instead of punishment; and (4) helping the juvenile avoid the stigma of a criminal label. This was to be accomplished by removing juveniles from the adult court and creating special programs and trained personnel for the delinquent, dependent, and neglected youth.

The first law defining juvenile delinquency was passed by the Illinois legislature in April 1899; the juvenile court began functioning several months later. The first police juvenile officers appeared during that year in Chicago to service the Cook County juvenile court. Under the Illinois Juvenile Court Act of 1899, Illinois designated probation a preferred alternative to incarceration of juveniles, but funds were never allocated for probation officers. The new juvenile justice system

substituted an available commodity--the police officer. Titled "police probation officers," these officers served as liaison between the police and the juvenile court. They wrote delinquency petitions, set hearing dates, notified the involved parties, issued summonses, presented the case at the hearing, and offered recommendations for dispositions. They did not supervise probationers. According to Sterling, in his History of The Juvenile Bureau of The Chicago Police Department, the development of the juvenile specialty may have been forced upon an unwilling police department.

Using the Chicago experience as a base, other departments instituted variations that typified the police response to problem juveniles for more than half a century: establishing juvenile bureaus, assigning women as juvenile officers, and assigning juvenile investigators to specialized squads and units. Juveniles who were both perpetrators and victims of crime were the target groups for those officers. "Big-city" police attempted to prevent juvenile crime in a variety of ways:

. . . the New York City police assigned welfare officers to residential precincts; the Chicago police created an employment bureau for young men; and the Los Angeles police department detached officers to the juvenile courts. . . . Commisioner Woods of New York City . . . even decorated the station houses with trees at Christmas, invited the neighborhood children to stop by, and loaded them down with modest gifts on the assumption that by winning their affection the department was deterring juvenile delinquency.¹

By 1950, juvenile units or juvenile officers were institutionalized in many police departments across the nation.

During the 1950s, police departments with juvenile officers began to consolidate their juvenile specialists and services under one division

and command. Police juvenile subspecialties developed (e.g., gang control) to meet specific needs. The police juvenile unit of the 1960s launched delinquency prevention programs (e.g., Police Athletic League, Officer Friendly Program), to combat the continually increasing number of delinquents. Positive police-community relations were stressed as a means of preventing delinquency. According to responses to the national mail survey undertaken for this study, 67 percent of the 98 reporting departments formed their juvenile unit after 1950.

The irony of the 75-year development of a separate juvenile justice system has been the growing skepticism of the assumptions, operations, and consequences of this system. Many observers believe it is abusive to the individuals it was established to protect. Paul Lerman, in Delinquency and Social Policy, has succinctly summarized the litany of unfulfilled promises:

Major critics of the Court assert that the juvenile-court reformers promised a great deal more than they could possibly accomplish. They promised that the court would provide treatment and rehabilitation instead of punishment, but they were never able to offer the variety of services that these intentions required. The court was supposed to deal with children parens patriae (in the role of parents), but it offered inferior substitutes: an untrained judiciary, uneven and inadequate probationary supervision, and congregate institutions. The court promised to take children away from the harshness and formality of adult criminal-court procedures, but it supplied arbitrary decision-making unconstrained by the traditional and constitutional guarantees of due process. The court promised expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of problem children, but it was unable to provide the necessary knowledge; in fact, that knowledge does not yet exist. The court promised to do away with the old stigma of youthful criminality, but it could not offset the new stigma of youth delinquency. The court promised to keep pursuing its laudable goals, but critics kept setting them aside and insisted on examining the functioning and outcomes of the court's actual operations.²

The juvenile unit of the 1970s has had to respond to judicial rulings which have extended to juveniles due process rights previously accorded only to adults;³ to a growth in juvenile crime which has been described as "a crisis of staggering dimensions";⁴ to competing suggestions and sets of standards developed by commissions and task forces to examine the problem of police-juvenile relations;⁵ to state legislatures that want to handle the violent juvenile offender as an adult⁶ and decriminalize status offenses (e.g., runaways);⁷ and to fundamental changes in police organization and strategy that open to question the need for specialized juvenile officers and units.⁸

Juvenile Unit Literature

There is a dearth of useful literature that focuses directly on the police juvenile unit.* One review of the literature on police juvenile units undertaken in 1967 produced remarks which are equally valid today:

Although the literature presents a wide assortment of articles, pamphlets, and books that describe the organization and administration of a juvenile unit and the definition of its role, there is a great deal of duplication and repetition. It seems there are several outstanding sources that represent a main reservoir of ideas and these ideas appear through the writings of others with little modification or change.⁹

The "outstanding sources" that produced the "reservoir of ideas" in 1967¹⁰ have been replaced by others whose ideas are summarized in two recently promulgated sets of standards: one by the National Task Force to Develop Standards and Goals for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency

Prevention (Task Force);¹¹ the other by a Joint Commission of the Institute for Judicial Administration and the American Bar Association (IJA/ABA).¹² The Task Force standards cover many aspects of police work with juveniles: referrals of juveniles to court; the use of alternative dispositions; the specificity of codes and policy guidelines; the selection, training, and promotion of juvenile officers; coordination with public and private agencies; investigative practices; establishing the unit; and officer accountability. The IJA/ABA standards deal with many of these areas, as well as with the police role in delinquency prevention, police authority to arrest, and legal and procedural guidelines for police operations.

Both the Task Force and IJA/ABA standards have similar drawbacks: they rely heavily on value judgments which are presented in the absence of data to support underlying assumptions. For example, Task Force Standard 7-1, on the organization of police-juvenile operations, suggests, "Every police agency having more than 75 sworn officers should establish a juvenile investigation unit, and every smaller police agency should establish a juvenile investigation unit if community conditions warrant."¹³ The standard also specifies unit responsibilities, such as juvenile investigations, assistance to field officers, and liaison with other agencies interested in juvenile matters. But without data to support the assumption of the general effectiveness of such an organizational arrangement, it is difficult to assess the merits of competing arguments made by departments that favor team policing or the generalist officer model.

*An expanded review of literature on police work with juveniles can be found in the final report.

The most comprehensive data on police juvenile unit operations resulted from a national survey of police practices involving juveniles undertaken by Richard Kobetz for the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in 1970.¹⁴ Kobetz mailed a questionnaire to approximately 2,000 law enforcement administrators, including state, county, city, and municipal personnel. The survey attempted to gather data on variations in police juvenile unit organization and practices. The general areas reviewed were: initial police contact with juveniles; formal and informal dispositional alternatives for dealing with delinquents; selection, qualifications, and training of police juvenile officers; organizational policies and staffing of police programs for handling juveniles. Although the study provides considerable information on the practices of departments in 1970, it is not comparable to the data gathered for the present study; only 13 percent of the respondents from the Kobetz survey came from departments serving populations of more than 100,000; all of the departments surveyed and visited during this study served jurisdictions of that size.

National Survey of Juvenile Units: Results

The absence of recent, comprehensive information on police juvenile units prompted the design and distribution of a national mail survey. The survey was conducted primarily to identify existing police juvenile units, to ask questions which would place each unit within its larger organizational setting, and to gather information on unit activities. The picture of police juvenile unit operations that emerged from the survey is presented below. Because the survey was designed before the staff made field visits, as a way of gathering a wide range of information

quickly and economically, the data presented in this chapter should be considered preliminary to the insights and conclusions that appear in later chapters.*

Department Specialization**

The survey attempted, first of all, to identify all departments having a specialized unit for handling juveniles.*** Responses ($N = 124$) indicated that 89 percent of the departments had an organizational entity known as the juvenile unit; 6 percent of the departments had juvenile officers, but no juvenile unit; and 5 percent of the departments had neither a juvenile unit nor juvenile officers. According to these statistics, the large proportion of departments had some form of specialized ability to deal with juveniles. The departments which had a juvenile unit were more likely to be serving cities than counties (93 percent vs. 73 percent of respondents, respectively).

Table 1 summarizes information on the number of juvenile unit officers found in police departments of varying size. According to statistics in Table 1, a general trend emerges: As the size of the department increases, the number of juvenile officers in the unit increases. In general, departments of fewer than 400 officers are likely to have fewer

*This chapter presents data for only selected questions; the complete analysis is available in the final report.

**The absolute number of responses to each question on the survey varied, partly because some questions were not applicable to all departments. Some of the variation came from departments that did not respond to all applicable questions. The differing Ns used throughout this section represent the total number of respondents to the particular question discussed.

***The survey instrument was mailed to 165 police departments.

TABLE 1: Number of Juvenile Unit Officers as a Percentage of
Sworn Officers in a Department

Full-Time Sworn Officers in Unit	Full-Time Sworn Officers in Department				
	Fewer Than 200	200-399	400-599	600-799	800+
1-5	39%	24%	7%	30%	0%
6-10	54	39	21	10	12
11-15	8	20	29	20	12
16-20	0	10	29	10	0
21+	0	7	14	30	75
TOTAL (N=95)	100% (13)	100% (41)	100% (14)	100% (10)	100% (17)

than 10 juvenile officers in a unit; departments of 400 or more officers are likely to have 11 or more juvenile officers.

In comparison with the rest of the units in the departments, the juvenile units reported smaller budget increases. Of the 112 responding departments, 87 percent noted an increase in the department's budget over the previous year, but only 70 percent of the respondents indicated an increase in the juvenile unit's budget.

The data indicate an upward trend in the establishment of juvenile units since the 1930s, which reached a peak in the 1950s. The emergence of new units tapered off in the 1960s, but picked up again during the 1970s. The units established during the 1970s noted the following reasons for their creation: (1) an increase in crimes committed by and against juveniles; (2) a perceived need for organizational efficiency through specialization; and (3) a desire to emphasize prevention.

Date Juvenile Unit Established

1970-77	21%
1960-69	13
1950-59	33
1940-49	18
1930-39	13
Before 1930	2

(N=98)

Of the 92 departments responding to a question on funding, 19 percent currently receive some LEAA funds for their juvenile unit; 37 percent of 64 responding departments indicated that their units had previously received such funds. These respondents report that they received funds for either the creation of a juvenile unit (e.g., personnel, equipment); the expansion of a unit; or the development of special unit programs (e.g., pretrial diversion).

Of 99 departments responding to a question on departmental organization, 77 departments (78 percent) reported that juvenile units are organizationally placed within the criminal investigation division. The remaining units are placed with patrol (11 percent), community relations (4 percent), administration (4 percent), and other divisions (3 percent).

Characteristics of Juvenile Units

Personnel. Responses to a question asking for the rank of the commanding officer of the juvenile unit produced the following statistics:

Inspector	1.9%
Major	3.7
Captain	24.3
Lieutenant	46.7
Sergeant	16.8
Other	6.5

(N=107)

According to these statistics, almost half of unit commanders hold the rank of lieutenant, and another 30 percent hold ranks higher than lieutenant.* A separate question revealed that almost half of the unit commanders report to an officer who holds the rank of captain; an additional 27 percent report to a deputy chief.*

Slightly more than half of 105 respondents indicated an educational requirement for eligibility as a juvenile officer; of 103 responding departments, 75 percent required a fixed number of years' experience in the department. Of 105 responding departments, 80 percent said they offer specialized training to juvenile officers and more than half stated that this training is required. Responses to a question on location of

*It should be noted that not all departments have the same rank structure: The same ranks may not exist in each department; and the same rank can mean different things in different departments.

training indicated that the department provides most of the training, with colleges and universities providing a relatively large share as well.* Two-thirds of the respondents also indicated that juvenile unit officers participated in training nonjuvenile officers.

Most juvenile officers work out of uniform: 79 percent reported working in plain clothes, and an additional 19 percent of the units reported having a mix of uniformed and plainclothes officers ($N = 108$).

Juvenile officers are not the exception to the standard rule that police carry guns; officers in all units are armed while on duty ($N = 108$).

Duty shifts covered by juvenile officers vary considerably across units. According to Table 2, 35 percent of the responding units work all shifts; in direct contrast, 21 percent work only one weekday shift.

TABLE 2: Distribution of Police Departments
with Juvenile Units

Duty Shifts ^a	Percentage of Respondents
All Shifts	35
Weekends and Weekday--Two Shifts	21
Weekends and Weekday--One Shift	5
Weekdays--Two Shifts	12
Weekdays--One Shift	21
Other Combinations	6
(N=107)	

^aExcludes times listed as "on call."

*The survey data on selection and training should be reviewed along with the information that field visits provided. The field visit data lead staff to question the validity of survey responses.

Juvenile Offenses Handled. Each state legislature defines the age of majority. Responses to a question asking for the age below which the state considered an individual a juvenile indicate that most states use 18 years of age as the age of majority. Responses were as follows: 18 years of age, 66.7 percent of the respondents; 17 years of age, 23.6 percent; and 16 years of age, 9.8 percent.

In response to questions about the juvenile offenses most often handled by the unit, the departments replied:

Larceny	29%
Status Offenses	24
Burglary	18
Vandalism	7
Assault	6
Sexual Assault/Robbery/Murder	3
Drug Violations	3
Other Offenses	10

(N=307)*

According to these figures, larcenies, status offenses, and burglaries are most frequently handled by juvenile units. It is significant that only 9 percent of the responding departments reported that the units frequently handled assaultive crimes.

Because the status offense label covers a variety of behavior, staff undertook a separate analysis of frequently handled status offenses. As shown by the figures presented below, "runaway" and "incorrigible" are the most frequently handled status offenses:

*The survey requested the three juvenile offenses handled most often by the unit. The number 307 represents the tabulation of all first, second, and third most frequently handled offenses of the 105 departments responding to this question. The rank-ordering of offenses is based on the frequency with which an offense was mentioned.

Runaway	34%
Incorrigible	26
Truant	16
Curfew Violation	11
Use of Alcohol	6
Other	7
	(N=329)*

Of the responding departments, 10 percent reported having to deal with gang problems ($N = 121$); 53 percent reported having a school crime problem ($N = 117$); and 86 percent of 89 responding departments handled cases involving adult offenders in which a juvenile was a victim (e.g., abuse and neglect).

Juvenile Unit Operations. Responding to four separate questions on activities performed, 94 percent of the respondents stated that the unit investigated cases frequently ($N = 105$); 46 percent counseled frequently ($N = 101$); 32 percent conducted programs frequently ($N = 91$); and 27 percent patroled frequently ($N = 98$).

Another series of questions asked whether a unit sponsored or participated in programs of a specific nature. Responses appear in Table 3. Data in Table 3 suggest that most of the responding departments participate in a variety of programs, but fewer sponsor these programs.**

*The survey requested the three status offenses most often handled by the unit. The number 329 represents the tabulation of all first, second, and third most frequently handled status offenses by the 115 departments responding to the question. The rank-order is based on the frequency with which a status offense was mentioned.

**The relatively small number of responses to these questions leaves their generalizability in question.

TABLE 3: Programs Sponsored or Participated in by Juvenile Units

Unit Involvement	Safety Program	Police Probation	School Program	Recreation Program	Diversion Program ^a
Sponsor	31.1%	30.4%	33.3%	22.7%	40.0%
Participate	68.9 (N=61)	69.6 (N=23)	66.7 (N=91)	77.3 (N=44)	60.0 (N=90)

^aTelephone interviews indicated that departments confused the operation of a diversion program with using diversion as a process of screening juveniles out of the system; the percentage, then, may be inflated.

Questions about the handling of juveniles by nonjuvenile unit officers indicated that nonjuvenile officers perform a variety of tasks in juvenile cases (Table 4). These data suggest that nonjuvenile officers are particularly involved in contacting parents (81.4 percent of respondents) and investigating offenses (80.2 percent of respondents).

TABLE 4: Tasks Performed by Nonjuvenile Officers in Juvenile Cases^a

Nonjuvenile Officer Tasks	Yes	No
Contacts Parents (N=97)	81.4%	18.6%
Investigates (N=96)	80.2	19.8
Interrogates (N=97)	68.0	32.0
Charges (N=79)	51.9	48.1
Fingerprints (N=81)	45.7	54.3
Photographs (N=79)	43.0	57.0

^aResponses to this question do not preclude the performance of these tasks by juvenile officers.

On another question asked, 94 percent of the 133 responding departments stated that the juvenile unit often received referrals from other police units.

When respondents were asked to name the types of community organizations to which they often referred cases, the following statistics emerged:

Community Service Organizations	38.1%
Welfare Agencies	25.0
Youth Service Bureaus	15.0
Mental Health Clinics	13.1
Neighborhood Groups	5.6
Narcotics Treatment Centers	2.5
(N=160)*	

According to these figures, community service organizations frequently received unit referrals from the greater percentage of respondents (38.1 percent), seconded by welfare agencies (25 percent).

Survey Data Qualifications

During subsequent field visits, staff examined several survey findings more closely. Readers should view the survey findings from a perspective that will enable them to anticipate data presented in the remaining chapters of this report. First, the fact that most juvenile units are organizationally situated in the criminal investigations division (CID) is contrary to the recommendations of a working paper on police made by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice. The paper suggests an autonomous operational

*The survey requested the three community agencies to which police referred juveniles most frequently. The number 160 represents the tabulation of all first, second, and third most frequently used referral agencies of the 87 departments responding to the question. The rank-order is based on the frequency with which a type of agency was mentioned.

division on a line level with such divisions as patrol, traffic, detectives, and vice.¹⁵ The placement of most units under CID suggests that departments accord units a lower level of status than that recommended by the commission. This organizational placement also increases the possibility of tensions between juvenile and nonjuvenile officers because it subsumes a unit under a division which, field visits indicated, has incompatible goals and different operational procedures.

Second, the juvenile offender handled by most units responding to the survey is not the violent, hardened criminal to whom the mass media have given attention. Although each city and county has a problem of varying degree with the assaultive juvenile, the juvenile offender handled by most units is the larcenist, burglar, and runaway. In some departments this is true because most juveniles in its jurisdiction commit acts of minimal severity. In other departments it is true because the CID handles the more serious juvenile offenders.

Third, although responses to the survey give the impression that juvenile officers receive a great deal of specialized training, field visits uncovered great variation in the nature and extent of training received. This discrepancy may have resulted from the lack of a standard definition of "training" and organizational incentives within the police world to interpret the term, "training," broadly.

Fourth, survey data that indicated that nonjuvenile officers perform a variety of tasks in juvenile cases (e.g., investigation, contacting parents, interrogation) led to field questions about lines of authority and the division of labor within a department. Staff found that there is a large overlap between juvenile and nonjuvenile officer functions in the investigation of a case.

Juvenile Unit Site Visits*

The analysis of any survey disguises jurisdictional variation by aggregating statistics to reveal national patterns. Real differences, which exist in the field, influence assessment attempts. Some of these differences are displayed in Tables 5 and 6 for the 12 departments visited during the course of this study.* Table 5 presents primarily organizational and jurisdictional information for the department within which the unit exists; Table 6 presents unit characteristics and functions. As stated previously, these sites represent the range of variation on unit function (i.e., investigation, screening, program operation) and jurisdiction (i.e., all juveniles, some juveniles) criteria established on the basis of mail survey and telephone responses. Geography, population, and department size were secondary criteria used. Each of these sites responded to the mail survey.

Department Characteristics

Table 5 indicates the mix of city and county departments visited and the range of populations they serve, from Duluth's low of 100,000 to Baltimore's high of 861,000. Of the 12 agencies, 8 qualify as middle-range cities or counties, with populations of between 100,000 and 250,000. The ratio of sworn officers to population varies from .55 officers per 1,000 in Contra Costa County to 6.17 officers per 1,000 in Washington, D.C.

*A detailed description of each field visit site appears in Chapter III of the final report.

TABLE 5: Department Characteristics of Sites Visited

Sites Visited	City/County	Population	Area (sq. mi.)	Departmental Budget (in thousands)	Sworn Personnel	Organization	No. of Juvenile Arrests prior year
Arlington, VA	County	175,000	25.	8,656	278	Central.	886
Baltimore, MD	City	861,000	78.3	93,317	3,410	Decentralized.	21,522
Contra Costa County, CA	County	600,000	73.5	12,000	330	Central.	1,469
Duluth, MN	City	100,000	67.3	3,200	125	Central.	1,913
Greensboro, NC	City	154,000	54.4	7,437	418	Central.	1,272
Lincoln, NB	City	150,000	49.3	4,909	223	Team	2,455
Multnomah County, OR ^a	County	168,000	423.0	7,144	223	Team	2,200
Onondaga County, NY	County	425,000	794.0	4,500	347	Central.	496
Topeka, KS	City	140,000	47.5	4,117	215	Central.	2,151
Torrance, CA	City	140,000	23.3	8,600	206	Central.	2,363
Tucson, AZ	City	262,933	80.0	15,200	554	Central.	8,055
Washington, DC	City	711,000	68.2	32,257	4,390	Decentralized.	9,711

^aThe Multnomah County Sheriff's Department does not have a juvenile unit.

TABLE 6: Juvenile Unit Characteristics of Sites Visited

	Year Unit Established	Unit Budget (In thousands)	Division to Which Unit is Responsible	Rank of C.O.	Rank of Juvenile Officer	Number of Juvenile Officers	Age of Majority	Most Frequent Juvenile Offenses	FUNCTIONS OF UNIT			Hours on Duty	Clothing	
									Investigations		Screening			
									Cases Handled	Cases Handled	Cases Handled			
Arlington, VA	1950	488	CID	Lt. Officer	19	Under 18	Larceny Runaway Vandal.	Yes	Misdemeanors, Less Serious Felonies	Yes	All Juvenile Cases	Yes	School Programs, Crime Prevention	Days Eves. Wknds. Uniform Plain,
Baltimore, MD	1944	1,377	Oper. Col. Officer	60	Under 18	Larceny Burglary Robbery	Yes	Misdemeanors, Assaults and Robberies Between Juvs.	Yes	Only Those Investigated by the Unit	Yes	Diversions, Limited Adjustment Programs	Days Uniform Plain,	
Contra Costa County, CA	1959	175	CID	Lt. Sgt.	6	Under 18	Runaway Hail. Mis. Vandal.	Yes	Serious Misdemeanors, Felonies, All Crimes Against Juveniles	Yes	"Citation" Cases, Those Coming Into Unit	No	—	Days Plain.
Duluth, MN	1941	146	CID	Lt. Officer	10	Under 18	Runaway Larceny Liquor	Yes	All Cases Involving Juveniles	Yes	All Cases Involving Juveniles	Yes	School Liaison Program, Immediate Intervention	Days Eves. Wknds. Plain.
Greensboro, NC	1951	249	CID	Capt. Officer	14	Under 16	Larceny Burglary Vandal.	Yes	All Cases Involving Juveniles	Yes	All Cases Involving Juveniles	Yes	School Safety Explorers Post Little League Youth & Law	Days Plain.
Lincoln, NB	1956	30	Team	Sgt. Officer	2	Under 16	Runaway Larceny Vandal.	No	—	Yes	All Cases Involving Juveniles	Yes	School Resource Program Summer Camp, Football	Days Uniform Plain.
Multnomah County, OR ^a	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Under 18	Burglary Larceny Runaway	N/A	—	N/A	—	No	—	H/A H/A
Onondaga County, NY	1954	120	CID	Lt. Invest.	7	Under 16	Larceny Hail. Mis. Burglacy	Yes	Misdemeanors	Yes	All Cases Involving Juveniles	Yes	Police Probation, School Program, Explorers Club	Days Eves. Wknds. Plain.
Topeka, KS	1951	153	CID	Lt. Invest.	7	Under 18	Burglary Larceny Runaway	Yes	Misdemeanors Status Offenses	Yes	Only Those Investigated by the Unit	Yes	Police Athletic League, School Liaison Program	Days Eves. Wknds. Plain.
Torrance, CA	1976	183	CID	Sgt. Invest.	6	Under 18	Larceny Burglary Drugs	Yes	Misdemeanors Crimes Against Juveniles	Yes	All Juvenile Cases	Yes	Explorers Club, School Program	Days Wknds. Plain.
Tucson, AZ	1963	300	CID	Sgt. Officer	18	Under 18	Burglary Larceny Auto Th.	No	—	No	—	Yes	School Resource Officers	Days Plain.
Washington, DC	1955	1,241	Oper. Deputy Chief	Officer	71	Under 18	Burglary Larceny Robbery	No	—	Yes	All Juvenile Cases	Yes	Police Athletic League, Police Youth Clubs	Days Eves. Wknds. Uniform Plain.

^aThe Multnomah County Sheriff's Department does not have a juvenile unit.^bIncludes all juvenile programs operated by the department.

The departments' organization included both centralized and decentralized arrangements, as well as several forms of team policing. Duluth, for example, is a traditionally organized, centralized department, divided into three divisions: patrol, criminal investigations (CID), and administration. The juvenile aid bureau is located in the CID. Washington, D.C., is one example of a decentralized department which contains a juvenile division at the headquarters level and youth service officers in each of seven district stations. Functions are specialized: The juvenile division operates prevention programs and special investigations such as child abuse; youth service officers primarily screen and process cases handled by nonjuvenile officers. Team policing in Lincoln is characterized by four teams permanently assigned to a particular shift, with the exception of the youth aid bureau, which is responsible to the day team.

The number of juveniles arrested in the year preceding this study varied considerably among departments, without apparent reference to the size of the jurisdiction. Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, although they are comparable in size, did not have comparable annual arrest rates for juveniles: Washington listed 9,711 for 1977, and Baltimore listed 21,522. The same dissimilarity existed in Greensboro and Lincoln.

Unit Characteristics

Table 6 indicates that all of the departments visited had established their units since 1940. Comparison of a unit's budget with that of its department (Table 5) resulted in ratios ranging from a high of 5.6 percent of the department's budget in Arlington County to a low of 0.6 percent in Lincoln. Most of the units are located in the criminal

investigations division, a finding that parallels the mail survey responses. The rank of the unit's commanding officer also parallels survey findings; the majority of unit commanders hold the rank of lieutenant or above.

Rank held by juvenile officers reveals differences across sites. In most jurisdictions, including Baltimore, Duluth, and Greensboro, the juvenile officer holds the officer rank. In Topeka and Onondaga County juvenile officers hold the rank of investigator. A unit's existence in the criminal investigations division does not ensure the rank of investigator for its officers, as comparison of officer rank with the division to which the unit responds shows.

The number of juvenile officers in a unit varies across departments from 2 in Lincoln to 71 in Washington, D.C. The ratio of unit officers (Table 6) to department officers (Table 5) ranges from a low of .9 per hundred officers in Lincoln to 8 per hundred officers in Duluth. Size of population served, size of department, and unit functions are some of the variables affecting personnel deployment policies. For example, a comparison between Greensboro and Lincoln on the basis of population similarities alone (Table 5) would be misleading, because the Greensboro and Lincoln units differ in the functions they perform. A Greensboro-Topeka comparison on the basis of population and functional similarities seems more appropriate, but Greensboro has twice the number of sworn officers as does Topeka (Table 5). The fact that Greensboro's youth division also has twice the number of sworn officers as the Topeka unit, then, is not so significant as it originally appears.

Most units visited have jurisdiction over anyone under 18, following survey findings. Greensboro, Lincoln, and Onondaga County are the only agencies for which the state has established 16 years as the age of majority.

A review of the juvenile offenses most often handled by the units reveals similarities with national statistics: larcenies, burglaries, status offenses, and vandalism account for most of the units' "business." Robbery shows up in this category only in the two large cities visited, Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

Information on unit functions reveals wide differences in their number and nature. For example, the Arlington County juvenile offenses unit investigates and screens misdemeanors and less serious felonies. Onondaga County investigates misdemeanors, but is responsible only for screening juvenile cases after the criminal investigations division conducts an investigation of felonies. Duluth both investigates and screens all juvenile offenses.

Most of the agencies visited operate police programs: The nature of these programs varies considerably. Arlington County offers several prevention approaches within its junior and senior high school programs (e.g., student counseling, information programs, safety patrol). Baltimore, in contrast, operates a Limited Adjustment Program for juveniles taken into custody which may involve counseling or diversion of the juvenile to a community service work program.

Duty hours vary considerably among units, from a weekday-only shift in Baltimore, Contra Costa County, Greensboro, and Tucson, to a weekday/

evening/weekend shift in Arlington County, Duluth, Onondaga County, Topeka, and Washington, D.C.

Each unit has some of its officers in plain clothes.

Unit Goals

Using the telephone interviews and site visits as a basis, staff compiled a list of the primary goals of police juvenile units. The list is neither exhaustive nor arranged in order of priority, but it does cover the goals officers in departments nationwide mentioned most often.

These goals are:

- To rehabilitate the delinquent
- To enforce laws violated by juveniles
- To prevent juvenile delinquency
- To help the juvenile avoid the delinquent label
- To coordinate police work with that of other juvenile justice system agencies.

These goals are more likely to be informally understood by unit officers than they are to be found written in department handbooks or unit manuals. Although officers within a given unit usually can agree on the unit's goals, they do not make conceptual distinctions between goals, objectives, procedures, and functions that are important for evaluation purposes.

It is important to make several observations about the difficulty of establishing a unit's goals. First, there are as many versions of what unit goals are as there are sources in a department. As an example, when staff visited a district station in Washington, D.C., they identified five distinct goal statements. The statements varied depending on whether staff reviewed handbooks, interviewed juvenile officers, observed juvenile officer activities and decisions, analyzed unit

data-gathering forms, or interviewed nonjuvenile officers. Second, many departments go about achieving the same goal in different ways. Delinquency prevention, for example, can be a summer camp experience for a predelinquent in Lincoln or the return of a truant to school (to prevent burglaries) in Washington, D.C. Third, unit goals change over time but officer activities do not necessarily reflect these changes. For example, a reorganization of the juvenile court in Topeka several years ago established an intake division and changed the police juvenile unit's role from screening to investigation. But officers assigned to the unit before the reorganization continue to spend their time counseling juveniles; the newer officers investigate and take more of a "law enforcement" approach. Fourth, conflicting goals can coexist within a unit. The goal of rehabilitation, the special province of the juvenile justice system, conflicts with the law enforcement orientation of the department in which juvenile officers were trained as recruits.

It is not clear whether the majority of nonjuvenile officers share these goals, with the exception of law enforcement. The goals of rehabilitating an offender and trying to avoid putting an offender through the juvenile justice system, for example, do not exist for the adult criminal justice system. Nonjuvenile officers work in a system in which an alleged perpetrator proceeds directly to court, bail is set, and the case is prepared for prosecution. The juvenile justice system, which values diversion from court, avoidance of detention, and a disposition that may be unrelated to the facts of a case, is decried by many

nonjuvenile officers.* They tend to view a juvenile officer's daily activities, such as case conferences with the juvenile and the juvenile's family and discussions with social work agents, as not being "real" police work. The "kiddie court" image of the juvenile justice system leads to the perception of the juvenile officer as working with less rigor and lower standards. A unit's operation of school, athletic, or recreation programs is considered less than police work, even when nonjuvenile officers give part of their time to these programs.

In short, nonjuvenile officers often treat the juvenile unit as separate from other divisions. This separation appears to stem from: (1) goals of the unit that nonjuvenile officers do not share; (2) case decisions unit officers make that nonjuvenile officers may resent; (3) activities that nonjuvenile officers may consider insignificant; and (4) actions and decisions of the juvenile court which are mistakenly attributed to juvenile officers.

Yet some nonjuvenile officers think that if such "undesirable" activities as handling minor offenders (who could be as young as seven years of age), investigating minor offenses (e.g., a bicycle theft), counseling families, and dealing with social work agencies could be restricted to a special group of juvenile officers, the remainder of the officers could spend more of their time building cases for prosecution against alleged offenders. Although, in fact, nonjuvenile officers

*Egon Bittner has pointed out that nonjuvenile officers may give special treatment to classes of offenders in addition to juveniles: the mentally ill, residents of ethnic ghettos, certain types of bohemians, and vagabonds. See "The Police on Skid-Row: A Study of Peace-Keeping," *American Sociological Review* 32, October 1967.

may be spending most of their time responding to citizen requests for information, giving directions, and providing medical assistance, the department views these officers as more available for "law enforcement work" if the burden of handling juvenile cases is removed.

In addition to the primary goals listed above, there remain several secondary goals, the attainment of which depends on the existence of a juvenile unit:

- To enable nonjuvenile officers to devote their time to law enforcement duties
- To develop a positive view of law enforcement among juveniles
- To appear socially conscious and responsive to the community
- To reduce the workload of the juvenile court
- To be efficient in processing juvenile cases

The goal of helping nonjuvenile officers maintain their law enforcement duties emphasizes the philosophical rift that still exists in many departments over what constitutes the primary function of police officers. The goals of developing positive attitudes toward the police among juveniles and appearing socially conscious and responsive to the community are closely related. By word and deed, juvenile officers attempt to demonstrate that police are human, that they are defending the social order the community desires, that they are particularly concerned with the future of the problem juvenile, and that they want to work out a solution that is fair to both the juvenile and the community. Department administrators assume that the nonuniformed officers who "specialize" in juveniles and their families, who attempt to educate and treat as much as to enforce the law, go a long way toward making these goals a reality.

They also assume the unit has an important impact on the juvenile justice system through the cases it screens into and out of the juvenile court. Both the volume and the nature of cases handled by court intake (in particular), prosecutors, and judges are related to decisions made in the juvenile unit.

Specialization, however, is a double-edged sword: It seems to generate divisiveness within a department, but it does enable nonjuvenile officers to perform their duties without the burden of handling juvenile offenders. The juvenile unit, then, appears to be an operational convenience, if not an efficient processor, for the department. First, the unit relieves the nonjuvenile officer from the unwanted task of dealing with juveniles and their families, a task that is likely to increase the nonjuvenile officers' frustration with the system and desire for punishment of the juvenile.

Second, the unit takes responsibility for tasks for which the disadvantages outweigh the incentives for most nonjuvenile officers. Holding a juvenile in the unit until a parent arrives to assume custody is an example such officers give of an unrewarding activity. Officers do not expect commendations for a felony arrest when the perpetrator turns out to be a juvenile, nor can they expect overtime pay from a court system which rarely requests testimony from an arresting or investigating officer. Arrest satisfaction is minimal when the "bad guy" turns out to be a juvenile whom the law assumes to be less responsible for his or her actions than an adult.

Third, records may be maintained and stored in a central location, and nonjuvenile officers need not worry about completing special,

additional paperwork needed for the juvenile court. Time, and ultimately manpower, is thus saved by standardizing operating procedures and creating a place and group of officers who become responsible for holding juveniles until parents can be notified.*

Functional Framework

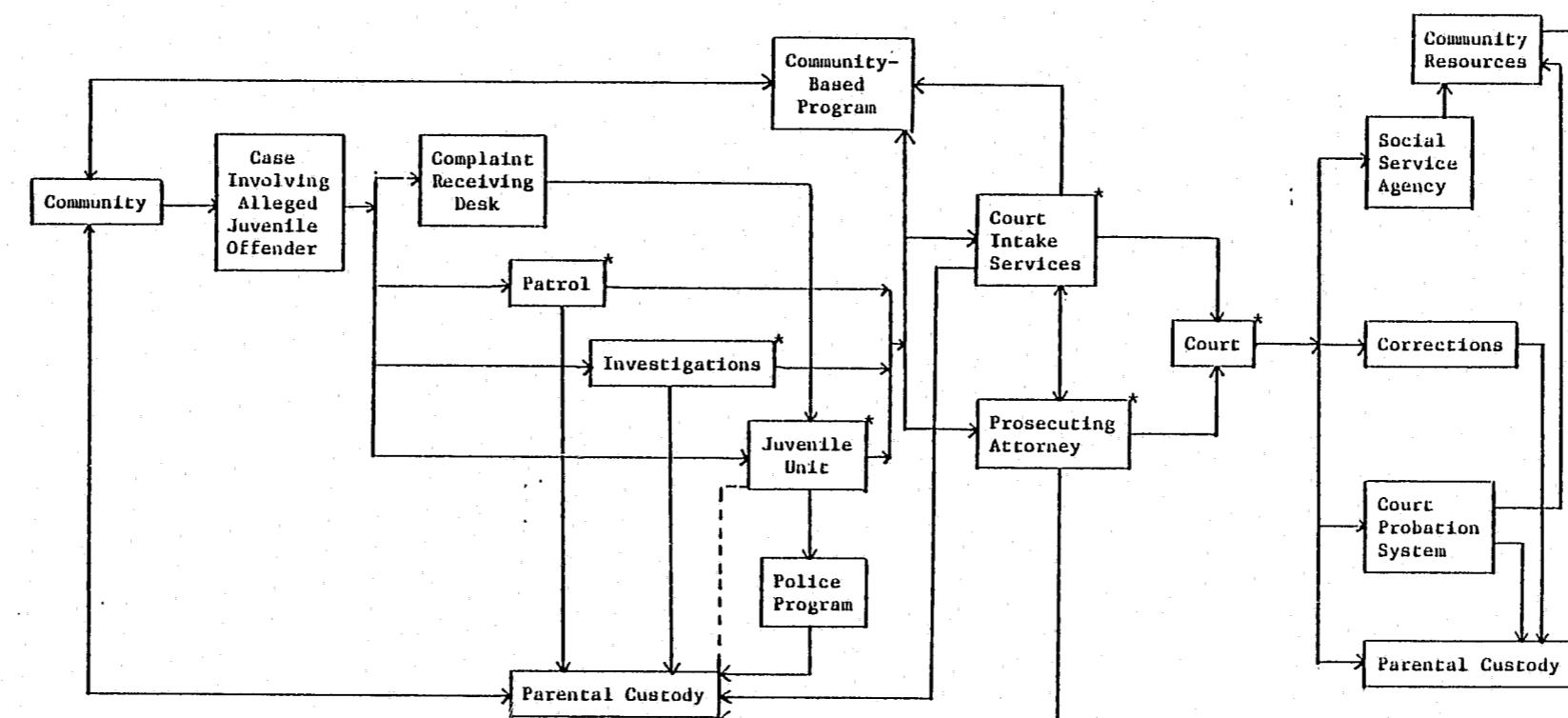
The data gathered through field visits to 12 departments led to the conclusion that the most useful analytic framework for understanding the operations of police juvenile units, from the policy and evaluation perspectives, is based on the functions juvenile units perform. Police officers tend to think in terms of police functions: A question put to officers about goals and objectives elicits an answer about functions. There is considerably more agreement among units on what functions they perform than on why they perform them. Finally, a functional framework opens the way for a clear identification of the significant aspects of a unit's operations, which is conducive to evaluation and measurement.

The Unit Within the Juvenile Justice System

Figure 1 presents a model of a case flowing through a typical juvenile unit and juvenile justice system. The model was synthesized from information gathered during the field visits and from the telephone survey. According to this figure, an incident involving a juvenile suspect comes to the attention of the unit in a variety of ways: through the agency's complaint receiving desk, from a patrol officer, from the investigations division, or directly to the unit. The figure also shows

*Data from Multnomah County, where the police department is organized around a team policing model, imply that the administrative efficiencies may be greater where no special juvenile officers or unit exists, contrary to popular belief.

FIGURE 1: The Juvenile Unit within the Juvenile Justice System



Lege

- Alleged Offender
*Points at which dismissals
acquittals occur

how a juvenile case may bypass the unit altogether, and a complaint against an alleged offender filed in court by an officer from another division. In this instance, the juvenile unit may never learn that a juvenile has been petitioned to court by a nonjuvenile officer.

The dotted line connecting the nonoffender with the juvenile unit represents the juvenile who is involved with the unit through delinquency prevention programs in the school and community. This group of juveniles includes those whom the police feel may be potential offenders. They are included in the nonoffender category, however, because an alleged offense was not the reason for their participation in the program.

A case referred to court by patrol, investigations, or the juvenile unit often is reviewed first by an intake unit of the court, and, second by the prosecuting attorney. Cases brought to the attention of the court (judge) are likely to have been screened by police, intake, and prosecution.

In juvenile court, a case is formally presented before a judge or referee. The juvenile has most likely admitted to the offense before appearing in court, so the only question is what disposition the court will choose from the variety of options available: parental custody; placement in a correctional institution; probation; or direct referral to a city, county, or state social service agency. Placement in a correctional facility is usually reserved for the repeat and serious offender.

Unit Functions*

Telephone interviews and field visits led to the conclusion that most, if not all, juvenile units have one or more of three primary functions:

- Investigation--gathering and acting on information relating to the commission of an alleged criminal incident
- Screening--gathering and acting on information for the purpose of reaching a case disposition
- Program Operation--implementing an activity within the community designed to prevent delinquency or rehabilitate delinquents

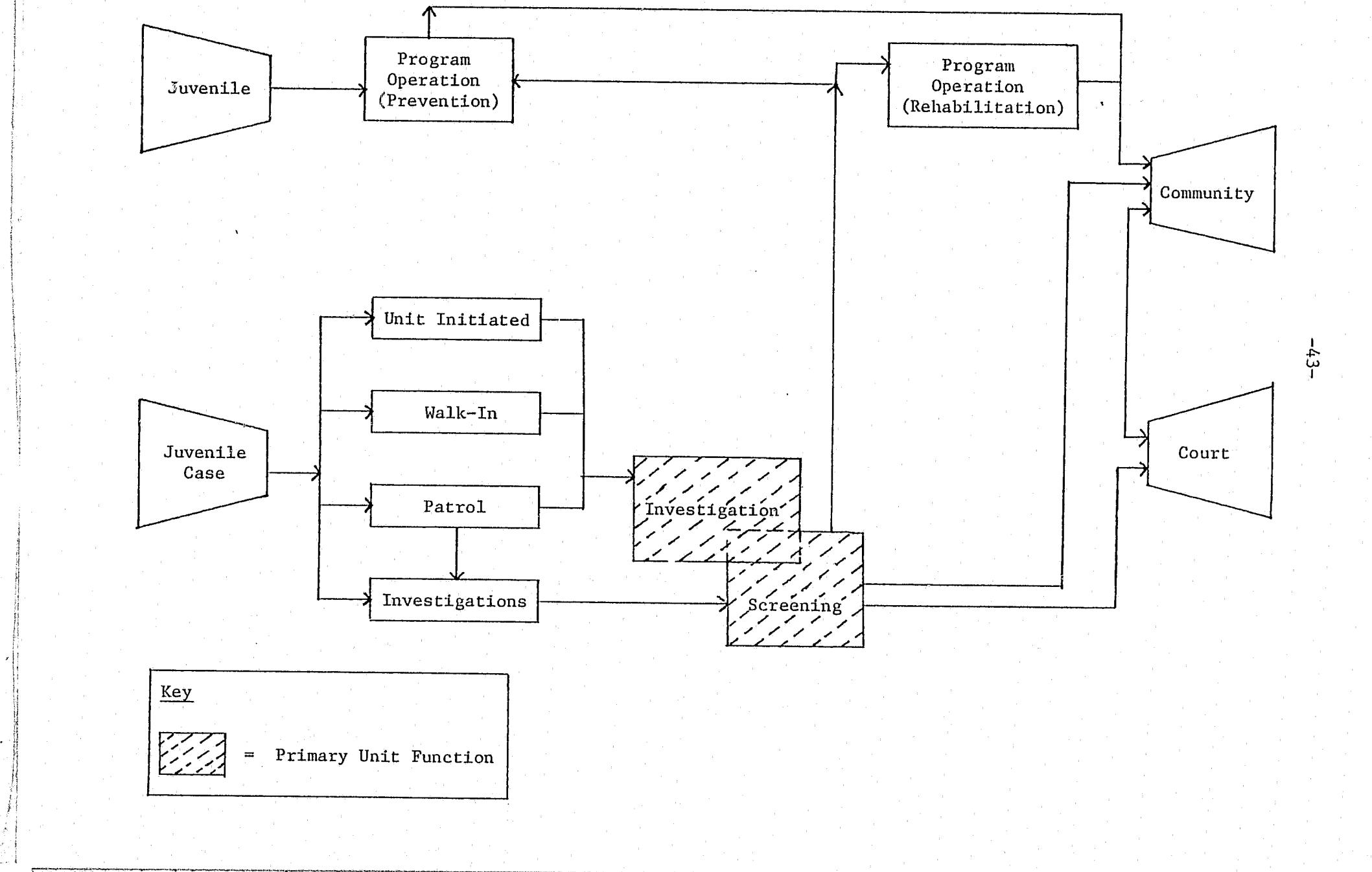
Figure 2 diagrams the operational interaction of these functions. When a case comes from the investigative division, the unit may omit further investigative tasks if the investigative work is judged complete; the juvenile officers will perform only screening activities. When the case is unit-initiated or reported by patrol, or if the case is a "walk-in," the unit will most likely perform both investigative and screening functions, from which release to the community, referral to a police-operated program, or petition to court may result.

Investigation and screening functions are not entirely distinct. Although each has different goals and objectives, these functions share some of the same activities, and use some of the same information for their decisionmaking.

Juveniles may participate in a unit-sponsored prevention program as a result of the juvenile's initiative (i.e., nonalleged offender) or by

*The final report includes a discussion of the interaction of goals, functions, and assumptions which, for brevity, has been omitted from this summary.

FIGURE 2: Primary Juvenile Unit Functions



referral following contact with the police. Many prevention programs, such as athletic leagues, summer camps, explorer groups, and big brother programs, are operated primarily for the potential offender. Police-sponsored rehabilitation programs usually represent an alternative to a petition to court, and they vary from a highly structured, employment-oriented program to informal police probation.

CHAPTER III

THE INVESTIGATIVE FUNCTION

This chapter presents the information gathered during the 12 field visits on the investigative function performed by juvenile units. It reviews the literature on investigations, presents a flow model of the investigative process, and synthesizes quantitative and qualitative data on investigations. Two statistics drawn from responses to the national mail survey highlight the importance of the investigative function of police juvenile units: (1) 78 percent of the police departments with juvenile units stated that their unit was located within the criminal investigations division ($N = 99$); (2) 94 percent of the respondents stated that the unit investigated cases "frequently" ($N = 104$).

Previous Studies*

The work of the 1967 President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice began a decade of research on the investigative process.¹⁶ Objective data, needed to dispel the mystique surrounding investigators, now exists on a variety of questions asked of police departments across the country. Although none of the research focused on juvenile investigators, several of the findings receive support from data presented in this chapter.

*See Chapter IV of the final report for a more complete discussion of the literature cited.

Who Solves Cases?

Perhaps the most potentially significant conclusions about investigations, from the point of view of the police administrator, have come from a study by Greenwood and Petersilia on the criminal investigation process.¹⁷ Based on data from a two-year national study of police investigative practices, they found that whether a case is solved is largely determined by information the victim or witnesses supply to the immediately responding patrol officer. This finding led them to make several recommendations to limit the jurisdiction and discretion of investigators. Several earlier studies provide supporting data for this finding.¹⁸ The collective conclusions raise serious questions about the value of the traditional patrol-investigator organizational arrangement and the preliminary follow-up investigative division of labor among these officers, which is taken for granted by most departments. Several studies have specifically questioned the value of such traditional arrangements.¹⁹

How Are Cases Solved?

Greenwood and Petersilia's study of the criminal investigation process also found that: (1) investigative time is largely consumed reviewing reports, documenting files, and attempting to locate and interview victims on cases that will not be solved; (2) more than half of all serious reported crimes receive superficial attention from investigators; and (3) routine police procedures clear most cases not immediately cleared by patrol.²⁰ In one of the first studies of investigative practices, Greenwood found that New York City Police Department arrests for property crimes were made either at the scene of the crime or as a result of evidence present when the crime was reported.²¹ Conklin reported that

criminal investigations of robberies produced clearances in only one of fifty cases.²² Conclusions such as these have led to questions about the existence of the special skills departments traditionally have attributed to investigators.

Juvenile Unit Investigators

Where does the role of the juvenile investigator fit into the picture previous research presents? According to field observations,* most juvenile officers do not spend time on patrol; many rarely spend time on the street for any reason other than following a lead in a case. Juvenile officers depend as heavily on the work of patrol officers as do other investigators. The data presented later in the chapter reveal that juvenile officers in some departments also depend on criminal investigators.

Several differences exist between adult and juvenile investigators, and they must be considered in making direct comparisons between these groups. First, the purposes of investigation differ in emphasis for the criminal and juvenile investigators. Although both groups attempt to identify, apprehend, and gather enough evidence to prosecute suspects, juvenile officers often must dispose of less serious cases by means other than court referral. This objective places a burden on juvenile officers to gather motivational and background data on suspects, in addition to legal evidence that the suspect is linked to the offense, in order to make an appropriate disposition. It is therefore difficult to isolate

*It is difficult to rectify the mail survey finding that only 20 percent of the responding departments reported never patrolling and the fact that none of the juvenile officers in the 12 sites visited ever patrolled. The problem may have been caused by a lack of clear definition of patrol.

the investigative and screening activities performed by an officer. Second, the juvenile justice system, with which juvenile investigators work, differs from the adult criminal justice system in philosophy and legal requirements. The philosophy of most juvenile systems is the traditional one: to act "in the best interests" of the child (although currently there is concern about focusing on the case and not on the juvenile). The legal differences lie in the areas of bail and trial by jury, both of which are denied juveniles. These differences in philosophy and legal requirements are likely to have implications for the nature, type, and amount of information gathered by juvenile officers. Finally, juvenile investigators interview and interrogate individuals who are under the age of 18 years--under 16 years of age, in many instances. Because their potential suspects (and frequently victims and witnesses) are defined by age, juvenile officers must adjust investigative procedures accordingly. Juvenile courts sometimes place restraints, such as the need to have a parent present during an interrogation, on these investigators. A training key developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) suggests some techniques for interrogating juveniles that are distinct from those used by officers interrogating adults.²³ The point is that one must be very cautious in trying to generalize the findings of studies of criminal investigation to the work of juvenile units.

Flow Model of the Investigative Process

Every police department conducts investigations. Although nearly all officers are involved in investigation to some degree, most departments consider investigators to be their specialists. For clarity, and because no universally accepted definition exists, investigation is

defined in this report as the effort to gather facts that establish that a crime has been committed, lead to the identification and apprehension of an offender, and provide evidence of guilt for purposes of prosecution.*

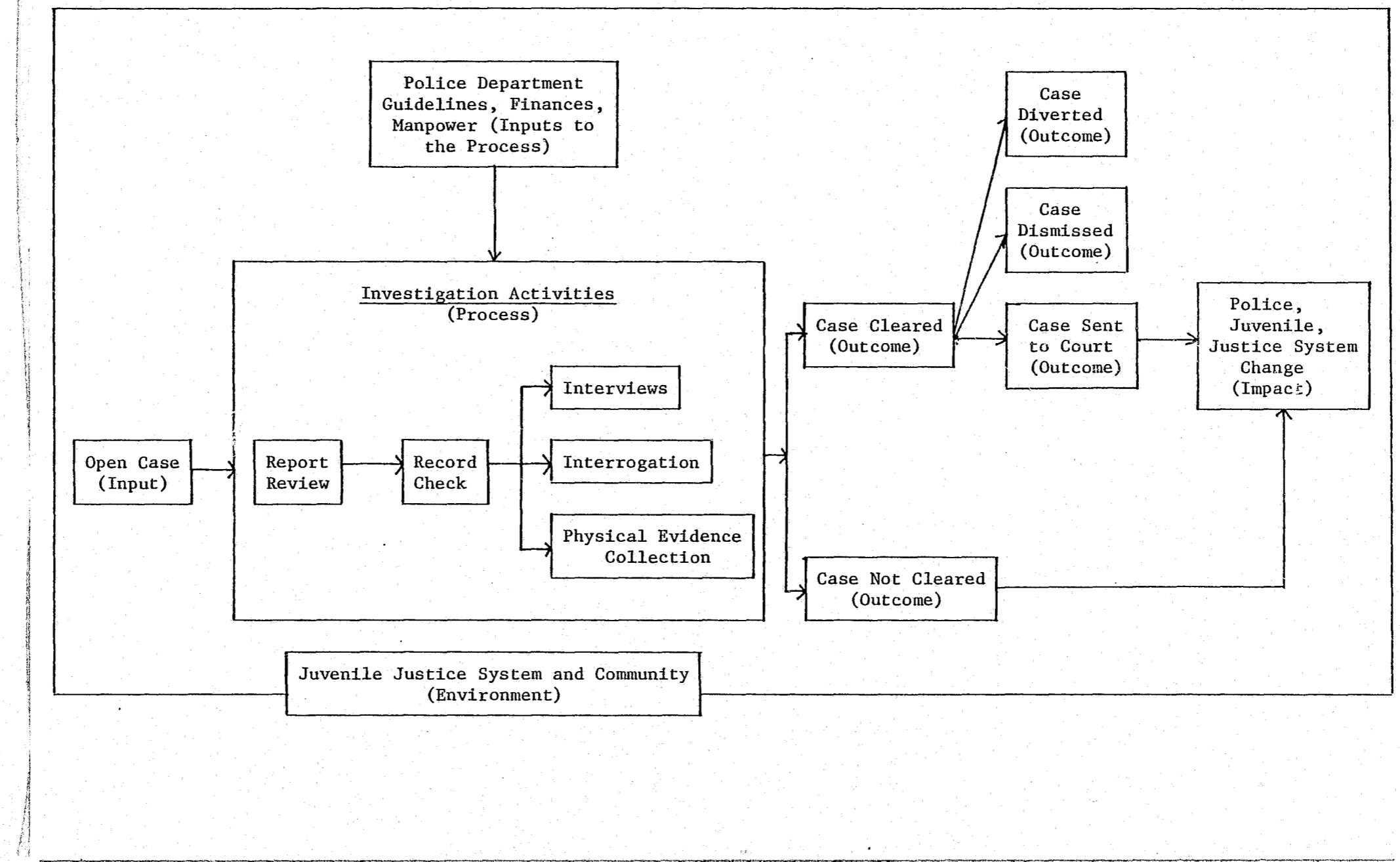
The case flow model in Figure 3 identifies the typical investigative activities performed by the juvenile units studied and presents them in the most frequently observed order. The model focuses on the investigative activities themselves (process), the cases affected by the investigation (input), the expected case resolution (outcome), the potential long-range effects of the investigation (impact), the departmental variables directly affecting the investigation (inputs to the process), and those variables in the larger justice system and community environment (environment).

As shown on Figure 3, the input into the investigative process is the juvenile case. A case is defined as any law violation allegedly committed by a juvenile. Although there are various methods by which a case arrives at the juvenile unit, it is most likely to have been sent by patrol or by criminal investigators. A preliminary, and possibly a follow-up, investigation have already been completed. A juvenile suspect may or may not be in police custody.

The investigative process begins when the unit receives notification of a criminal incident involving a juvenile. The unit supervisor assigns the case to a juvenile investigator, although screening and case dismissal at the supervisory level may occur. Following the investigator's

*This definition is based upon that found in Peter W. Greenwood and Joan Petersilia, The Criminal Investigation Process, Vol. III: Observations and Analysis (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, 1975).

FIGURE 3: Flow Model for the Investigative Function of the Juvenile Unit



review of previous reports, one or more of several discrete tasks is performed: a records check, interviews, interrogation, and the collection of physical evidence. A juvenile officer reviews the reports, typically an incident report (containing the statement of the complaint or describing elements of the offense), a custody report (providing information about a suspect), and a supplementary report (detailing all information gathered). These reports enable the officer to reconstruct the sequence of events and to determine whether the existing information provides sufficient data to close the case.

If a suspect has been identified, unit and department records are checked to determine the suspect's past history of arrests or police contacts. The most frequently used juvenile records are (1) the contact file--a file on juveniles who have been stopped and questioned, but not arrested, and (2) the suspect file--a file on juveniles who have previously been taken into custody. Juvenile officers may collect physical evidence.

Whether or not a suspect has been identified, juvenile officers conduct interviews to close information gaps, gather new information, or verify information gathered by patrol and criminal investigators. Interrogation* of a juvenile suspect is likely to require the presence of a

*A definite line exists between interviewing a juvenile who may have information about the commission of a crime, and interrogating a juvenile suspected of a crime. The distinction is an important one because when an officer feels that there is probable cause to link the juvenile to the commission of a crime, the officer is obliged to give the juvenile the Miranda warning. In some jurisdictions this necessitates contacting a parent or guardian if an interrogation is to take place. During the interrogation, an effort is made to establish whether the juvenile: (1) did commit the alleged offense; (2) can provide additional information about the circumstances of the offense; (3) is responsible for or has knowledge of other related offenses; and (4) can identify an accomplice or other possible suspects.

parent or guardian and, if undertaken in the police department, a separate facility from that provided for the interrogation of an adult. As in the case of the alleged adult offender, Miranda rights are accorded juveniles before any interrogation.

Investigators seek to clear cases; that is, to gather enough information to identify, apprehend, or prosecute a suspected juvenile offender, or to indicate that the case is unfounded as a crime. A case is incomplete (i.e., not cleared) when the information gathered does not lead to a suspect or is insufficient to sustain a charge against a suspected juvenile.*

Questions Researched

The most significant questions involving the assignment of the investigative function to the juvenile unit are operational and organizational in nature. The operational questions researched were case-related, and focused on both the process (question 1) and the outcomes (questions 2 and 3) of the investigative activities and decisions of juvenile unit officers.** The organizational question is a management issue which concerns the efficient use of a department's investigative resources (question 4).***

*It should be noted that the juvenile investigative unit may not handle all cases involving juveniles. In some sites visited, nonjuvenile officers sent suspected felony offenders directly to the prosecutor's office for prosecution in either the juvenile or the adult criminal court. The juvenile unit may not receive any information on these cases.

**Except for the observations presented below, no comparative data were gathered on the differences and similarities between the juvenile and nonjuvenile officers in their manner of case investigation.

***Discussion of the investigative function is organized in the final report according to goals and assumptions underlying these goals. An attempt is made in that document to validate assumptions.

1. Does the juvenile officer gather investigative information in addition to that gathered by nonjuvenile officers?
2. Is the information gathered by juvenile officers needed to clear cases?
3. Is the information gathered by juvenile officers needed to prosecute cases?
4. Do the investigative activities performed by juvenile officers contribute to the efficiency of case investigation?

1. Additional Investigative Information

According to the brief review of research on investigative functions, several studies have provided data to support the finding that whether a case is solved is largely determined by information the victim or witnesses supply to the immediately responding patrol officer, although none of that research focused on juvenile investigators.

In order to gather more objective information on the nature of information juvenile officers add to a case, staff took a random sample of the files of cases closed in 1976 in Torrance and in Greensboro.* The review of 201 cases in Torrance and 197 cases in Greensboro focused on five information items:

- description of a suspect;
- description of the scene;
- description of persons' actions at the scene;
- laboratory tests; and
- physical evidence.

Staff arranged all reports in each case file in chronological order, and coded every item of information in each of these five areas as either new (information that had not previously appeared in any report);

*These sites are comparable in several important ways: they both investigate cases, report to the annual investigations division, handle a large percentage of larcenies and burglaries, and serve cities of similar size.

repeat (information that had previously appeared in a report, that had been gathered from the same source); or verified (information that had previously appeared in a report, that had been gathered from a different source). The results of the tabulation of information items appear in Table 7.

TABLE 7: Nature of Information Items Gathered by Juvenile and Nonjuvenile Officers

Nature of Information	Site and Officer Type		Site and Officer Type	
	Greensboro	Torrance	Nonjuvenile	Juvenile
New (N=2575) ^a	78.8%	21.1%	New (N=1985) ^a	95.3% 4.7%
Repeat (N=1432) ^a	32.9	67.1	Repeat (N=783) ^a	87.7 12.3
Verified (N=98) ^a	15.3	84.7	Verified (N=992) ^a	87.1 12.9

^aN = number of information items in the 197 case files of Greensboro and the 201 case files of Torrance.

SOURCE: Case files, Greensboro and Torrance, 1976-1977.

According to Table 7, the Greensboro juvenile officers contributed 21.1 percent of all information categorized as "new" (N = 2575). The larger percentages of "repeat" information (67.1 percent) and "verified" information (84.7 percent) suggest that much of the same ground covered by patrol and detectives in the preliminary investigation is covered a second time by juvenile officers. Juvenile officers in Torrance contributed only 4.5 percent of the information classified as "new," and

approximately 12 percent of both the "repeat" and "verified" information. The small percentages in each of these three categories suggest a much more limited investigative effort than that undertaken by officers in Greensboro. This finding agrees with the Torrance unit's emphasis on screening. The extremely small amount of new information gathered (4.5 percent) probably reflects the fact that many of the unit's cases are transmitted by the criminal investigations unit.

This information presents a striking contrast to officer beliefs. Staff interviewed juvenile officers in each site about 25 selected cases that had been closed during the site visit or within the previous month. As Table 8 shows, juvenile officers in Torrance believed that they added "new" information to 76 percent of the 25 cases handled during the period and "verified" existing information in 76 percent of cases; the juvenile officers in Greensboro claimed to have added "new" information in 88 percent of the cases and "verified" existing information in 92 percent of the cases. These beliefs arise because juvenile investigators, regardless of previous work done on a case, choose to reinvestigate: (1) to feel comfortable in understanding all the aspects of a case, (2) to reach a case disposition.

When the "nonjuvenile officer" category is subdivided into patrol and criminal investigators, statistics indicate that almost all of the "new" information is gathered by patrol in both Torrance and Greensboro (Table 9). Table 9 indicates that investigators in Torrance provide 13.6 percent of the total items of "new" information gathered, and juvenile officers provide an additional 4.7 percent. In Greensboro, where adult investigators do not handle juvenile cases, the juvenile officers

TABLE 8: Officer Beliefs About Information Gathered

Officer Beliefs	Site	
	Greensboro	Torrance
Provided Additional Information		
Yes	88%	76%
No	12	24
	(N=25)	(N=25)
Verified Existing Information		
Yes	92%	76%
No	8	24
	(N=25)	(N=25)

TABLE 9: Source of New Information Items

Officer Type	Site	
	Greensboro	Torrance
Patrol	78.4%	81.7%
Investigations	.5	13.6
Juvenile	21.1 (N=2575) ^a	4.7 (N=1985) ^a

^aN = number of new information items appearing in the 197 case files of Greensboro and the 201 case files of Torrance.

SOURCE: Case files, Greensboro and Torrance, 1976-1977.

fill this role, adding 21.1 percent of the "new" information. In both sites, patrol provides approximately 80 percent of the "new" information.

2. Information Gathered to Clear Cases

Is the small amount of "new" information juvenile officers gather during the investigations process essential to clearing a case? Unfortunately, empirical data are not available for a complete assessment.

Juvenile officers make their own decisions as to whether and what additional information is needed to complete a case. Formal unit guidelines and supervision do not appear to play any significant role in this decision in most units visited. According to juvenile officers in Greensboro and Torrance, the most frequent investigative objectives are:

- to obtain a confession by the juvenile suspect through investigation;
- to determine the intent of the suspect;
- to verify facts of statements already made; and
- to uncover additional crimes or suspects.

Incident reports--especially if they come from investigations--often come with a juvenile already in custody or a juvenile suspect listed.

Objective data gathered onsite (Table 10) indicate that much of the information juvenile officers gather is suspect-related, indirectly validating the first two points.

Table 10 shows that juvenile officers in both departments gather primarily suspect information (33.6 percent and 39.7 percent, respectively). They rarely collect physical evidence in Greensboro, but it comprises approximately 20 percent of the information gathered by the Torrance unit. Laboratory tests comprise a small proportion of the Greensboro information (10.4 percent) and none of the Torrance information.

TABLE 10: Nature of Information Juvenile Officers Gather

Nature of Information	Unit	
	Greensboro	Torrance
Suspect	33.6%	39.7%
Scene	33.9	28.8
Persons at scene	21.8	11.0
Physical evidence	.2	20.5
Laboratory tests	10.4	--
	(N=586) ^a	(N=46) ^a

^aN = number of information items appearing in the 197 case files of Greensboro and the 201 case files of Torrance.

SOURCE: Case files, Greensboro and Torrance, 1976-1977.

Although the substance of the "suspect" information is not known, when juvenile officers in Greensboro and Torrance were asked what was missing from the 25 cases when the officers received them, the most frequently mentioned item was a "confession." According to these officers, they obtained confessions in 44 percent of the 25 cases in Torrance, and in 40 percent of the 25 cases in Greensboro.

3. Information Gathered to Prosecute Cases

Staff asked juvenile officers in Greensboro and Torrance whether they thought the information they received on the cases, gathered by nonjuvenile officers, was sufficient to send the case to juvenile court.

According to Table 11, juvenile officers believed that the majority of cases they received from nonjuvenile officers did not contain enough information to send the case to court. In Greensboro, juvenile officers believed that 60 percent of the cases lacked sufficient information; in Torrance, 56 percent of the cases.

TABLE 11: Cases Having Sufficient Information to Refer to Court

Sufficient Information	Site	
	Greensboro	Torrance
Yes	40%	44%
No	60 (N=25)	56 (N=25)

SOURCE: Juvenile officers, Greensboro and Torrance.

However, information on case prosecution and its relationship to investigative work performed by juvenile officers is sparse and difficult to interpret for several reasons. First, although the major objective of the criminal investigation is to gather evidence to prosecute an identified offender, supervisors and court personnel often ask juvenile officers to dispose of less serious offenses and offenders by means other than court petition. Case file statistics reveal that Greensboro petitioned only 40 percent of its cases ($N = 197$) to court; Torrance petitioned 30 percent ($N = 201$). Second, a confession of guilt is needed in order to make a disposition other than prosecution. An incentive exists for a juvenile to admit minor violations of criminal or status laws (i.e., he will not have to go to court), and, other than the confession, there is no extradepartmental assessment of the "prosecutability" of the existing evidence. Third, investigation and screening concerns overlap. What an officer believes is "in the best interest of the juvenile" may determine decisions more typically associated with undertaking investigative activities. Finally, intake, prosecution, and judicial decisions

are not always based on factors related to the legal sufficiency of a case. In one site visited, for example, case dismissal statistics reflect personnel shortages in the prosecutor's office rather than investigative faults of the police. In several other sites these decisions reflect the intake officers' social and philosophical concerns about trying to help juveniles avoid becoming entangled in the juvenile justice system.

4. Efficiency of the Investigative Process

Because important data on these topics are missing, it is impossible to assess whether it is efficient for a police department to have a separate juvenile investigation unit. The data that have been presented leave the impression that a certain amount of duplication of effort exists. In addition to this duplication may be inefficiency resulting from competition for cases.

Competition among divisions to handle juvenile cases does not exist in every department--in many departments, nonjuvenile officers avoid contact with juveniles whenever possible--but competition for cases was evident in some departments in which the juvenile unit was relegated to investigate only minor offenses, or where jurisdictional boundaries among divisions overlapped and heightened already existing tensions.

In several departments, officers vied for "good," meaning "serious," cases. In Arlington County, for example, lieutenants in several divisions rotate a pre-roll call responsibility for distributing cases coming into the department during the night shift. The juvenile unit investigators receive felony cases to investigate only when the lieutenant in charge of that unit has the morning duty. In Duluth, where the juvenile

aid bureau shares jurisdiction for some types of cases with both the detectives and the narcotics/vice unit, officers in all three units indicated that competition exists over cases. In Topeka, patrol has the option to turn certain cases over to either the juvenile unit or investigations (e.g., burglary) depending on their assessment of potential seriousness of the complaint. In shoplifting cases, patrol can release the suspect to a parent, send the case directly to court, or refer the case to the juvenile unit. Annual statistics indicate that each year patrol is referring a smaller percentage of cases to the unit.

The lack of a clear line between the investigative and screening functions, in terms of activities and decisions, complicates any attempt to assess efficiency of either the organization of investigative work or specific investigative activities.

The organization of a department, however, is only one aspect of bringing efficiency to the investigative process. Because efficiency is also related to officer morale, the operational conveniences the juvenile unit offers the department and its officers may outweigh any small inefficiencies uncovered by future research. The juvenile unit relieves the nonjuvenile division and officers from the unwanted task of spending lengthy amounts of time with juveniles and their families; it takes responsibility for tasks for which the disadvantages outweigh the incentives for most nonjuvenile officers (e.g., holding a juvenile until custody of the juvenile can be transferred to a parent); and it is assumed to be administratively efficient by providing a focal point for juvenile matters. Although no objective information exists to support the efficiency of these alleged conveniences, their existence in the

minds of nonjuvenile officers may be transmitted into the operational realm.

A Department Without a Unit

This section outlines the juvenile investigative function as it is performed in Multnomah County, Oregon, by the Multnomah County Sheriff's Department. The data gathered during both the initial field visit and the case study periods is meant to provide an impressionistic contrast to Greensboro and Torrance, where established units exist.

The Multnomah County Division of Public Safety reorganized in 1975 and initiated team policing to replace a more traditional organizational structure. The enforcement branch of the department now consists of six teams--a team for each of the five zones into which the county is divided and a sixth team known as the "detective team." Except for the detective team, which handles only the most serious offenses, the officers on the other teams are considered generalists. In theory, each team has one or two officers who work largely as investigators. In reality, this position has come to be treated as a reserve position, to be filled only when there is not a personnel shortage elsewhere on the team or in the department. When project staff visited Multnomah County, they noted that the team they observed never had its two investigator positions filled.

There are no juvenile officers or juvenile investigators. For a period of time after the department reorganized, officers report that there was a tendency to ask former youth officers to handle juvenile cases. This practice has all but disappeared.

Team officers estimated that 20 percent to 30 percent of their caseload consisted of juvenile-perpetrated offenses. Staff observations

suggest that this is reasonable, if not an underestimate. There are no figures available on juvenile arrests in Multnomah County; all cases, whether adult or juvenile, are numbered in sequence and stored in numerical order.

A typical juvenile case is a shoplifting case (petty larceny). Several of the affected stores in the area employ security systems, and this results in a large number of arrests for this crime. Officers in Multnomah County often respond to calls from store security officers. The entire investigation of such a call involves administering the Miranda warning and questioning the suspect and the security officer. The Multnomah County officer usually is able to obtain an admission to the act and enough background information to determine the advisability of releasing the juvenile to parents pending a juvenile interview with the court intake, and usually calls the department to request a record check on the suspect. Because these cases are strong, they are likely to be cleared on the same day they are received. Most cases of this nature are sent to court.

Other larcenies and burglaries are likely to receive the type of preliminary investigation usually associated with the patrol function.

Officers have to ask to be taken off calls so that they can pursue investigations, and such requests are discouraged. There seems to be an unspoken understanding that such a request should be made only in unusual circumstances.

According to the officers in charge of the 25 cases debriefed, no case took longer than one week to complete (i.e., decide to clear or remain uncleared); 80 percent were completed in one day. Officers

responding to calls had little or no case backlog. Most minor cases that cannot be solved in a relatively short time by patrol are not pursued further. Serious cases may be sent to the detective team.

In only seven of the 25 cases officers believed the evidence was strong enough to send the case to court. Reasons given for needing additional information were uncertainty about the circumstances surrounding the incident and needing physical evidence to support the case.

The Multnomah County officers completed an average of two reports and five interviews per case. Most of the interviews were with suspects on the street. The officers seemed to expect an admission of guilt and perceived a case as a problem when such an admission was not forthcoming.

To conclude, there seems to be very little in-depth investigation of juvenile offenses; nine out of every ten juvenile cases were opened and closed within one day by the reporting officer.

CHAPTER IV

THE SCREENING FUNCTION

This chapter presents information gathered on the screening function performed by juvenile officers. It presents a flow model of the screening process; synthesizes quantitative and qualitative data gathered from departments visited; and incorporates the literature on screening in the analysis of data.

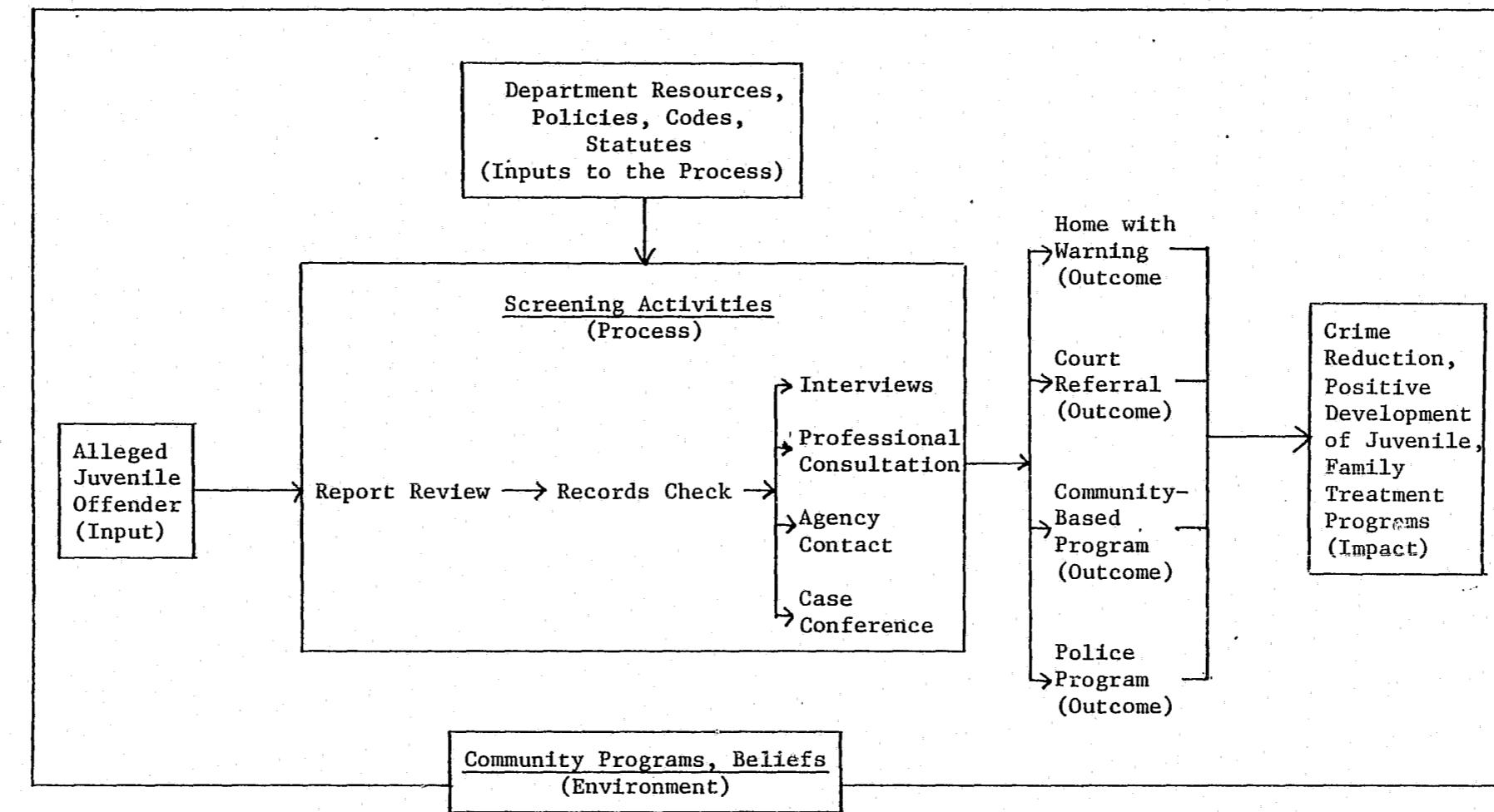
Two national commissions studying the role of police in handling juveniles have suggested that the least restrictive alternative be used for juveniles, and that the police referral of delinquents to court be limited to the repeat offender or the juvenile who has committed a serious criminal act.²⁴ This relatively liberal approach to juveniles does not prevail nationwide. Its existence is bound up with a variety of factors, from the organization of the local juvenile justice system to the philosophy of each of the components of the juvenile justice system, to the fiscal arrangements for community-based programs.

Flow Model of the Screening Process

The screening function is the juvenile officer's gathering of information for the purpose of reaching a case disposition. A hidden "given" in this definition is that the juvenile officer has sufficient evidence to link a specific juvenile to a specific crime.

The components of the screening process are presented in Figure 4 in the form of a case flow model. The model focuses on the screening activities of officers (process), the juveniles affected by the screening activities (input), the immediate case disposition (outcome), other

FIGURE 4: Flow Model for the Screening Function of the Juvenile Unit*



*This model assumes an offender whose case has not been dismissed because of lack of legal evidence or confession.

long-range effects of screening (impact), and the variables directly affecting screening (inputs to the process) and those in the larger community (environment). The figure also identifies screening activities performed routinely by most juvenile units contacted during this study and it presents those activities in their most frequently observed order.

According to Figure 4, one input into the screening process is the alleged juvenile offender. Unlike the case concern of the investigation process--the facts of the case, the amount of information already gathered--screening focuses on the individual juvenile. How old is the juvenile? Was the juvenile disrespectful to the arresting officers? Has the juvenile appeared in the juvenile unit on a previous complaint?

Some of the discrete screening activities of the juvenile officers are identical to those of investigation. The first three steps are essentially the same for both processes: report review, records check, and interviews. The difference lies in the type of information being gathered and the purpose toward which it is being gathered. Screening activities focus on information about the background and character of the accused in order to reach an appropriate disposition; investigative activities focus on information about the incident in order to solve the case through identification, apprehension, and possible prosecution of a juvenile.

Juvenile officers may seek professional consultation to increase their knowledge about the social behavior and personal attributes of the youth, including consultation with probation officers, mental health professionals, teachers, welfare workers, and program administrators.

Officers also consult agencies offering potential referral and placement to ascertain their availability and willingness to receive the juvenile.

In contrast to consultations with professionals, which do not occur in every case, a case conference is held for almost every case and plays a particularly important role in reaching a case disposition. The conference is typically an interview conducted by the juvenile officer with the juvenile and the juvenile's parents in either the juvenile's home or the police station. It may take place at the same time that the officer is conducting the interrogation phase of the investigation. Among the reasons for holding such a conference are these: (1) to make parents aware of their child's behavior problem; (2) to gain insight into the juvenile-family relationship; (3) to assess the nature and degree of supervision and control the parent exercises over the juvenile; and (4) to discuss disposition alternatives. Officers place considerable emphasis on learning whether the parents are aware of their child's delinquent or status offender activities, what the parents think about those activities, and what the parents can and are willing to do to prevent further unlawful activity. Juvenile officers also use the conference as an educational tool. The officer advises the parents about child-management techniques and recommends agencies and programs that can help the parents improve the home situation.

The immediate outcome of screening is usually one of four types of case dispositions: (1) return of the juvenile to his or her home with a warning; (2) referral to court; (3) diversion to a community-based program; and (4) provision of services by the police. The choice

of one of these four outcomes involves two separate but related decisions:

- The penetration decision--whether or not to send the juvenile to court
- The diversion decision--which alternative to select for the juvenile who is not sent to court.

These decisions are as much the product of the juvenile officer's assessment of the juvenile's needs as they are related to department-approved options, pressures and influence from the court, and available community resources which the police think are effective for juveniles.

The desirable long-range impact of the screening function is a general decrease in delinquent and status offense behavior in a given community, the personal growth and development of a juvenile, and the betterment of family relationships.

Constraints within the department and the community affect the decisions of juvenile officers. For example, department policy may limit the disposition options available to a juvenile officer. In Washington, D.C., the juvenile officers have only two alternatives: release to home or court referral. In Onondaga County, N.Y., the juvenile officers can use any of the alternatives depicted in Figure 4. The availability of community programs that accept direct referrals from the police can be a major constraint which a community places on the police department.

Questions Researched

The questions researched for the screening function, as for investigations, are operational and organizational in nature. The operational questions are case-related and focus on both the process (question 1) and the outcomes (questions 2 and 3) of the screening activities and

decisions of juvenile officers. The organizational question goes beyond the jurisdiction of the police department and focuses on the components of the juvenile justice system (question 4).*

1. Is the dispositional alternative selected by the juvenile officer related to the individual needs of a juvenile?
2. Are similar cases disposed of uniformly by juvenile officers?
3. Do police referrals to community-based and police-sponsored programs result in a more punitive sanction than sending a juvenile to court?
4. Are police activities and decisions duplicated by other juvenile justice system agencies?

1. Disposition Related to Needs

At every stage in the screening process--report review, records check, interview, professional and agency consultation, and case conference--juvenile officers sift and screen an ever-increasing amount of information on which they will make the case disposition. It is difficult to pinpoint which activity or which piece of information crystallizes the officer's ideas about the juvenile. The activities and information are part of a cumulative process whose end product--a correct identification and diagnosis of need--is only as good as the officer's ability and personal attitudes, the nature of the information gathered by an officer, and the manner in which it is used.

Information Gathered and Manner Used

The report review is the first screening activity a juvenile officer performs after being assigned a case. When a unit (like that in

*Discussion of the screening function is organized in the final report according to goals and assumptions underlying these goals. That report attempts to validate assumptions.

Greensboro) is responsible for both case investigation and screening, the incident report completed by patrol probably will be the only report available. In a unit which is primarily responsible for case screening, such as Torrance's unit, the juvenile officer will receive several reports for review. In the first instance, the incident report is likely to contain no more information on the suspected juvenile than his or her physical characteristics and demeanor at the time of contact. In the latter instance, investigations already completed by nonjuvenile officers will provide most of the information used by the juvenile officer.

Information gathered during the records check includes data on the juvenile's previous handling by police: number of contact(s) or arrest(s), police disposition(s), and court disposition(s).

The information gathered from the report of the offense (and possibly its investigation) and the juvenile's prior record enables the officer to make a rough determination of whether the juvenile is "good" or "bad." The "bad" label, applied on the basis of information on these documents, means one of two things: (1) the offense is too serious not to send to court; or (2) the offender is a repeater who deserves to be sanctioned severely. This label paves the way for a court referral, eliminating the officer's responsibility to diagnose further a juvenile's "needs."

A substantial amount of potentially diagnostic information is gathered through interviews with complainants, victims, witnesses, and the police officer who responded to the scene of the crime. This information focuses on the precipitating circumstances of the incident, the juvenile's

motive, the juvenile's attitude at time of arrest, the parents' attitudes at time of notification of arrest, and any obvious juvenile or family problems. If court referral is not automatically indicated on the basis of offense or prior record, officers look at the juveniles' and parents' attitudes and relationship to decide whether the juvenile can avoid future deviant behavior. The case conference is a particularly valuable tool for this. By the end of the conference--whether it occurs at the middle or the end of the process of accumulating information for a screening decision--the officer will have reached an opinion about the likelihood of future deviance. Because officers feel that an admission of wrongdoing is the first step in rehabilitation, they often use the case conference to elicit a statement of remorse or contrition about the unlawful act committed.

The extent to which an officer goes beyond individuals related to the incident to consult professionals, and the nature of the professional consultation solicited, are more related to officer inclination and unit policy than to a search for an individual diagnosis. For example, the Topeka unit routinely involves a psychiatrist from the Menninger Clinic in evaluating the needs of a juvenile. In Torrance, juvenile officers regularly visit local schools to discuss particular juveniles with teachers. In Greensboro, a psychologist from a family counseling agency meets weekly with the officers to discuss current cases.

For the most part, the information gathered by juvenile officers is not used to address needs. It is used primarily to determine (1) whether the authority and coerciveness of the justice system should bear down

upon the juvenile to indicate society's displeasure with the juvenile's past or present behavior; (2) whether the appropriate level of remorse and contrition exists on the part of the juvenile and the juvenile's family; and (3) whether the juvenile's family is able to take the steps appropriate to control their child's future behavior.

Officer Ability

The ability of juvenile officers to identify juveniles in need of treatment and to diagnose an individual's specific needs is a function of a variety of mechanisms in the control of the department: (1) selection criteria and procedures for juvenile officer candidates which screen for officers who already possess needed abilities; (2) specialized training given to officers before or after they are selected; (3) experience in working with juveniles over a period of time; and (4) supervision of officers concerning cases handled.

Selection of Juvenile Officers. There is no indication that eligibility criteria or selection procedures identify officers with diagnostic abilities. The most typical criteria used to select a juvenile officer are: (1) the officer's expressed desire to work with juveniles; (2) a good work record within the department; (3) after-work activities that indicate a special interest in youth (e.g., baseball coach); and (4) a department-established number of years of required service. In most units visited there were some officer(s) who were selected because of (1) pressure from a high-ranking department official, or (2) performance on a test that qualified an officer for assignment to any opening in a given rank.

The selection process usually involves review of the officer's application by the commander of the juvenile unit, review of the officer's documented work history, and consultation with several of the applicant's supervisors. Minor variations exist. In Tucson, a three-person panel of supervisory officers reviews the application and interviews the candidate. In Topeka, the applicant undergoes an assessment by a psychiatrist. In Arlington, the aspiring juvenile officer is interviewed and evaluated by existing juvenile officers. Apparent ability to work with the other officers is a sought-after characteristic. The members of this unit are also likely to look into a candidate's reputation among juveniles who live in the officer's assigned work area.

Interviews onsite led staff to believe that unit heads generally seek such individuals. Whether the selection process or whether respect for juveniles bears any relation to the potential for rehabilitation remains unknown.

Training of Juvenile Officers. Most juvenile officers learn on the job. Specialized training occurs when there is a fortuitous combination of support from a chief or juvenile unit head, available department resources or outside funding, and desire for training in a specific area among unit officers. The nature and extent of formal training given officers varies greatly among departments, and within any unit. A review of the personnel records in Greensboro indicated that its unit officers had not received any structured juvenile-related training within the department. Training outside the department included university-sponsored crime-specific seminars, general courses in delinquency, and attendance at national conferences or conventions. No

two officers in the unit had a similar training background, and there seemed to be no systematic approach to offering training to officers. In contrast, juvenile officers in Washington, D.C., receive a five-day course at the police academy that focuses on regulations, special orders, and paperwork. Unfortunately, a new officer does not always receive this course until months after placement in the unit. Although some juvenile officers in some departments receive an eight-week course from the Delinquency Control Institute of the University of Southern California or the University of Minnesota, such extensive training is atypical.

Informal, on-the-job training is the principal training a juvenile officer receives. This generally consists of being introduced to unit procedures by an experienced juvenile officer or supervisor in the unit, and being observed and monitored by the unit's commander until the commander gains confidence in the new juvenile officer's performance. Once confidence exists, degree of supervision and officer accountability depends on the commander's style.

The information gained through site visits led to the conclusion that the survey response to the training question may have exaggerated the amount of training given juvenile officers.

Experience of Juvenile Officers. There is no typical experiential profile of the juvenile officer. Of the 14 juvenile officers who comprise the juvenile unit in Greensboro, for example, 88 percent are between 40 and 60 years of age; 80 percent have been members of the department for longer than 15 years; and 60 percent were in the unit for more than six years. In contrast, most juvenile officers in Torrance are between 20 and 40 years of age (71 percent of the seven juvenile

officers), members of the department for less than 15 years (85 percent), and in the unit for less than five years (85 percent). Neither unit showed any pattern of pre-juvenile unit police experience; juvenile officers came to each unit with very different work histories.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate the role experience plays in acquiring or sharpening diagnostic skills. From an assessment perspective, a unit that depends on experience as the primary method by which juvenile officers are expected to acquire these skills is leaving a great deal to chance.

According to a study of one juvenile justice system, undertaken by Cicourel, most police officers developed their own theories about the delinquency of particular individuals, groups, and communities, and made their own decisions on the basis of how closely an individual "fitted" into the categories established.²⁵ Staff visits to juvenile units supported Cicourel's findings.

Supervision of Juvenile Officers. Officer direction and supervision varies across juvenile units, as it does across departments. In Greensboro, for example, the captain in charge of the juvenile unit is actively involved in every case: assigning cases, inspecting reports, and reviewing officers' decisions. Officer performance is evaluated every six months according to a highly structured evaluation format. In contrast, the sergeant in charge of the juvenile unit in Washington, D.C., routinely signs off on cases the officers present to him as "closed" on their books.

Accepting the variability of supervisory styles, staff had the impression, following the 12 site visits, that most supervision given

juvenile officers is not oriented to inculcate skills needed either to identify juveniles in need of assistance or to diagnose the nature of the juvenile's problem. In light of this observation, the ABA/IJA's recommendation for the periodic evaluation of police juvenile operations is particularly important.²⁶

Selecting Dispositions

Knowing Available Treatment Alternatives. According to Kobetz, specialized police-juvenile operations should seek treatment alternatives to the referral of juvenile offenders to court.²⁷ Little direct information exists, however, about whether juvenile officers have information about treatment alternatives in their city or county. Indirect information, pieced together, led to the conclusion that most units consult with only a few groups on a regular basis. First, only 60 percent of the survey respondents answered a question asking them to list the community agencies that receive juvenile referrals. Second, interviews with juvenile officers indicated that most officers made almost all referrals to one or two treatment alternatives. This seems appropriate for units that rely on diagnostic agencies to coordinate referrals to treatment agencies. In Lincoln, the Youth Services System (YSS) plays this role. The South Bay Diversion Programs play the equivalent role for the Torrance unit. For most units, however, the agencies were not diagnostic services. Third, units visited either did not have handbooks containing the names of potential referral agencies or had handbooks which appeared never to have been read.

Selecting the Appropriate Treatment Alternative. There are no data on an officer's ability to select the appropriate treatment alternative

for a given juvenile. The quantitative data which this study generated from two units, however, do indicate that the major decision of the juvenile officers in these units is whether to refer the juvenile to court or to send him or her home. Case dispositions in Greensboro and Torrance are presented in Table 12. According to Table 12, the majority of the juveniles screened in Torrance (58.9 percent), are released to a parent or guardian and sent home (N = 201), and about one-third are petitioned to court. Only 10 percent of the cases are referred to a community-based program, primarily to a diversion program which screens each juvenile and makes an appropriate placement. In Greensboro, a somewhat smaller percentage of cases are sent home (40.7 percent), a larger percentage to court (30.6 percent), and almost 20 percent of the cases receive an alternative disposition, the principal one being psychological counseling for the juvenile and family.

TABLE 12: Case Dispositions, Greensboro and Torrance, 1976-1977

Disposition	Site	
	Greensboro	Torrance
Court		
Home	39.8%	30.6%
Community-Based Program	40.7	58.9
TOTALS	19.4	10.5
	(N=108)	(N=201)

Although most of the available literature on diversion and referral speculates upon police referral decisions, Klein has undertaken several empirical studies of officer diversion practices. In one study, department

orders instructed officers to use referral agencies whenever possible with the beginning offender.²⁸ An examination of records indicated that two-thirds of all referred cases were first offenders. Klein also found that, although referrals to community agencies have increased significantly over the past five years, they remained relatively low. Without the infusion of federal and state funds, he believes, referral rates would recede to an earlier low level. Unfortunately, the data gathered in the course of this study do not shed any light on these findings.

2. Uniformity in Case Disposition

It is difficult to ascertain uniformity of case disposition. This study's research on the issue concluded that a "pool" of similar variables are applied within a unit, and possibly across units, in order to reach a disposition. When juvenile officers in Greensboro and Torrance were questioned about the factors most important in the disposition of recently closed cases, the same factors were mentioned most frequently in both places:

- seriousness of the offense
- prior record of the juvenile
- the juvenile's attitude about the offense
- parental attitude about the offense
- ability of the parent to communicate with and control the juvenile in the future.

Most of these factors were mentioned in the other sites visited as well. Others mentioned with less frequency were preference of the complainant regarding case disposition, and opinions about the juvenile by professionals who have dealt with him or her previously. These findings are

compatible with several empirical studies on the use of police discretion (by patrol) in the arrest decision.²⁹ However, staff also concluded, from data gathered in site visits, that although the variables are applied as a group, the relative weight given to a particular variable will vary according to the context of the situation. For example, in one case the nature of the offense may be given overwhelming priority in reaching a case disposition. In another case, given the same offense, a difference in family attitude may alter the chosen disposition. Because of minimal documentation of attitudinal data in case files, however, the use of such data without onsite observation and interviews can give misleading results.

In order to have another indication of uniformity of dispositions among officers in a unit, each juvenile officer in Greensboro and Torrance was asked to respond to a series of questions based on two hypothetical cases. The hypothetical cases corresponded to typical incidents uncovered in the case files reviewed in each site.* The number of respondents was small ($N = 25$), but the responses themselves revealed some uniformity in expected case dispositions. In each site, juvenile officers in the unit were more likely to be in agreement on the disposition of one of the cases than the other. Based on this observation, staff hypothesized that there is an identifiable group of offenses and offenders who are treated uniformly by the officers in a given unit; the remaining group receives widely varying dispositions from different officers. Research to determine which are the "uniform" and "nonuniform"

*The hypothetical cases may be found in the final report.

cases is desirable, as is empirical research focusing on the attitudinal dimensions used in reaching a case disposition.

Some quantitative evidence exists that, for the Greensboro and Torrance units, two factors consistently influence case dispositions. According to Tables 13 and 14, seriousness of the offense* and arrest history of the juvenile are related to having the case sent to court. As shown on Table 13, larcenies in both Greensboro and Torrance are more likely to be sent home than are burglaries, although the likelihood of this occurring in Torrance is much greater than in Greensboro (71.7 percent and 47.1 percent, respectively). Burglaries in both cities are more likely to be referred to court (64.3 percent and 48.7 percent, respectively) than to receive any other single disposition. Referrals to community-based programs are more frequently made in Greensboro (19.6 percent) than in Torrance (11.0 percent) for larcenies, although the percentages for burglaries are relatively similar (7.1 percent and 11.8 percent, respectively).

TABLE 13: Charge and Disposition, Greensboro and Torrance, 1976-1977

Disposition	Site and Charge			
	Greensboro		Torrance	
	Larceny	Burglary	Larceny	Burglary
Court	33.3%	64.3%	17.3%	48.7%
Home	47.1	28.3	71.7	39.5
Community-Based Program	19.6 (N=51)	7.1 (N=14)	11.0 (N=76)	11.8 (N=64)

*Larceny and burglary cases were selected for analysis because of their large numbers at both sites.

CONTINUED

1 OF 2

According to Table 14, the juvenile's record also is related to case disposition. In Greensboro, for example, 60 percent of the juveniles without any arrest record were sent home; 60 percent of the juveniles with one or more arrests are petitioned to court. Although in Torrance, absolute numbers are smaller for juveniles with an arrest record, the trend seems to be for the "no-priors" to be sent home (78.5 percent) and "priors" to be sent to court (61.5 percent).

TABLE 14: Prior Record and Disposition, Greensboro and Torrance, 1976-1977

Disposition	Site and Record			
	Greensboro		Torrance	
	None	One +	None	One +
Court	20.0%	60.0%	10.8%	61.5%
Home	60.0	20.0	78.5	30.8
Community-Based Program	20.0 (N=55)	20.0 (N=40)	10.7 (N=65)	7.6 (N=13)

Age of offender also correlates with sending an offender to court (Table 15). The data displayed in Table 15 indicate that older juveniles are more likely to be referred to court than are younger juveniles. In Greensboro, where the unit handles only juveniles below the age of 16, approximately 50 percent of the 13-15-year age group is sent to court; the figure for the 9-12-year age group is 19 percent. A similar percentage of juveniles in both age groups is referred to community programs. In Torrance, where the unit handles juveniles up to the age of 18, the trend again is that court cases involve the older juveniles: 42 percent

of the 16-17-year-olds are sent to court; only 12.5 percent of the 9-12-year-olds are. At least half of the juveniles in each age group are sent home.*

TABLE 15: Age and Disposition, Greensboro and Torrance, 1976-1977

Disposition	Site and Age				
	Greensboro		Torrance		
	9-12	13-15	9-12	13-15	16-17
Court	19.4%	49.2%	12.5%	23.7%	42.2%
Home	58.1	30.5	62.5	63.3	50.0
Community-Based Program	22.6 (N=31)	20.3 (N=59)	25.0 (N=24)	12.8 (N=109)	7.8 (N=90)

Based upon observations and interviews, cases considered most appropriate for court are those in which the police believe that they have "failed" on previous occasions to "turn the kid around." Because it is the informal policy of juvenile units to give a juvenile several "chances" before petitioning a case to court--release to home with a warning, police probation, suggested participation in community-based program--officers who petition a case to court definitely hope for some negative sanction to be applied to the juvenile.

To conclude, it appears from staff experience that the decision to send a case to court, as Klein found in his study of diversion from court, is based more on police judgments and motives than on identifying juveniles who should avoid court labeling.³⁰

*Numbers were too small in some cells to undertake multiple factor analysis.

3. More Punitive Sanctions

Although this study omitted the question of whether the police decision not to petition a case to court results in a more punitive sanction than if the case were petitioned, it is a serious issue that warrants further research. According to case file data, approximately 20 percent of the cases disposed of in Greensboro and 10 percent in Torrance were diverted into community-based programs. An attempt to reduce the juveniles' involvement in the juvenile justice system seems to occur to some extent in most departments with juvenile units. What "treatment" these cases receive is unknown, and deserves further research.

In one study of the issue, Klein found that cohorts of offenders referred to agencies by the police received more treatment than comparable groups for whom petitions were filed.³¹ As a rule, this latter group was typically released at intake without treatment, or given informal probation. Klein concluded that treatment outside the system may be more coercive than treatment within the system (i.e., court action). He and others also found that control over juveniles is being extended to a larger and less seriously involved sector of the juvenile population.³² These researchers concluded that referred youngsters, rather than being diverted from the justice system, are more commonly drawn from those ordinarily released without further action.

Juvenile officers interviewed for this study were concerned about "keeping the kid from getting a record." This concern seems to be based more on ideas about the inappropriateness and inadequacy of the judicial system than about its potential negative consequences. First, officers believe that many cases they handle would never have reached even the

point of an arrest when they themselves were juveniles. They cite the destruction of neighborhoods, the decline of the stable family, and the community's growing dependence on formal legal action as major causes for police arrests and prosecutions of juveniles who are guilty of relatively harmless "juvenile" behavior (e.g., destroying property through spray painting). Two studies of factors influencing the police disposition of juvenile offenders support this point indirectly. Hohenstein concluded, on the basis of an analysis of police dispositions of 504 cases, that attitude of the victim is one of the three most important factors in determining the police disposition; where victims made statements to the police that they were against prosecution, offenders were "remediated" in 96 percent of the cases (i.e., no arrest). The victim's attitude, in fact, was a more powerful determinant than seriousness of offense.³³ Black and Reiss, exploring the situational aspects of policing juveniles in three large cities, also found that the imposition of an arrest sanction represents the preferences of complainants, among other variables.³⁴

Second, many juvenile officers believe that the court can do little for the juvenile that the police themselves could not do. One exception to this belief concerns the "hardened" juvenile, who is a community menace and considered a "juvenile" only because of an arbitrary age definition established by the state. The 15-year-old robber of "mom and pop" shops in Washington, D.C., with a long record of petty theft, is not a "juvenile" to police officers. He or she is a danger to the community. The second exception is found in jurisdictions in which municipal and state services are available to the juvenile only through

court referral. This situation exists in Duluth, for example, where the juvenile court is the only institution empowered to purchase services. Because payment for most public services is contingent on an order of the juvenile court, signed by a judge, eligibility criteria established by many agencies screen out police referrals. In this case, not petitioning to court, as Cicourel points out in The Social Organization of the Court, can mean that a juvenile will not receive needed services.³⁵

4. Duplication of Effort

The extent to which other juvenile justice system agencies duplicate or counteract the activities and decisions of both juvenile and nonjuvenile police officers is site-specific, but it was uncovered often enough to be considered a critical issue for further research. The existence of a police juvenile unit does not guarantee overlapping screening layers, but the unit's existence increases the likelihood of its occurrence. This layering effect, taken to the extreme, works as follows: The juvenile officer performs an initial screening of all juveniles accused of a crime. The purpose is to eliminate from the system those cases that can be handled informally, by either a parent, the police, or a community-based program. The juvenile who is taken into custody for the first time usually is released by the juvenile unit with a warning. A second or third offense may result in participation in a police program, a community referral, or a referral to the court intake unit.

Court intake's purpose in screening cases is also to eliminate those that should not appear before a judge. Police and court intake are likely to apply some of the same criteria--seriousness of the offense, arrest record, family relationships, and juvenile and family

attitudes toward the offense. The intake unit, however, may have no prior record of its own on the juvenile; the fact that the juvenile may have had several police contacts may have little effect on their judgment. The court intake unit may then react in exactly the same way as the police juvenile unit on its first contact with the juvenile: It may treat the juvenile as a "first-timer," with informal probation or outright release to parents. Only after the juvenile fails to respond to the treatment alternative, or is referred to intake on another complaint, does the case go to the prosecutor and judge.

The prosecuting attorney may also reject cases. Although the prosecutor must be concerned with questions of legal sufficiency, interviews led to the conclusion that the more typical concerns focus on office policies for handling specific types of cases in specific ways, and on personnel problems that forced the prosecution to handle only the most urgent cases. The case folder that arrives in front of the judge may receive only a quick review and a last attempt to eliminate a percentage of the cases from reaching the formal court hearing stage.

The result of this layering effect is a paring process at each successive pre-adjudicatory stage, which challenges the decisionmaking of all previous stages. The number of cases appearing before a judge for a formal hearing is minuscule compared to the number of juveniles taken into custody.

Juvenile officers are outraged by this screening process. In their opinion, they have eliminated from the system the juveniles who should have been eliminated, and they believe that other actors in the system needlessly redo their work and fail to meet their obligation to

deal more harshly with juveniles the police have pinpointed as a serious community problems.

Two variables are particularly important in determining whether efforts are duplicated: (1) the extent to which the justice agencies operate as a system; and (2) the type of case feedback mechanisms which exist to serve these agencies. Several of the sites visited functioned in a coordinated manner because of a common denominator: a powerful judge. Through the exercise of the judge's authority, intake and prosecution learned which cases the judge thought were too trivial to be heard in court and which juveniles the judge thought should have a particular type of sanction imposed. In Tucson, for example, a new judge decided to limit the number of juveniles being sent to state facilities. Although the former judge had sent approximately 380 juveniles in a recent year to state facilities, during the first four months of the new calendar year, the new judge sent only 11 juveniles to state facilities. In Topeka, one outspoken judge minimized police screening discretion by insisting that the unit forward reports of all juvenile incidents to the intake unit of the court, including cases not referred to court. This order had the effect of curtailing the use of police discretion and, supposedly, brought uniformity of treatment to the youth of the city through tight control over intake.

In jurisdictions where the judge, by choice or design, takes a less active role in dictating policy, other factors come to the fore. In Multnomah County, for example, the assistant prosecuting attorney takes an aggressive role in determining which cases should appear before the court and the judge follows his advice. The power of the prosecuting

attorney in Washington, D.C., derives primarily from the diffusion of power among criminal court judges who rotate through both the adult and juvenile courts. Although the intake unit of the court also plays an important role, its power is rarely distinct from that of the presiding judge.

Units have varied feedback mechanisms for learning about which cases the court and community agencies want to see. In Torrance, a diversion program staff member maintains a desk within the unit. This diversion program worker, who is available several days a week, helps the police screen cases out of the system. The worker also lets the police know about the success or failure of juveniles they have referred to outside agencies. In Lincoln, the screening officer within the unit has daily contact with the director of the local youth service bureau, the community's major referral program. Through this informal communication, the police are able to refer juveniles for whom services are appropriate and available. In Duluth, the unit is in informal, but regular, contact with several system components. One member of the intake unit has daily contact with the head of the juvenile unit on every case sent to intake. The lieutenant in charge of the unit receives daily visits from the prosecuting attorney in charge of the juvenile court. Discussion centers not only on cases before the court, but also on how the unit is handling its current open cases. In addition, a Children's Service Division case-worker stationed in the juvenile court routinely sends copies of reports of judicial actions to the juvenile unit, intake, and probation.

Juvenile officers seldom report case outcomes to patrol officers or detectives. As a result, arresting or investigating officers often

dissociate their functions from those of the juvenile officers. An attitude of "I do my job, you do your job" results once the case is passed to the unit. In some cases, the lack of communication causes confusion about which decisions are made by the juvenile officer and which are made by the court. Juvenile officers often get the responsibility or blame for court actions which nonjuvenile officers find unsatisfactory.

Most juvenile units do not obtain complete or timely information on the disposition of a case referred to court. A review of unit files usually revealed the last entry to be the police disposition, not that of the court. Reasons why this occurs vary among units. In Lincoln, the court routinely is supposed to notify the unit of each case disposition; but the notification is sent to central records, rather than to the unit. In Onondaga County the same situation occurs, with a six-month lapse between court case disposition and police department notification. In Washington, D.C., no formal case feedback mechanism existed until recently, when the department assigned a police officer to gather disposition statistics. The statistics involve aggregate numbers of cases referred to the court by each precinct; the specific disposition of individual cases is still unknown to the unit.

A Department Without a Unit

Juveniles in Multnomah County are not screened in the manner described in this chapter. There are only three decisions in the case available to the arresting team officer: (1) release the juvenile without any formal action; (2) release to parents, but refer to court for formal action; or (3) take into custody and transport to the detention facility to await formal court action.

A decision is always made on the spot, at the time when the juvenile is under direct suspicion of having committed a crime. In direct contrast to the juvenile officers in departments that have a juvenile unit, the arresting officers in Multnomah County made the screening decision, and made it quickly. In more than half of 25 selected cases, officers admitted that they knew what the disposition would be before the preliminary investigation was complete.

As far as the police officer is concerned, the information needed to screen most cases is elementary. What this officer does is primarily a preliminary investigation. The officer discusses the case with the suspect to find out whether the suspect admits or denies the alleged deviant behavior; speaks to individuals present at the scene to see if they can make any firm determination about the seriousness of the offense and the strength of the case; inquires into the juvenile's background--with whom is he or she living? How long has he or she been in the area? In most cases the officer will ask a juvenile about a past arrest record, while a simultaneous radio check is being made; the officer compares these two sources to determine the trustworthiness of the youth. By the time the records check is run, the officer has decided about the disposition. The formal case conference which occurs in most juvenile units is seldom held. A parent is never consulted with the idea of obtaining information that would affect the officer's decision, although a talk with a parent may influence the officer's decision about whether to place a youth in a detention facility pending court action. Officers seldom speak with other officers (one out of 25 cases) or other juvenile justice system personnel (one out of 25) regarding a particular juvenile.

Staff observations and case discussions suggest that 90 percent of all case dispositions are decided in a matter of three to four minutes.

Officers were questioned on the likely disposition in two hypothetical cases, as was the case for Greensboro and Torrance. The hypotheticals were as follows:

Larceny. Two white females, 13 and 14 years old, were apprehended in the parking lot of a department store by a security guard. The security guard had observed #1 suspect place various articles of cosmetics in her pocket, while #2 suspect had engaged the salesgirl in conversation. Both subjects exited the store without paying for said articles. Suspects were turned over to patrol with the appropriate paperwork completed by the security officer. Upon a review of both juvenile records, it was found that neither had any prior record.

Burglary. Between the hours of 0800 and 1300 a residential burglary was committed. One white male, 14 years old, was apprehended by a patrol officer two blocks from the scene. The suspect was found with various articles of jewelry in his possession valued at approximately \$100. Suspect was found to have one prior arrest for petty larceny within the last year. Juvenile was cooperative when questioned by patrol and detectives and furnished officers with all necessary information.

Contrasting with findings in Greensboro and Torrance, officers in Multnomah County were not likely to be in greater agreement on the disposition of the larceny case than they were in the burglary case, although in all three sites the disposition for burglary was more likely to be of a coercive nature.*

*Eight of the eleven responding officers in Multnomah County said they would counsel and release the juveniles in the larceny case, and three of the eleven would refer them to court without detention. In contrast, seven of the eleven officers would select detention and court as the disposition for the burglary offense, and four would release to home.

There are no agencies or groups in Multnomah County that take referrals from the sheriff's office. The court's intake staff ultimately decides on the wisdom of detention, formal court action, referral to a social service agency or program, probation, or release to home with no further action.

The police have few options for handling a juvenile case, and little guidance on what criteria to use in reaching a disposition. In the 25 selected cases, the overwhelmingly important criterion was severity of offense. Other frequently considered factors were, in order of importance, the suspect's demeanor at time of police contact, arrest record, age, and strength of evidence. In short, the most important factors used in reaching a disposition were those that could be instantly gleaned at the scene of the incident.

Officers estimated that approximately 65 percent to 75 percent of the suspects were referred to court. Of the 25 cases, 16 cases, or 64 percent, resulted in court referral. Only very minor problems--simple assaults between young children where there was no injury, or neighborhood disturbances--warranted less serious treatment than court referral. A suspect caught taking anything of value (in several cases observed the property was worth less than a dollar) was arrested and referred to court. Several officers stated that if there were a complainant, the officers would proceed against the suspect regardless of other considerations. According to statements made, officers do not see themselves as social agents; their job is to proceed against suspects, to act on complaints, and to protect the community. This attitude is reinforced by a formal court intake system. Both police and intake believe that the

juvenile is not stigmatized (i.e., labeled) unless a formal court petition is filed.

In all cases observed and discussed, the disposition decision was made by the team officer without any supervisory review. Although a system exists in which the duty sergeant is supposed to review each decision, in reality an officer's decision was not questioned.

CHAPTER V

THE PROGRAM OPERATION FUNCTION

This chapter presents information on the program operation function of juvenile officers. This discussion is considerably briefer than those of the preceding chapters; the wide range of programs sponsored by juvenile units precluded intensive study of this area within the time frame of this study. Consequently, more staff time was devoted to understanding the screening and investigation functions. In many departments, the department--and not the juvenile unit--sponsors the program. A given program may even be staffed entirely by nonjuvenile officers.

The following discussion attempts to:

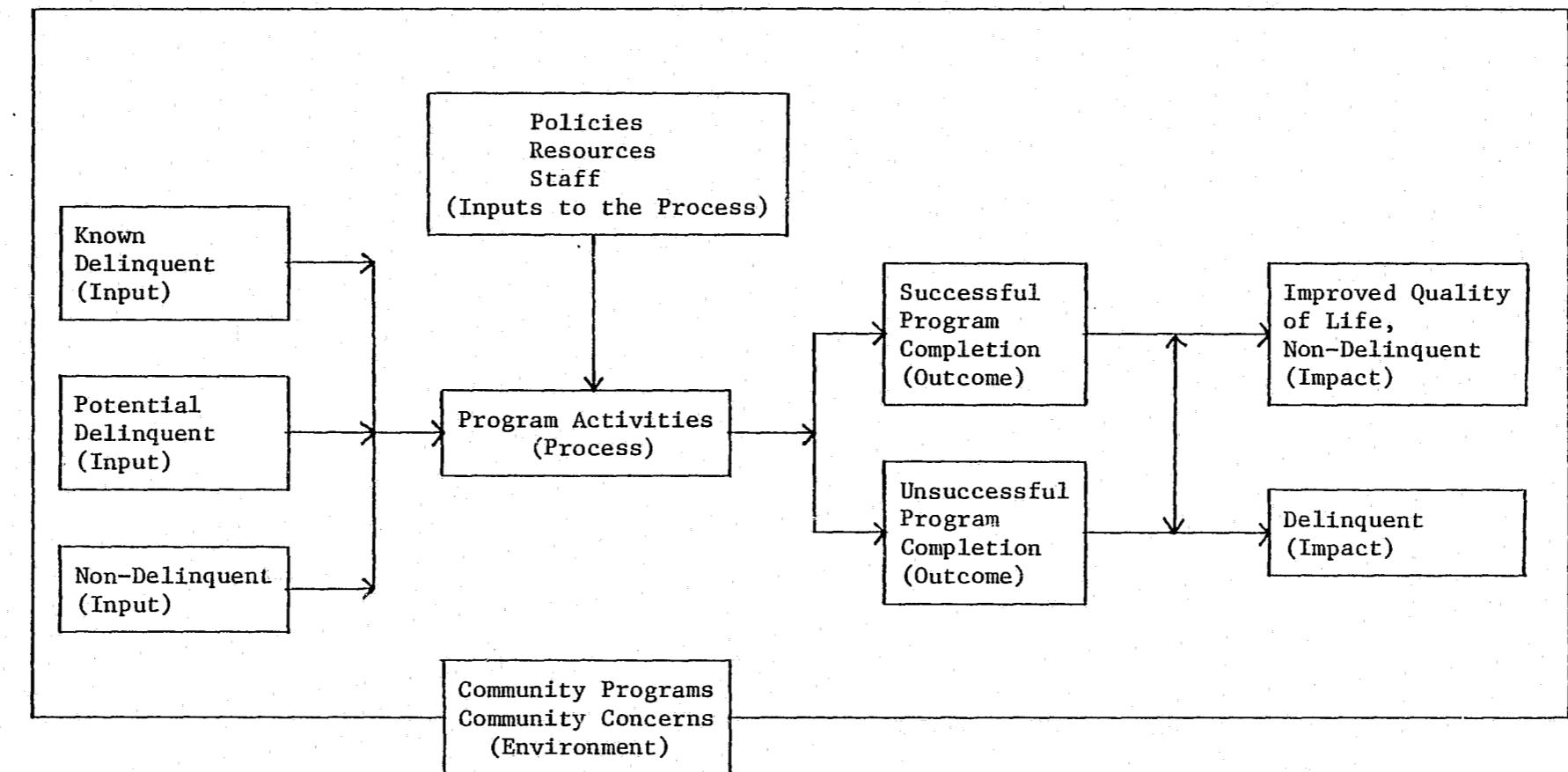
- o display the components of the program operation function;
- o identify the more typical police programs; and
- o review the literature that addresses the topic.

Flow Model of the Program Operation Process

Police departments have taken the initiative in providing programs designed to prevent juvenile delinquency and to rehabilitate the suspected youthful offender. Prevention programs usually offer participation to any interested juvenile. Rehabilitation programs, in contrast, typically restrict eligibility to those juveniles who have been taken into custody.

The flow diagram in Figure 5 is general enough to be useful in delineating the major components of most prevention and rehabilitation programs. The diagram focuses on program activities (process), the juveniles who participate in the program (input), completion of the program by these juveniles (outcome), the desired long-range effects of

FIGURE 5: Flow Model for the Program Operation Function of the Police Department



the program (impact), and variables directly affecting program activities (inputs to the process) and those in the larger community (environment).

According to Figure 5, police-sponsored programs work with juveniles who are known to have committed illegal acts, are considered potential delinquents, or are considered not likely to become involved in delinquent activities. Although juveniles in each group can participate in prevention programs (e.g., minibikes in Lincoln), police do aim their resources at the potential law violators, as perceived by police officers, school officials, or social service workers. Juveniles who participate in rehabilitation programs (e.g., police probation in Onondaga) usually have been taken into custody for a specific offense and referred to the program as the case disposition.

The immediate successful outcome of any program is its completion by the juvenile. For the police probation program in Lincoln, success might mean an essay on shoplifting; for the Limited Adjustment Program in Baltimore, it could mean the juvenile's maintaining a part-time job. For both rehabilitation programs, however, a halt to the juvenile's delinquent behavior is one of the primary, longer range objectives (impact). Inputs to the process vary according to each program. For the athletic team, it might be community-contributed resources; for the school program, it might be school policies and teacher support. In assessing the role a particular police program plays in the community, the larger environment of community programs and community concerns should be taken into account, such as the program's potential competition with other agencies for juvenile participants.

Prevention Programs

Most police prevention programs are school or community-based. The following programs are the typical ones operated by police departments, although not necessarily by the juvenile unit.

School Programs

School Resource Officers (SROs). In a number of cities, officers of the juvenile unit are assigned to specific schools in a resource capacity. At the high school and junior high school levels, the officer acts as an educational aide to the teachers, conducting periodic classes on safety, law enforcement, and drug education. The SRO also is available as an advisor to help teachers deal with unruly or disruptive students. This officer is in personal contact with both problem and well-adjusted juveniles and is able to anticipate and minimize problems likely to occur. At the grade school level, this officer is known as Officer Friendly, spending a great deal of time introducing the police function to youth. The officers in this program are probably spending less than full time in any given school, but may be rotating among several schools.

School Patrol Officers. Unlike the School Resource Officer, the School Patrol Officer is directly concerned with maintaining order within the school. This program seems to originate in schools that have suffered from classroom disruption and vandalism and consequently felt the need to augment their own disciplinary staff. The unit officer monitors the halls and grounds, aids teachers directly when there are classroom problems and is available to help maintain order at school dismissal times. In this program, the officer is less directly involved in

teaching or counseling activities, and more involved in enforcing laws applicable to the school setting.*

Community Programs

Athletic Leagues. The theory behind the police athletic program is that vigorous activity is important for juveniles who have spare hours but insufficient interests or opportunities to expend their energies constructively. A juvenile whose spare time is constructively occupied, the thinking goes, has less time and energy to become involved in destructive activity. In addition, athletic leagues give juveniles the opportunity to participate, to compete, and to achieve. One of the most traditional and popular police programs is the Police Athletic League. Through the league, the police sponsor and organize athletic teams, provide coaching, solicit community participation by obtaining donations for uniforms and trophies, recruit participants, and develop schedules and secure playing facilities, allowing local juveniles to compete in numerous team and individual sports. Programs include baseball, football, basketball, and soccer leagues as well as competitions in swimming, wrestling, boxing, and gymnastics.

The leagues may or may not be organized by officers from the juvenile unit. Many departments which cannot sustain their own PAL program become involved in local youth athletics through the unit's sponsorship of teams in the community, such as the Little League, or Pop Warner League. The

*This function often is performed by school security officers who are employees of the school district, not sworn officers from the police department.

funds for this endeavor often are raised directly from the officers within the department, on a voluntary basis, or from the community.

Youth Centers. Youth centers serve as community clubs where juveniles can congregate in the evenings. In Washington, D.C., for example, the police department sponsors ten youth clubs which are open from three in the afternoon until nine-thirty at night. The clubs are operated by the unit but are financed through contributions from the community and a grant from a local charity. Each club is staffed by two officers from the juvenile unit whose permanent assignment is to operate the club and monitor club activities. The activities vary from basketball to movies, depending upon the adequacy of staff, facilities, and budget. Departments that do not have the resources to develop local community centers may sponsor more traditional community programs, such as Boy Scouts or motor bike clubs.

Summer Camp. A large number of departments operate summer camps for local juveniles. With the assistance of nonjuvenile officers, for example, the unit may send groups of disadvantaged juveniles to a rural camp for a short period (e.g., one or two weeks). This gives the youth the opportunity to experience an alternative living situation and environment, and the chance for a close, personal relationship with a police officer.

Rehabilitation Programs

Police rehabilitation programs are typically the province of the juvenile unit and place a juvenile on probation in the charge of the juvenile officer handling the case. The formality of these programs varies, as does the extent to which all juvenile officers participate

in each program. For example, a police probation program was developed, and is predominantly used, by one juvenile officer in Onondaga County. The program consists of this officer's decision to request that any alleged juvenile offender meet with him regularly for counseling, or perform a specified activity, such as community or victim assistance. Program policies, eligibility criteria, and program activities (i.e., conditions of probation) are left largely to the discretion of this officer. In contrast, a larger counseling/referral/employment program, such as Baltimore's Limited Adjustment Program, is formalized in its goals, procedures, and approach; institutionalized within the unit; and known throughout the department and the city.

Police rehabilitation programs often allow an officer to retain some control over the juveniles, impose a negative sanction, and/or provide restriction in the community.

Questions for Future Research

Regardless of the specifics of any police-operated program, there are two broad questions to ask:

1. Do prevention programs prevent juveniles from committing crimes?
2. Do rehabilitation programs keep delinquents from recidivating?

No empirical data were available on these questions at the sites visited.

According to the existing evaluation literature, it is difficult to ascertain whether prevention programs operated by police--or any other group--do, in fact, prevent crimes by juveniles. A recent literature search by Lundman, McFarland, and Scarpitti unearthed 6,500 prevention programs operated between 1936 and 1973.³⁶ The researchers concluded that none of the 25 programs which provided sufficient data for an

evaluation actually prevented delinquency. Another study, by Dixon and Wright, focused on prevention programs providing services to youth between 1965 and 1974.³⁷ From a listing of 6,600 programs, the authors limited their concern to 95 programs with empirically based information. Of the 95 programs, only 50 were found to have conducted a rigorous evaluation (e.g., used control groups). When the researchers reevaluated the 95 programs, they failed to show significant results in effectiveness. Not one of these 95 programs was initiated or operated by police.

It is also questionable whether the operation of delinquency prevention programs, through any means other than law enforcement strategies and tactics, should be part of the police role. Kobetz has stated that, although police would provide leadership in the formation of needed youth-serving organizations, they "should encourage non-police leaders to take over and carry on the activities rather than expending official department time and funds";³⁸ he has also stated that police officers with an interest in Boy Scouts, Little League sports, Boys' Clubs and similar recreational and athletic programs "should be encouraged to participate in these activities--but on their off-duty time--the same as other responsible citizens."³⁹

Recent research has cast serious doubts on the relative effectiveness of rehabilitation endeavors. Both Martinson and Wilks and Schur have presented arguments for the abandonment of the individualized treatment philosophy inherent in the goal of rehabilitation programs. Martinson and Wilks reviewed evaluations of adult and juvenile intervention programs done between 1945 and 1967.⁴⁰ They concluded that

evaluations of such programs show little program impact on recidivism.

Schur reviewed intervention programs directed solely at youth.⁴¹ His findings are consistent with those of Martinson and Wilks. Although the authors draw different policy implications from these same conclusions (Martinson and Wilks emphasized punishment as a deterrent to crime; Schur emphasized juvenile court referral for serious violations), all argue for abandoning the individualized treatment (rehabilitation) approach.

Until methodological flaws in the evaluation of prevention and rehabilitation programs can be corrected, it will be difficult to know whether the programs or the evaluation methodologies have produced the findings recorded.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Responses to the mail survey (Chapter II) suggested that most city and county police departments servicing populations of more than 100,000 currently operate juvenile units. Telephone interviews and field visits, concentrated in departments serving populations of from 100,000 to 500,000, revealed that most units perform one or more of three functions-- investigation, screening, and program operation--through which the units attempt to achieve several primary goals. Yet our review of the literature has revealed that little empirical data on the effectiveness of juvenile unit operations exist.

The following sections provide an assessment of baseline data needs within the unit and the juvenile justice system; describe one approach to monitoring unit operations derived from the functional framework used throughout this report; present several reasons for not undertaking an in-depth national evaluation of juvenile units; and list additional areas of research that should receive priority attention in the future.

Baseline Data Needs

This study clarified one aspect of police-juvenile relationships: Current recordkeeping practices must change if the community and the nation are to understand the nature of the juvenile crime problem and the handling of juveniles by the police and the juvenile justice system. Grouping descriptively dissimilar offenses does a disservice to policymakers. So does a comparison and/or aggregation of offenses defined differently across jurisdictions. The variation of the age of majority

between 16 and 18 years of age across jurisdictions further complicates such comparisons.

Although this study did not attempt to assess police recordkeeping techniques systematically, several general observations have implications for future data gathering. For example, no information currently exists on patrol officers' handling of juveniles on the street. Where a daily log is kept by patrol, an entry will not indicate whether an incident involved a juvenile or an adult. In addition, no information exists on the informal contact(s) a juvenile officer has with a juvenile and his or her family. The information included in case jackets, or summarized by a juvenile unit on a monthly basis at the request of the sheriff or chief of police, may satisfy only minimal state reporting and funding requirements rather than enable internal policy planning.

It is often difficult to tell from a recordkeeping system how, or how well, that system is functioning. First, differing data bases may be used in one system. In Onondaga County, for example, the police count juveniles and the court counts incidents. In Lincoln, the police use team policing sectors, their major referral agency, the Youth Service System, uses the census tract; the schools use school districts. Second, the meaning of data categories is not always clear. In Washington, D.C., a case dismissed for "lack of prosecutorial merit" may mean that the prosecutor's staff shortage required that the office give this case low prosecutorial priority. Third, information does not flow back and forth through the system. Police records regarding cases petitioned to court or referred to community agencies are incomplete. In Lincoln, it may take six months for central records to learn the disposition of

a court case; this disposition may never reach the juvenile unit. Cases that are disposed of before a judicial hearing may have no entry in police files. Most juvenile units visited had case file information on police disposition only; even the outcomes of police-community referrals were unknown.

Several implications for data gathering might result in a more accurate picture of juvenile crime and the operation of the juvenile justice system:

- Descriptive information is needed within offense categories for which juveniles are taken into custody to give a more precise picture of the nature of juvenile offenses. This might result in the use of new categorical distinctions more appropriate for disposition purposes than are the current code distinctions.
- National data should be collected and analyzed according to offense, offender, and jurisdictional categories that would be more helpful for policy or funding decisions on the local and national levels.
- Longitudinal information is needed which tracks juveniles through the entire justice process. This is the necessary first step to creating a justice "system," by analyzing necessary and unnecessary repetitions of activities and decisions.

Monitoring Unit Activities

A monitoring design that maintains information on what a juvenile unit and its officers are doing is a necessary step which precedes evaluating how well they are doing. Program monitoring should be viewed as a management tool which

. . . provides current information on the implementation, operation and immediate output of a project while it is in progress. When any of these is judged inadequate, management can take corrective action to increase the chances that a project will satisfy . . . objectives and goals.⁴²

The basis for monitoring is the description of the program or project. For example, the flow diagrams presented for the investigation and screening function display the inputs, outcomes, and processes of these functions. Before any monitoring system can be implemented, there has to be a determination of what information is needed, a development of procedures to produce the type and quality of information needed, and a means of assuring that the monitoring information is used.

It would be premature to detail a monitoring design gathering information on unit functions without knowing the data needs of the unit or department. The following discussion briefly indicates a general approach that might be used for monitoring; the final report contains a more detailed discussion.

A useful approach is to begin by asking units to answer two interrelated questions (which are a necessary first step to any evaluation and which can be answered without full agreement on ultimate goals):

- what activities are the officers performing;
- what are the outcomes of these activities.

Activities

Few juvenile unit officers document all of their activities. Although the variety of officer activities is great--from public speaking to interrogating juveniles--units should try to: (1) distinguish the major functions officers perform; (2) isolate the activities involved in each function; and (3) decide what information unit supervisors should have about these activities.

Once the activities are outlined, the unit must decide what it wants to know about the activities. For example, the unit may want to know several things about interviews undertaken in the course of investigating

a case: the number of interviews; the relationship of the interviewee to the case (e.g., victim, witness); whether the information gained was additional, verifying, repeat, or worthless; the time taken to conduct the interviews. This same information may be desirable for the interviews undertaken for the screening function, although the information gathered and the use to which the information is put will vary.

The information gathered on officer activities should have a clear purpose. In one unit the purpose might be to compare unit officers; that is, to determine which officers are doing the more thorough case investigations. In another unit, it may be to determine which interviews lead to new information, in an effort to choose more efficiently interviewees who can provide good information. In a third unit, information gathered on the investigative process might link investigative activities with investigative outcomes (e.g., to determine the amount of investigative effort which is put into cases which are not being cleared).

This approach is also applicable to the screening function. For example, a unit may want to know several things about the agency contacts an officer makes in the course of reaching a case disposition: the number of contacts made; agencies contacted (e.g., drug addiction center, mental health clinic); the nature of the information solicited; the agency's responsiveness. Ultimately, officers might use this information to evaluate their contact with community service agencies or to support developing new community resources. Throughout, attention should be given to the possible discrepancy between what officers report they do and what they actually do.

Outcomes

For each unit function and component activities, there are several potential outcomes. For example, outcomes of the investigative process may be that a case is not cleared, is cleared without arrest, is cleared by arrest and sent to intake, or is cleared and disposed of without recourse to court. Cases sent to intake may or may not reach the prosecutor for review, and cases reaching the prosecutor may or may not be heard before a judge and adjudicated.

The type of information to be gathered on outcomes of the investigative function and the use to which the information is to be put should be decided simultaneously. For example, if a unit wants to know its clearance record, it will attempt to gather information on the number of cases not cleared and compare it with the number of cases cleared. A unit wanting to assess the relative effectiveness of sending different types of cases to court would gather information on the number and types of cases sent to intake, reaching the prosecutor, and heard by a judge. This kind of information can lead to unit decisions about the types of cases into which officers should put greater investigative effort.

The screening function has its own set of possible outcomes: release to home, referral to community programs, petition to court, and participation in a police program. Beyond these outcomes, a petition to court intake can lead to several additional outcomes which return juveniles to their homes, place them in community programs, send their cases to the prosecutor, or provide them with intake services (i.e., some form of probation).

An important question to ask about both of these functions is whether the outcomes are the ones the unit and the department desire. To answer this question, it is necessary to have the answers to the following questions:

Investigations

1. Is the information gathered by juvenile officers needed to clear cases?
2. Is the information gathered by juvenile officers needed to prosecute cases?

Screening

1. Are similar cases disposed of similarly by all juvenile officers?
2. Do cases referred to court by juvenile officers reach the stage of a judicial hearing?

On a basic level, a unit may want to summarize the case decisions its officers have made during the year (e.g., the number released to home, referred to community programs, etc.). To add more complexity to the assessment, the unit may want to determine whether different types of offenses (e.g., burglary, larceny) are likely to receive different dispositions (e.g., most burglary offenses are sent to court, most larcenies are sent home). Finally, the unit may want to determine how intake, the prosecutor, and the judge dispose of those cases it deems "serious". (that is, those sent to court). This information can lead to unit policy decisions about case dispositions or attempts to work in closer contact with the court components.

Explanatory Variables

Gathering information on the processes and outcomes of case investigation and screening is the first step in learning how the unit and

its officers operate. Trying to understand why the unit works as it does is the second step, involving specific explorations for each unit and department. The range of potential explanatory variables is wide, from those related to department policies (over which unit officers may have some control), to those related to community attitudes (over which unit officers may have little control).

The final report contains a listing of variables which are particularly relevant for these purposes. In addition, it presents measurement models of the investigation and screening process.

National Evaluation Concerns

A national evaluation of the operation of police juvenile units that might gather more empirical data in an attempt to answer the question, "Should there be a police juvenile unit?" is unwarranted. This conclusion is grounded in several reasons which have a negative cumulative impact. First, the organization of a police department to handle juveniles is a local matter. Because the juvenile unit does nothing that cannot be handled elsewhere in the department or justice system, whether or not to have a unit and what duties to assign to it are administrative decisions for each police chief which involve a host of local department and system variables. Whether the unit, in fact, does accomplish the operational and administrative goals set for it by the department entails a management study which asks questions that a national evaluation is not suited to answer.

Second, the more important questions in policing juveniles deal with the efficacy of the functions themselves (e.g., the productivity of investigations, the uniformity of screening, the effectiveness of

prevention programs), rather than with which police unit performs these functions.

Third, telephone interviews and field visits indicate that current trends in policing--team policing, department decentralization, generalist officers--are undermining the role and autonomy of the juvenile unit. These trends are responses to organizational concerns such as officer morale, arrest productivity, upward mobility, and probably would not be influenced by data resulting from a national evaluation of juvenile units.

Fourth, the reality of juvenile unit operations is that many units currently have to compete for cases with other department divisions. For example, units that investigate reported delinquent behavior frequently have jurisdiction over the less serious offender, while the felony case is assigned to the criminal investigations division. As juvenile offenders become increasingly responsible for the more serious crimes in an area, a situation that already exists in the nation's largest cities, and is now a trend in the medium-sized cities, the criminal investigations division probably will investigate even more of these cases.

Fifth, legislative trends are further limiting unit jurisdiction. Although the influence is indirect, legislation removing status offenders from the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, or mandating that certain groups of juvenile offenders, by virtue of their offense and age, be handled by the courts as adults, are decreasing the unit's "business." Rather than investigating these cases, or counseling both juvenile and parent(s), juvenile officers may either ignore the occurrence (e.g.,

runaway, incorrigible) or transport the juvenile to an agency with jurisdiction.

Sixth, whether or not juvenile units can achieve their primary goals may be as, or more, dependent on the workings of the other components of the juvenile justice system than on any internal department changes which a national evaluation might suggest. The parens patriae concept behind the juvenile justice system is still favored for less serious offenders, but the successful implementation of this concept depends on the full cooperation of all system components. Any system change in philosophical orientation from labeling theory to deterrence theory may influence the handling of only the serious juvenile offender (in the direction of a greater number of juveniles being referred to adult criminal court). The current realities of juvenile crime, policing, legislation, and theory lead to the conclusion that a national evaluation of police juvenile units at this time is unwarranted.

Future Research

The data gathered during the course of this study illuminated several directions for future research. The remaining discussion outlines these areas and some of the important research questions.

The Value of Juvenile Investigations

Previous research on the investigative process, supported by the data this study generated, raises several questions about whether, and to what extent, the resources and staff time spent for investigators--including specialized juvenile investigators--are productive and cost-effective. Past research on the adult investigator has led to suggestions of a diminished role for the investigator. Data from the two juvenile

units on which this study conducted empirical research suggested that juvenile investigators add little new information to the cases reviewed.

In fact, it was difficult to discern whether any of the information added to the case was necessary for case prosecution because a large number of cases are diverted from a judicial hearing by police, intake, and prosecution for social, rather than legal, reasons. Few cases reach the point of being tested legally in court. The following three questions focused on juvenile investigators, deserve research attention:

- Are juvenile officers better able to investigate juvenile cases than nonjuvenile officers?
- Is the information gathered by the juvenile unit needed for clearing cases?
- Is the information gathered by the juvenile unit needed for case prosecution?

Based on this report's two case studies, it is our research hypotheses that: (a) little new information is added by the juvenile unit to that already gathered by nonjuvenile officers; (b) the clearing of most cases does not depend on information gathered by the juvenile unit; and (c) the strength of the prosecutor's case does not depend on investigative activities of the juvenile unit. Rather, information gathered by the juvenile unit plays a small role in the decision to prosecute a case. Support for these hypotheses would have implications for department organization (e.g., division of labor among officers, resource allocation) and officer morale, self-esteem, and productivity.

It is also suggested that research be undertaken on several factors that appear to influence the extensiveness and outcome of juvenile investigations. These include:

- case assignment and review process
- officer's pending caseload
- anticipated action by the prosecutor and court
- accuracy of officer knowledge of court disposition

Such research would highlight the relationship between the investigative process and variables that are not case-specific.

Uniformity of Case Disposition

The question of uniformity in case decisionmaking has been researched over two decades. The focus always has been on the arrest decision, but that decision may be less important than the "final" police disposition made by the juvenile officer. Not only does the juvenile officer make the decision to refer a case to court, but this officer also decides on community referrals which, according to research, may be increasing the number of juveniles coerced into "treatment."

The following questions are suggested for future research:

- Are similar cases disposed of similarly by the arresting officer; the juvenile officer; intake; prosecutor; and judge?
- Are police dispositions which refer juveniles to community-based programs increasing the number of juveniles receiving an imposed sanction?

It is our hypothesis that there is an identifiable group of offenses and offenders who are treated uniformly by the police, intake, prosecutor, and judge, although the groups might differ for the various components of the system. However, cases not in this core will be dealt with less uniformly. In addition, each system component (e.g., intake, prosecutor) may define these "core" cases differently.

Information on each of these issues that focuses on uniformity in case decisionmaking, will necessarily have implications for guidelines

for the use of discretion at several decisionmaking points and for supervisory practices and mechanisms that hold legal agents accountable for their decisions.

This study was not concerned with the number of juveniles coerced into treatment, but the literature reviewed and police practices observed suggest a closer look into this question.

It is also suggested that research be undertaken on several factors that appear to influence screening decisions. These include:

- training received by the juvenile officer
- supervision of the juvenile officer
- formal and informal unit policies
- knowledge of treatment alternatives
- formal and informal court policies

Such research would highlight the relationship between screening decisions and organizational systemic matters.

Overlapping Decisionmaking

In discovering the multiple points at which one case can be screened and the overlapping functions and options which exist among system components, it becomes clear that research on decisionmaking should extend beyond the police role. The following question is suggested for future research:

- What is the impact--on the juvenile, the police, the system--of juvenile officer activities and decisions which are duplicated by other agents of the juvenile justice system?

It is our hypothesis, based on data gathered for this study, that where little coordination of effort takes place among police, intake, prosecution, and judge in their decisionmaking, repetition of activities and decisions at several system levels results. This repetition, rather than contributing to a checks-and-balances systems, results in a

juvenile's loss of respect for the system; the inefficient use of justice system resources; and police disillusionment with the system. According to interviews with police officers, the juvenile continues to lose respect for the justice establishment as he or she continues to have contact with it. In addition, the police officer--juvenile or non-juvenile--who refers a juvenile to court only to find the juvenile "out on the street before me," begins to lose respect for the system as well.

The final irony in an uncoordinated juvenile justice system may be that, regardless of the number of duplications within any given system, a stable proportion of cases reaches the judge on a yearly basis. The natural policy implications which would flow from such research would be in the area of system coordination.

Impact of Labeling and Deterrence

In the course of this study it was difficult to gain a clear picture of the effects on the juvenile of trying to keep him or her out of the system or of using sanctions in a specific manner to deter delinquent behavior. Data from the two case studies suggest that juvenile officers invoke labeling theory for the less serious offenses and offenders they return home, and deterrence theory for those they petition to court.

The impact of implementing each theory should be researched further:

- What are the effects--on the juvenile, the police, the system--of implementing either or both labeling and deterrence theory?

Research into this question should focus on both the anticipated and unanticipated consequences of implementing either theory.

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