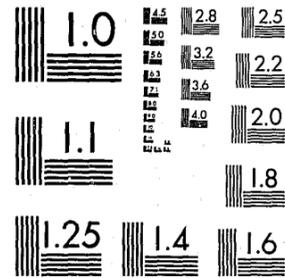


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EFFECTS OF STATUS OFFENDER DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION
IN CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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INTRODUCTION

The 1974 juvenile justice and delinquency prevention act marked the beginning of what has become a major (and controversial) federal effort to bring about substantial changes in the way local juvenile courts deal with status offenders.¹ The federal legislation specified that states which wished to participate in the formula grant program to be administered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) would have to meet the following condition, within two years:

. . . juveniles who are charged with or who have committed offenses that would not be criminal if committed by an adult, shall not be placed in juvenile detention or correctional facilities, but must be placed in shelter facilities; [Juvenile Justice Act, 1974].

In March, 1975, a major federal initiative--commonly referred to as DSO (deinstitutionalization of status offenders)--was announced by OJJDP in an effort to encourage the local courts to cease detaining youths whose offense was not a violation of the criminal law. One of the DSO grants was awarded to the Clark County juvenile court located in Vancouver, Washington.

The purpose of this paper is to present selected results from an evaluation of that program with particular attention to two issues: 1) whether the federally funded program reduced the detention of status offenders and why (or why not); and, 2) whether the program had an effect on the recidivism rates of program youths and, if so, the mechanisms through which effects on future behavior seem to have occurred.

Background

At the time the federal DSO program was launched, there was only scanty empirical information about status offenders. The characteristics

of these youth were largely unknown as were the common patterns of dispositions used by juvenile courts. Research on the effectiveness of different methods of dealing with status offenders was virtually nonexistent. The primary motivating factors for the 1974 legislation were the resulting federal efforts to remove status offenders from secure confinement stemmed mainly from philosophical opposition to juveniles being able to incarcerate persons who had not violated the criminal law as well as from the general absence of research data that could justify the deprivation of liberty on the grounds of improvement in future behavior [Kobrin and Klein, 1980]. Milton Rector, when president of the National Council of Crime and Delinquency, argued that detention of status offenders served "no humanitarian or rehabilitative purpose. The punishment is unwarranted, unjust and cannot be justified under either a treatment or a punishment rationale" [AJC, 1975:18].

Passage of the 1974 act and recommendations from respected national task forces such as the IJA/ABA Joint Commission furthered the already intense debate among practitioners and legal scholars concerning the proper role of the juvenile court in dealing with noncriminal but troublesome misbehavior.²

Although this debate has prompted renewed interest within the research community about status offenders and the way in which police and courts deal with them, many of the knowledge gaps that existed in 1974 have not yet been remedied. Studies of recidivism among status offenders have reported widely varying rates from one jurisdiction to another--ranging upwards to more than 50 percent in a 12-month time period.³ The wide variance in recidivism clearly suggests that re-referral to justice agencies depends not only on the nature of the youth's behavior, but on

the inclination of parents to invoke official agencies to deal with the behavior and on the willingness of the official agencies to accept these youths as referrals.⁴ With only a few exceptions these studies have not sought to account for differences in recidivism rates as a function of differences in handling by the social or juvenile justice agencies.⁵ Virtually no information is available on the effect--if any--of detention and/or incarceration on the recidivism rates of status offenders.

In this context, it is interesting to note that the guidelines for the DSO initiative, issued in March, 1975, identified the major source of Congressional interest in deinstitutionalizing status offenders as follows:

The primary basis for Congress' concern about secure confinement of status offenders comes not from complete findings about the effects of institutionalization on youths or reduced or increased recidivism rates, but rather from moral repugnance of the incarceration of young persons who have not committed crimes. [LEAA, 1975:10.]

There are a number of empirical studies documenting the fact that status offenders are held in secure confinement both before and after adjudication, but the reasons for holding these youngsters in secure facilities are still rather obscure.⁶ Similarly, there is a general absence of research regarding whether changes in detention and/or incarceration have occurred as a result of legal or programmatic efforts to eliminate secure confinement of status offenders.⁷

The Vancouver DSO Project

The Vancouver deinstitutionalization project was the smallest of the national DSO grants (\$50,000 for two years) and most of the funds were used for direct service delivery. The major components of the project were crisis intervention counseling provided by two newly-hired juvenile court probation officers and family crisis intervention counseling

provided by volunteers trained and directed by the project probation officers. The purposes of the program, according to the grant application, were to:

1. Reduce the penetration of status offenders into the juvenile court system by reducing the number detained, reducing commitments for incarceration to the Department of Social and Health Services, and reducing the number of status offenders on whom formal petitions were filed; and
2. Reduce the recidivism of status offenders.

The Vancouver DSO program was operated as part of the probation unit of the juvenile court. Prior to implementing the deinstitutionalization project, the common practice was for status offenders to be held in detention before being seen by a probation officer, and they were sometimes held in detention for several days after that time awaiting a counselor from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The two additional probation officers hired with the federal funds were to counsel status offenders immediately after court intake in an effort to return them to their homes or to find community-based alternatives to detention. A second component of the DSO program in Vancouver was the development of a group of volunteers who, under the guidance of a probation officer, could provide family crisis counseling. The goal of this portion of the DSO program was to return youths to their homes, thereby making available the extremely limited community bedspace to other youths who were unwilling or unable to return to their homes.

With the implementation of the crisis intervention DSO project, it was expected that the number of status offenders detained would decline because of the fact that the DSO counselors would be on duty for weekends and for longer hours during the week (8:00 a.m. through 11:00 p.m.)

rather than the normal daytime shift, and because of their efforts to be available for immediate counseling of the youth and family rather than having their calendars full of prescheduled appointments.⁸ The crisis intervention counseling, family counseling, and decline in detention were expected to reduce the need to file petitions against the youths because they expected to be able to resolve a larger proportion of the disputes, enabling the youths to return home or to an acceptable community alternative.

The reduction in recidivism of status offenders was expected to result from the reduced penetration of the youths into the system and/or from the nature of the counseling. Underlying the expectation of program personnel that reduced penetration would in turn reduce recidivism was the idea that youths who come into contact with the juvenile court and who remain in contact with it for a longer period of time are labeled by themselves and others as problem youths, which tends to produce more problem behavior in subsequent months. (One could argue, from a deterrence perspective, of course, that the lack of penalty for running away, curfew violations, truancy, or incorrigible behavior would result in a youth believing that these types of problem behavior would evoke no official penalty and therefore could be continued.)

METHODOLOGY

The local evaluation was originally planned so that propositions concerning effects of the project on clients could be tested with an experimental design involving random assignment of eligible status offenders into a DSO experimental group and a non-DSO control group.⁹

It became clear shortly after data began to be received that there were problems with the random assignment procedure.¹⁰ One problem was

that 15 of the control group youths who later recidivated were assigned incorrectly to the experimental group for the recidivist offense and three of the experimental group youths who recidivated were placed in the control group upon their return to the court. There is no good solution to this problem. The procedure that seems to introduce the least bias in the data is to count the youths in the control group for the time period prior to when they entered the experimental group and to count them in the latter thereafter. (There were no triple assignments.) The same would be done for the experimental group switches.

The group that "switched" should not be eliminated from the analysis. If that were done, the control group would lose 15 cases (12 percent of the total) and would lose more than a third of its cases that recidivated, thus reducing the overall recidivism rate for the control group. Because there were only three switches from experimental to control, the experimental group would lose a much smaller proportion of its recidivators than would the control group. It should be noted that pre-post change scores of recidivism are not being used in the analysis. Although this method commonly is employed in recidivism studies, it introduces more error into the analysis than is present when making a direct comparison of subsequent contacts across the groups in the study. Change scores, calculated for each individual, contain twice the error of the post score only or the pre score only.¹¹ This, in turn, makes the measure less reliable which depresses the value of the significance test and makes it more difficult to find statistically significant differences.

The second problem with the random assignment is that there were clear differences between the control and experimental groups in terms of sex of the offender (see Table 1). Furthermore, there are differences

TABLE 1
CHARACTERISTICS OF EXPERIMENTAL & CONTROL GROUP STATUS OFFENDERS¹

Charac- teristic	Exper	Contr	F	Sig	Charac- teristic	Exper	Contr	F	sig
N-	420	127			N-	420	127		
<u>SEX</u>			16	.001	<u>PRIOR DELINQUENT OFFENSES</u>			.22	.64
Male	37%	24%			none	81%	80%		
Female	63%	76%			one	17%	11%		
<u>RACE</u>			.27	.60	two	2%	5%		
White	99%	99%			three+	.3%	.8%		
Non-white	1%	1%			<u>PRIOR OFFENSES [DELINQ OR STATUS]</u>			2.6	.11
<u>LIVING SITUATION</u>			.43	.62	none	57%	57%		
both nat. parents	39%	40%			one	28%	20%		
2 parents one step	21%	21%			two	10%	14%		
1 parent	34%	34%			three+	5%	9%		
other ²	5%	6%							
<u>AGE</u>	14.57	14.65	.247	.62					
<u>PRIOR STATUS OFFENSES</u>			2.38	.12					
none	71%	69%							
one	20%	15%							
two	6%	8%							
three+	3%	8%							

¹The analysis was conducted on raw (computerized) data provided to IPA by the Clark County juvenile court. The time period is July 1976 through June 1977. The designation of a youth as experimental or control was done from data collected by IPA for the USC national evaluation and this code was added to the court data.

that approach statistical significance in terms of the total number of prior status offenses and the total number of any type of prior offense (Table 1). These differences are of particular concern if the variables on which the groups differ are related to detention or recidivism rates of the youths and if the bias consistently favors either the experimental or the control group. There were no differences between the groups in terms of family income, parental stability, age, total prior delinquent offenses, or race.

As a result of these differences between the control and experimental groups, the analysis of data cannot be a straightforward comparison of the two groups, but instead will involve the use of a multiple regression design based on individual-level data for more than 2,000 pre-program status offense cases and all post-DSO status offenses coming to the attention of the court. One test to be conducted concerns whether there was a change in the dependent variable (detention or recidivism) attributable to the DSO program when the entire pre-program group is compared with the entire post-program group, controlling for possible confounding variables. This analysis is conducted at the individual level but is a type of time-series design in that one of the control variables is the month of referral to the court. Clearly, since the DSO program did not include all post-DSO status offenders this is an extremely demanding test of the effectiveness of the program since it would have to have a substantial impact on the experimental group to overcome the lack of impact on juveniles not included in the "treatment" (i.e., the control group and the ineligible). If this test indicates that the program may have had an impact on the entire post-DSO population (i.e., a significant change occurred when DSO was implemented), then the second test is designed to determine whether the

effect was the same for the experimental, control, and ineligible groups (controlling for other differences in the groups). If so, then it is reasonable to conclude that although a change occurred when DSO began, the change should not be attributed to the program, per se, since the program was not supposed to have any impact on the control group nor on the ineligible. Instead, the conclusion would be that some other factor affecting the entire local court brought about the change. Conversely, if the observed change was attributable primarily (or entirely) to the experimental group rather than the control and/or ineligible, then this would be viewed as further confirmation of the effect of the program.

Data on all youths entering the court from 1972 onward who were charged with a delinquent offense also were obtained and will be used, in some instances, to assist in establishing whether a change--provided that one has been observed--is due to the DSO program or to other factors. Following the same logic as before, the DSO program is expected to have an impact only on status offenders and, therefore, if similar changes are observed for delinquents, the proper conclusion is that some factor other than the DSO program is responsible for change that seems to have occurred.

Data upon which the analysis rests were from the computerized, case-by-case information provided by the Clark County court on magnetic tapes. The case-by-case data begins with 1972 and ends in June, 1977. The 1972 data contained several problems that were not present in later years and were not used in most of the analysis. Because much of the analysis requires knowledge of prior offenses, the 1974 data are the earliest used as this provides at least 12 months of prior risk time for all cases.

The major dependent variables in the analysis are detention and recidivism. Detention was coded on the court statistical forms as either

YES or NO. Although there is no indication of how long a youth is detained, the definition of detention used by court personnel is that the youth is booked into the juvenile hall and this generally means the youth will spend the night.

Recidivism is defined and measured in this report as a subsequent referral to the juvenile court. In much of the analysis a three or six month follow-up period is used. Although a longer follow-up period would be preferred, this would eliminate too many of the control and experimental cases, since only 12 months had elapsed in the post-DSO time period when data collection had to end in order to complete the evaluation before the grant period ended.

The independent variables of particular interest are the differences in treatment received by the experimental and the control groups, as well as differences in treatment of all status offenders between the pre and post time periods.

Although the major question is whether the experimental DSO strategy (crisis intervention counseling and family therapy) reduced detention and reduced recidivism, there were simultaneous changes in case load and other differences among the probation officers that make it difficult to determine whether any apparent effects of the project are attributable to the strategy being used rather than to other factors. The case load in the post period differed between the experimental and control groups (30 to 56, respectively). Differences between experimental and control also could be attributed to differences in personal characteristics of the probation officers. The experimental and control probation officers differed in terms of age, experience, and sex. The two experimental officers were much younger than the officers handling the control (and

ineligible) cases, had far less experience, and one of the two was a man whereas both of the control ineligible counselors were female.

In addition to differences in treatment, there are other variables used in the analysis, mainly for the purpose of statistically adjusting for differences attributable to variables other than the treatment. These include several socio-economic or demographic characteristics of the clients: age, race, sex, parental status (living with both parents, with one parent, with relatives, in a foster or group home), and source of family income (regular salary, welfare/unemployed, none).

FINDINGS

From July, 1976 through June, 1977, there were 479 status offenders eligible for the deinstitutionalization program and 433 other status offenders who were not eligible. Table 2 shows the monthly totals of status offenders in the pre-program group, the experimental program, the control group, and the ineligible group. During the post DSO time period, the juvenile court handled an average of 76 status offenders per month, compared with 74 per month during the January, 1974 through June, 1976 pre-program phase.

Characteristics of Status Offenders

One of the potential side effects of projects such as the deinstitutionalization of status offenders would be a shift in the classification of offenses (either from status to delinquent, in order to avoid assigning youths to the project, or from delinquent to status, in order to assign more youths to the project) [McNeece, 1977]. Another potential side effect could be a shift in the patterns of referral to the court, such that the characteristics of the youths changed. Any changes of these types

TABLE 2

MONTHLY TOTALS, STATUS OFFENDERS, CLARK COUNTY JUVENILE COURT¹

1 9 7 4		1 9 7 5		1 9 7 6				1 9 7 7					
MONTH	#SOs	MONTH	#SOs	MONTH	TOTAL SOs	Inelig	Exper	Control	MONTH	TOTAL SOs	Inelig	Exper	Control
JAN	95	JAN	94	JAN	76				JAN	77	26	30	21
FEB	65	FEB	78	FEB	71				FEB ³	109	28	61	20
MARCH	95	MARCH	76	MARCH	77				MARCH	78	25	46	7
APRIL	80	APRIL	78	APRIL	84				APRIL	78	40	34	4
MAY	62	MAY	89	MAY	96				MAY	51	18	33	0
JUNE	68	JUNE	78	JUNE	65				JUNE	54	22	32	0
JULY	73	JULY	79	JULY ²	83	63	10	10					
AUG	82	AUG	62	AUG	79	59	14	6					
SEPT	85	SEPT	68	SEPT	99	65	23	11					
OCT	105	OCT	93	OCT	88	39	29	21					
NOV	63	NOV	68	NOV	67	29	29	10					
DEC	58	DEC	64	DEC	49	19	14	16					
TOTAL	931	TOTAL	927	TOTAL	934	274	119	74	TOTAL	447	159	236	52
AVG	77.6	AVG	77.3	AVG	77.8	45.7	19.8	12.3	AVG	74.5	26.5	39.3	-

¹Status offenses include runaways, incorrigibles (ungovernables), curfew violations, and truants. Cases and review hearings are excluded from the counts.

²Program startup occurred in July 1976.

³Random assignment ended in mid-February and, thereafter, all new cases were in the experimental group.

could alter the characteristics of youths considered to be status offenders, and, if so, could alter the pattern of detention and/or recidivism. In order to examine whether these types of changes occurred as indirect effects of the DSO project, the characteristics of status offenders during the pre and post time periods were examined. To ascertain whether there is any evidence of shifts in classification from status to delinquent or vice versa, the characteristics of delinquents also were examined for the pre and post time periods.

The data in Table 3, for status offenders, show that there were very few changes in characteristics of the youths between the pre and post time periods. Status offenders were more likely to have been female than male in both time periods; were predominately white (as is the population of Clark County); most attended school regularly; and most were slightly less than 15 years of age.¹² Less than half of the status offenders lived with both natural parents and the proportion in this category declined between the pre and post time periods. As has been found by some other investigators, status offenders tend to come from less stable family situations than do delinquents [Ferdinand, 1964].

Characteristics of delinquent offenders did not change much either from pre to post. It should be noted, however, that a greater proportion of the delinquent offenders in the post time period were females than in the pre-program period and, as with status offenders, there was a slight drop in the proportion who live with both natural parents.

A multiple regression analysis conducted on the characteristics that changed from pre to post showed that the changes did not occur at the time the project was implemented, but instead represented gradual shifts throughout the 42 months. Thus it appears that there was no change in the

TABLE 3

CHARACTERISTICS OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS, PRE AND POST¹

Variable	Status Offenders		Delinquent Offenders	
	Pre Program	Post Program	Pre Program	Post Program
	N-2,328	N-914	N-5,259	N-2,601
<u>TYPE OF OFFENSE</u>				
Curfew	8%	8%		
Runaway	47%	48%		
Incorrigible	35%	30%		
Truant	5%	10%		
Other	5%	4%		
<u>SEX</u>				
Male	42%	43%	83%	79%
Female	58%	57%	17%	21%
<u>RACE</u>				
White	99%	99%	99%	99%
Non-white	1%	1%	1%	1%
<u>SCHOOL STATUS</u>				
Regular Attendance	86%	84%	88%	89%
Dropped Out	9%	9%	9%	9%
Expelled	5%	7%	3%	2%
<u>AGE, AVERAGE</u>	14.7	14.6	15	14.9
<u>LIVING SITUATION</u>				
Both Natural Parents	43%	38%	61%	57%
Two parents, one step	15%	20%	10%	11%
One Parent	27%	29%	22%	24%
Relatives	3%	2%	2%	2%
Foster Home	5%	4%	1%	1%
Group Home or Institution	8%	7%	4%	5%

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TABLE 3 (continued)

CHARACTERISTICS OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS, PRE AND POST

Variable	Status Offenders		Delinquent Offenders	
	Pre Program	Post Program	Pre Program	Post Program
<u>PRIOR OFFENSES (fixed risk period)</u>				
No prior delinquent offenses in last 12 mos	74%	73%	65%	58%
One or more delinquent offenses in past 12 mos	21%	20%	28%	32%
No prior status offenses in past 12 mos	59%	65%	85%	82%
One or more status offenses in past 12 mos	20%	16%	11%	10%
<u>PRIOR OFFENSES (variable risk period)</u>				
Average months at risk since January 1972	40	60	40	60
One or more delinquent offenses since 1972, but none in past 12 mos	6%	7%	7%	10%
One or more status offenses since 1972, but none in past 12 mos	4%	4%	4%	8%

¹The analysis was conducted on raw (computerized) data provided to IPA by the Clark County juvenile court. The pre-program time period is from January 1974 through June 1976. The post-program time period is from July 1976 through June 1977.

characteristics of status offenders associated with implementat. of the DSO project which would confound interpretations of pre-post in detention, petitions, or recidivism.

A method of examining whether there were shifts in classification of referral that accompanied the implementation of the program is to examine the proportion of all juvenile referrals who are status offenders and who are delinquents. If a shift in classification occurred from status offender to delinquent, one would expect the proportion of all referrals classified as delinquent to increase at the time the project was implemented or shortly thereafter. If a shift occurred in the other direction (delinquency to status offender classification), one would expect the proportion of all referrals who are status offenders to rise as a function of program implementation.

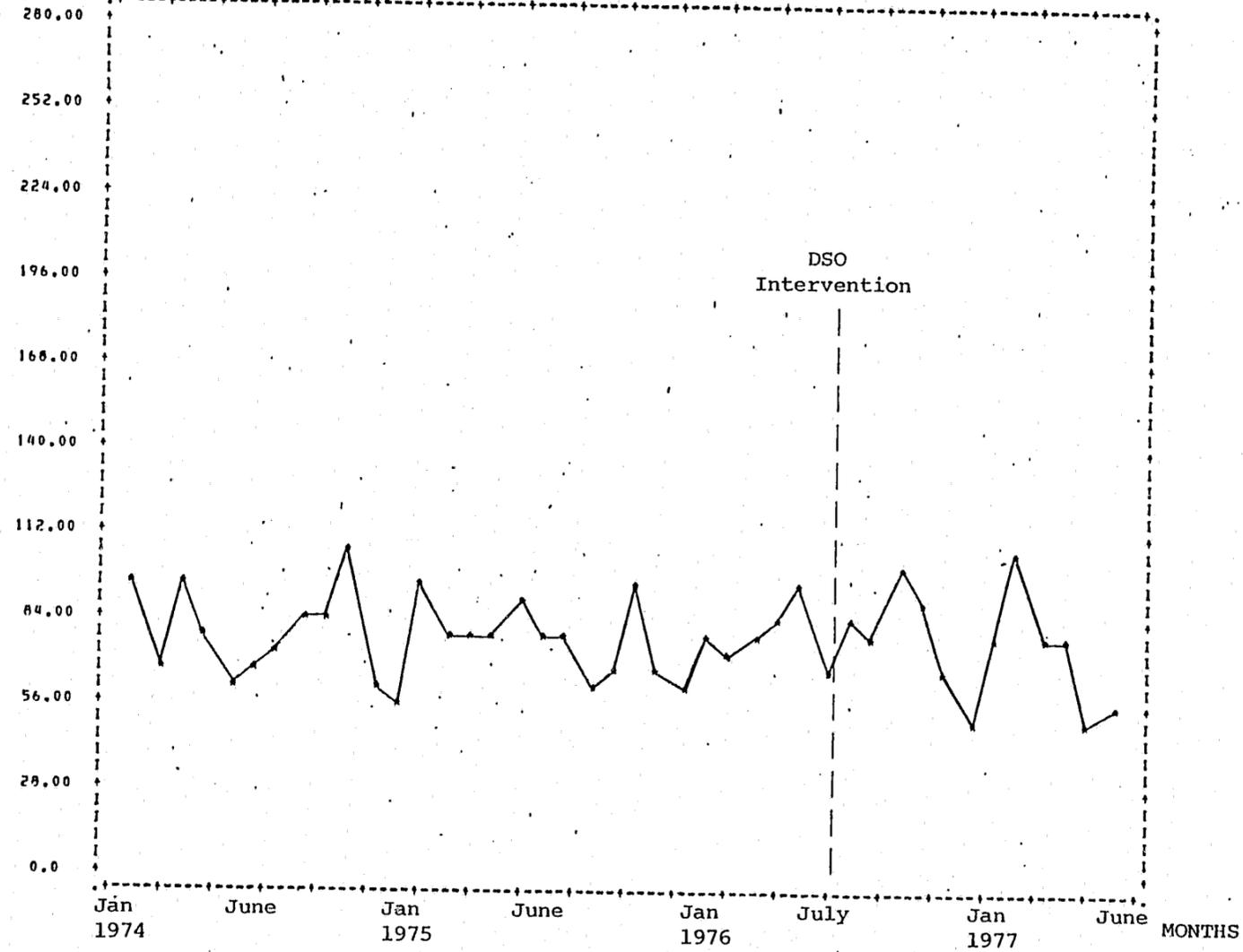
The data show that there was a steady decline throughout the entire time period in the proportion of referrals who were classified as status offenders, but there was no shift that can be attributed to implementation of the project.

Net Widening

A question of considerable concern to federal officials was whether the DSO projects had the effect of "widening the net" thereby bringing into the system more status offenders than before. This phenomenon has been observed with certain types of diversion programs. In the effort to reduce penetration into the system or to avoid incarceration of offenders, some diversion projects have inadvertently attracted even more juveniles into the system.

As shown in Figure 1, the number of status offender referrals to the court shows no obvious change between January, 1974 and June, 1977.

NUMBER OF
STATUS OFFENDER
REFERRALS



NUMBER OF STATUS OFFENDER REFERRALS TO VANCOUVER JUVENILE COURT BY MONTH¹

FIGURE 1

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¹The results indicate that DSO did not increase the number of status offender referrals to the court (see Appendix B for the full equation).

Furthermore, the implementation of the project clearly did not have the effect of increasing the number of status offenders as the graph shows a slight decline in status offenders, especially in the later months.

Detention of Status Offenders

A major purpose of the federal DSO initiative was to prevent status offenders from having to spend time in detention and, hence, to reduce the length of their contact with the juvenile justice system.

In order to determine whether the Clark County project reduced the proportion of status offenders in detention, a statistically significant change should occur from the pre to post time periods and this change must be attributable to DSO rather than to other factors which might have produced it.

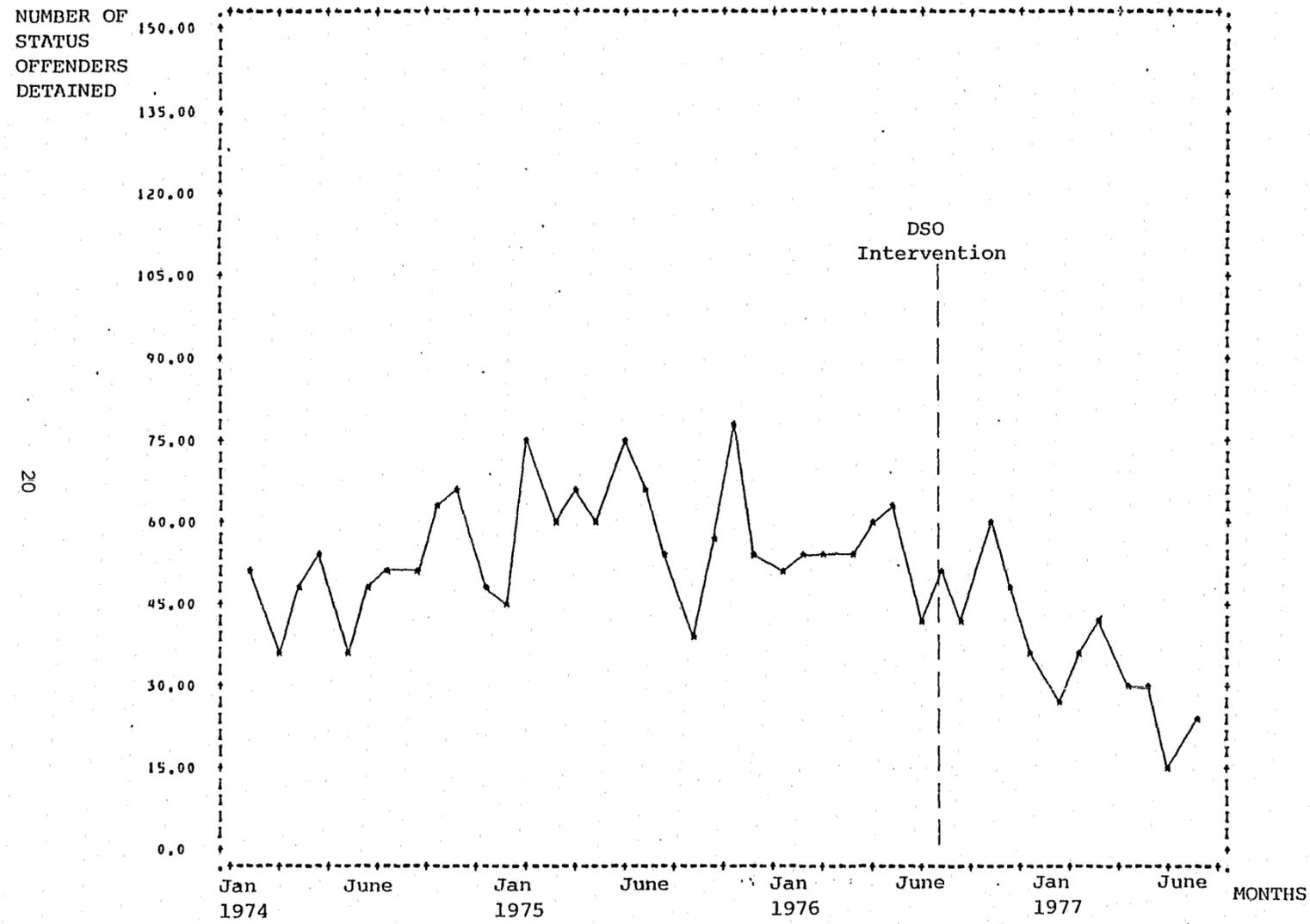
Figure 2 shows that the proportion of all status offenders who were detained in juvenile hall increased rapidly from January, 1974 to about July, 1975 and then began a steady decline that continued for almost a year before the DSO program began in July, 1976. At that time, an additional decline is observed. (The post DSO data shown in Figure 2 include all status offenders at the court: experimental, control, and ineligible.)

The actual number of status offenders detained shows a similar pattern (see Figure 3). There is an increase from January, 1974 through about July, 1975, followed by a decrease that apparently is accelerated when the DSO project began in July, 1976.

These results suggest the need to identify the event or change around July, 1975 that produced the significant downturn in the percent of status offenders being detained. Analysis of status offender characteristics, discussed previously, indicates no change of the type observed in July, 1975



¹The results (see Appendix B) show that a statistically significant change occurred in the summer of 1975 when the DSO application was approved (locally) and when DSO was implemented in July 1976.



NUMBER OF STATUS OFFENDER REFERRALS DETAINED AT JUVENILE COURT¹

FIGURE 3

¹The results (see Appendix B) show that a statistically significant change occurred in the summer of 1975 when the DSO application was approved (locally) and when DSO was implemented in July 1976.

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occurred in any of the social, economic, or demographic characteristics of the status offenders. Thus, it is more likely that some exogenous event produced the mid-summer change in detention proportion during 1975. Bob Axlund, court administrator, noted that the application for the DSO grant was being considered in the summer of 1975 by the juvenile judges and key members of the court staff. It was during this time period that key personnel, including the judges, agreed to support an application for funds under the federal DSO initiative. It appears that the most likely explanation for the obvious shift in status offender detention rates that occurred in mid-summer 1975 is that it was produced by the anticipation of participating in the federal initiative. This suggests that when court staff and judges became sensitive to the issues of labeling and the plight of the status offenders, they began immediately to respond with actions that were desired by the national program itself. In this sense, the OJJDP initiative might have served as a "consciousness raising" experience for those having contact with status offenders.

The next question to be considered is whether the apparent drop in detention after the DSO intervention in Clark County is statistically significant and, if so, whether it was due to the crisis intervention and multiple impact therapy strategy used as part of the DSO project or whether it should be attributed to a generalized policy that influenced all probation officers handling status offenders (including the control and ineligible groups).

The data in Table 4 show the pre-program proportion of status offenders detained, along with the proportion detained within the experimental, control, and ineligible groups of the post-DSO time period.

Multiple regression analysis, using both pre and post data, clearly

TABLE 4
STATUS OFFENDER DETENTION RATES¹

GROUP	Total Number	Number Detained	Percent Detained
STATUS OFFENDERS			
Pre-DSO	2,317	1,668	72%
Post-DSO (total)	914	439	48%
Experimental	362	101	28%
Control	127	69	54%
Ineligible	425	268	63%

¹The analysis is based on the Clark County juvenile court computerized data file provided by the court to IPA. The pre-DSO period is from January 1974 through June 1976. The post-DSO time period is from July 1976 through June 1977.

suggests that a significant change occurred when DSO began and that the experimental group (not the control group) was responsible for the change (see Table 5).

The negative value of the standardized partial regression coefficient (column two of Table 5) for the experimental group means that youths in this group were less likely to be detained than would have been expected, given the pre-program trend, number of priors, and their socio-economic characteristics. The very small but statistically significant value of the partial standardized regression coefficient for the control group means they were a fraction more likely to be detained than are the pre-program youths or the other post-DSO groups.

The multiple regression analysis also shows that juveniles were more likely to be detained if they had more prior offenses, a less stable family situation, were not regularly enrolled in school and were older. Females were no more likely to be detained than were males.

The detention rates for youths in each of the post-DSO groups (experimental, control, ineligible) by characteristics of the juveniles are shown in Table 6. Statistically significant differences exist between control and experimental groups within virtually every category of prior offenses, current offense, sex, and living situation.

It is also of interest to compare the detention of status offenders and delinquents. The data (Table 7) show that status offenders were far more likely to be detained than were delinquents prior to DSO, but had about the same probability as delinquents of being detained in the post time period. Female status offenders had a higher probability of being detained than males in the pre-DSO months, but a lower probability after DSO.

TABLE 5
 MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF DSO EFFECT
 ON PROBABILITY OF DETENTION FOR STATUS OFFENDERS¹

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	No. of cases=2,540				
	DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PROBABILITY OF BEING DETAINED (0=not detained; 1=detained)				
	Zero Order Correlation	B	Beta	F Value ¹	Prob
Experimental Group	-.30	-.21	-.15	32.3	<.001
Control Group	-.01	.08	.04	3.03	<.01
Change in trend, DSO startup (D2MONTH)	-.28	-.03	-1.00	32.7	<.001
Overall trend, January 1974 - June 1977	-.18	.02	.42	40.8	<.001
No. of prior offenses	.14	.02	.09	20	<.001
Less stable living situation	.10	.003	.08	18.5	<.001
Older	.06	.02	.05	7.6	<.001
Not regularly enrolled in school	-.03	.04	-.04	3.7	<.001
Sex (0=male; 1=female)	.01	.01	--	n.s.	<.001

²R²=.14

¹The bivariate correlation (r) shows the relationship of each independent variable to detention without controlling for the effects of the other independent variables. B is the unstandardized partial regression coefficient for an independent variable when all the other variables are statistically controlled. Beta is the standardized partial regression coefficient.

TABLE 6
 STATUS OFFENDER DETENTION RATES FOR EXPERIMENTAL, CONTROL
 & INELIGIBLE GROUPS BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE YOUTHS¹

CHARACTERISTICS	PERCENT DETAINED			NUMBER OF CASES		
	Exper	Control	Inelig	Exper	Control	Inelig
<u>SEX</u>						
Male	32%	57%*	64%	156	30	204
Female	25%	58%*	62%	264	97	221
<u>LIVING SITUATION</u>						
Both natural parents	27%	74%*	66%	141	49	142
Two parents, one step	22%	54%*	59%	76	26	76
One parent	27%	41%*	64%	121	42	97
Other ²	47%	57%*	82%	19	7	90
<u>TYPE OF OFFENSE</u>						
Curfew	27%	78%*	66%	11	9	56
Runaway	36%	65%*	71%	171	51	217
Incorrigible	23%	57%*	56%	130	53	89
Truant	0	0	3%	44	14	35
<u>PRIOR OFFENSES</u>						
No prior delinq. offense in last 12 months	27%	56%*	63%	296	106	266
No prior status offense in last 12 months	25%	52%*	61%	257	86	248
One delinquency in last 12 mos.	30%	56%*	54%	40	9	48
One prior status offense in last 12 months	34%	58%*	63%	67	19	51

¹The analysis is based on Clark County computerized data, July 1976 through June 1977. Whether a youth was in the experimental, control, or ineligible group was determined from the data IPA collected for the USC national evaluation and this designation was added to the raw court data file.

²"Other" includes relatives, group homes, foster homes, or institutions.
 *p <.05

TABLE 7

PROPORTION OF STATUS OFFENDERS & DELINQUENTS DETAINED PRE & POST BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE YOUTHS¹

CHARACTERISTIC	<u>STATUS OFFENDERS</u>		<u>DELINQUENTS</u>		<u>NUMBER OF CASES</u>			
	Percent Detained		Percent Detained		Status Offenders		Delinquents	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
<u>TOTALS</u>	72%	48%	42%	49%	2,317	914	5,242	2,594
<u>SEX</u>								
Male	70%	50%	43%	50%	975	390	4,353	2,048
Female	73%	47%	38%	46%	1,353	522	906	552
<u>LIVING SITUATION</u>								
Both natural parents	67%	46%	36%	45%	941	332	2,969	1,399
Two parents, one step	75%	43%	49%	55%	327	178	500	267
One parent	72%	43%	49%	52%	589	260	1,053	594
Other ²	85%	75%	63%	69%	345	116	354	196
<u>TYPE OF OFFENSE</u>								
Curfew	69%	61%	--	--	176	76	--	--
Runaway	80%	57%	--	--	1,093	439	--	--
Incorrigible	67%	40%	--	--	824	272	--	--
Truant	2%	1%	--	--	120	93	--	--
Other Status Offense	71%	53%	--	--	115	34	--	--
Personal Delinquency ³	--	--	47%	51%	--	--	197	132
Property Delinquency ³	--	--	40%	44%	--	--	2,732	1,242
Non-Victim Delinquency ³	--	--	49%	58%	--	--	1,680	906
Other Delinquency	--	--	29%	42%	--	--	650	322

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TABLE 7 (continued)

CHARACTERISTIC	<u>STATUS OFFENDERS</u>		<u>DELINQUENTS</u>		<u>NUMBER OF CASES</u>			
	Percent Detained		Percent Detained		Status Offenders		Delinquents	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
<u>PRIOR DELINQUENT OFFENSES</u>								
No prior delinquent offenses in last 12 mos.	71%	46%	37%	44%	1,715	668	3,405	1,494
One prior delinquent offense in past 12 mos.	77%	44%	43%	52%	295	97	759	321
<u>PRIOR STATUS OFFENSES</u>								
No prior status offenses in last 12 months	70%	44%	39%	46%	1,383	591	4,454	2,138
One status offense in past 12 months	70%	48%	54%	57%	385	137	301	147

¹The analysis was conducted from raw (computerized) data provided to IPA by the Clark County juvenile court. The pre-program time period is January 1974 through June 1976. The post-program time period is from July 1976 through June 1977.

²"Other" includes relatives, group homes, foster homes, and institutions.

³Personal delinquency includes murder, rape, robbery, assault, and public indecencies. Property offenses are forgery, theft, stolen property, malicious mischief, larceny, shoplifting, and vandalism. Non-victim offenses are possession/use of drugs or alcohol, disorderly conduct, prostitution, and disturbing the peace. Other delinquency includes other misdemeanors and delinquent probation violations.

Recidivism Rates of Status Offenders

The project could result in reduced recidivism if it is the case, as labeling theorists believe, that youths who experience less penetration into the juvenile justice system are less likely to recidivate. Thus, since the DSO intervention reduced the proportion of youths detained and reduced the proportion of status offenders on whom petitions were filed, it is possible that it also reduced recidivism.¹³ The project could, of course, have an effect on recidivism independent of its impact on detention and petitions because of the different counseling and therapy strategies that were used.

As has been done in the previous sections, the analysis will proceed by first examining the impact of the DSO intervention on all status offenders (experimental, control, and ineligible) in order to test the effectiveness of the project on the entire system. In addition, since the post-DSO status offenders are relatively comparable to the pre-DSO youths who committed similar offenses, this provides some assurance that observed differences are not due to changes in the characteristics of the youths. Following these analyses, a comparison will be made between the experimental DSO and control youths in order to ascertain whether the experimental strategy in handling status offenders was more effective, in terms of recidivism, than the control strategy, for youths eligible for the program.

Recidivism has been measured in terms of recontact with the juvenile court for either a status or delinquent offense. There are several problems in measurement of recidivism, some of which will be discussed below along with the procedure used in this report to deal with them.

1. The purpose of the DSO project was not simply to reduce the number of subsequent court contacts, but also to reduce the frequency of

commission of offenses. And, since youths often commit status or delinquent offenses without being caught or referred to the court, the recontact measure is an underestimate of the actual number of offenses committed. There is no reason to believe, however, that the proportion of youths referred to the court differed between the experimental and control groups or differed from the pre to post time periods. Thus, even though the recontact measure contains considerable error, the nature of the error is the same for the pre and post time periods and for the experimental, control, and ineligible groups within the post time period. Thus, the major effect of this type of error is that the tests of significance will tend to underestimate the true differences between pre and post, as well as the true differences between experimental and control groups.

2. The number of youths referred to the court for a subsequent offense depends on the number of months the youths were "at risk" after the instant offense. The pre-program youths had far more months in which to commit a subsequent offense than the post-program group. In addition, since the probation officers who handled the control group discontinued their work with eligible status offenders in February, 1978, the control group has more months "at risk" than does the experimental group. The best solution to this problem is to select a specific follow-up time (such as three or six months from the end of the month in which the instant offense was committed). Any instant offenses for which there were not enough months at risk to meet the follow-up time (three months or six months) are removed from the analysis. This procedure was used here and most of the analysis was based on a three-month follow-up period. Since data collection had to end after the first 12 months of

the project, there is a severe reduction of cases in the post period when six or more months of follow-up data are included.

3. Another problem is what to do with offenses that were committed after the follow-up time period. One solution is to place the youth who committed the instant offense into the "nonrecidivism" category if s/he committed a subsequent offense but it was after the fixed risk period of three (or six) months. The problem with this approach is that it places youths who are going to recidivate into the nonrecidivist category and this category already contains many youths who eventually will recidivate. This is particularly true of the pre-program group, in comparison with the post, since the former had longer times at risk. This approach will yield a conservative estimate (underestimate) of the effect of the project unless the full impact of the project occurs during the fixed "at risk" time and the project youths do not differ from the others in terms of the proportion recidivating after the fixed risk time. Nevertheless, in the subsequent analysis those persons recidivating after the fixed risk time are counted as nonrecidivators.

One method of assessing the impact of the DSO intervention on the recidivism rates of post-DSO status offenders is to examine the proportion of status offenders (pre and post) who had a subsequent delinquent or status offense within the same month as the instant offense, within two months of the instant offense, within three months of the instant offense, and so on. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 8.

Data in the first row include all of the pre and post cases (since all of them had at least a follow-up period that extended to the end of the same month in which the instant offense occurred). Within that month, nine percent of the pre-program status offenders had a subsequent offense

TABLE 8
PROPORTION OF STATUS OFFENDERS RECIDIVATING
WITHIN SPECIFIED FOLLOWUP PERIODS, PRE & POST¹

Number of Months "At Risk"	% with subsequent offense within risk period		Z Value	Difference Pre/Post	Number of Cases ³	
	Pre	Post ²			Pre	Post
0 MONTH (same month)	9%	6.3%	2.53	2.7%	2,330	914
1 MONTH	18.9%	16.6%	1.49	2.3%	2,330	860
2 MONTHS	26.8%	21.9%	2.75	4.9%	2,330	807
3 MONTHS	33.1%	25.2%	4.02	7.9%	2,330	729
4 MONTHS	37.2%	29.9%	3.44	7.3%	2,330	651
5 MONTHS	40.1%	32.6%	3.22	7.5%	2,330	542
6 MONTHS	43.7%	35.0%	3.46	8.7%	2,330	465
7 MONTHS	45.7%	37.9%	2.94	7.8%	2,330	416
8 MONTHS	47.6%	39.8%	2.72	7.8%	2,330	349

¹ Recidivism is measured as a subsequent court contact for a delinquent or status offense after the instant status offense. Those who had no subsequent offense within the risk period shown on the left are included as "non-recidivators" when calculating the percentage. The percentages are cumulative across the risk periods. Thus, 18.9 percent of pre-program status offenders had a subsequent offense during the same month or within one month of the end of the month in which the instant offense occurred; 26.8 percent had a subsequent offense in the same month or by the end of the first month or by the end of the second month.

² The post time period includes all status offenders, not just those who were eligible for the DSO project.

³ The number of cases in the post time period drops as months "at risk" increase because all youths entering the court too late to have the full follow-up period (1 month, 2 months, ... 8 months) were excluded when calculating the recidivism rate for that particular follow-up period. Thus, for each of the months at risk, all youths included in that analysis had at least that many months of follow-up data.

compared with 6.3 percent of the post-program status offenders. This difference is significant beyond the .01 level (Z test for significance in proportions). The third column of Table 8 shows the difference between pre and post and the last two columns show the number of cases upon which the analysis is based.

Examination of the first two columns of Table 8 shows that the proportion recidivating increased as expected as the time "at risk" increased. It should be noted that the percentage recidivating indicates those who had a subsequent offense at any time during the risk period, not just those recidivating within a particular month. Thus, the data for three months means that 33 percent of the pre-program status offenders had a subsequent offense within a follow-up period that extended for three months after the beginning of the month in which the instant offense occurred. It does not mean that 33 percent recidivated during the third month after the instant offense.

The difference between pre and post recidivism rates (column four of Table 8) increased from 2.7 percent in the same month to about eight percent within three months and stabilized at about eight percent difference between pre and post as the risk period increased to eight months.

Although the differences observed would indicate that DSO had the effect of reducing recidivism, there are several other potential explanations of why recidivism was lower in the post time period. One possibility is that there was a downward trend in recidivism rates during the pre-program time period which simply continued after DSO began. Another alternative explanation is that the characteristics of status offenders were changing, over time or at the time that DSO began, and the difference in recidivism is attributable to the fact that the status offenders during

the post time period did not have the same characteristics as status offenders during the pre-program phase.

The multiple regression analysis of pre and post data indicates that neither of these explanations accounts for the change in recidivism during the post time period. In Table 9 are the results of a multiple regression analysis using all pre and post cases that had at least three months of "at risk" time. The results show that the project intervention had a statistically significant effect in reducing recidivism, controlling for age, sex, number of status offense priors, number of delinquent priors, and the family situation of the youth. The change attributable to DSO was a shift in the level of recidivism rather than a shift in the trend. The trend, for the entire time period, was statistically significant but of very minor magnitude. Recidivism, on the average, declined by less than one-half of one percent per month. The average recidivism rate for the three-month follow-up, however, dropped by about seven percent when DSO began, even with the other variables held constant.

It has been noted above that the proportion of youths detained declined as a result of the DSO project and the proportion of status offenders on whom petitions were filed also dropped. A multiple regression analysis of the effect of petitions and detention on recidivism is shown in Table 10. The results indicate that youths who are detained are more inclined to recidivate than those who are not, even when prior offenses have been controlled along with age, sex, and so on. In contrast, youths on whom petitions are filed tend to recidivate at a lower rate than others, when priors and socio-economic characteristics have been controlled. (Somewhat different results are obtained in the post only analysis, however.) More important, as shown at the bottom of Table 10, the DSO intervention had a

TABLE 9

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF DSO IMPACT ON 3-MONTH RECIDIVISM
OF STATUS OFFENDERS, PRE AND POST¹

No. of cases=2,285

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE ³	DEPENDENT VARIABLE: RECIDIVISM WITHIN 3 MONTHS OF INSTANT OFFENSE ²				
	Zero Order Correlation	B	Beta	F Value	Probability
DSO Startup	-.14	-.08	-.08	6.3	<.001
Monthly Trend	-.14	-.004	-.10	10.4	<.001
Number of Prior Status Offenses	.22	.07	.20	90	<.001
Number of Prior Delinquent Offenses	.16	.07	.14	42	<.001
Age (older)	-.08	-.03	-.11	28.5	<.001
Sex (female)	-.007	-.007	.00	.10	n.s.
R ² =.10					
F=30.7					

¹The zero order correlation shows the relationship of each variable on the left with recidivism when no other variables are controlled. B is the unstandardized partial regression coefficient and beta is the standardized partial regression coefficient. The analysis was conducted on the juvenile court computerized data base.

²Cases which did not have at least a three month risk period were excluded. Otherwise, all status offenders in the post period, not just the DSO project youths, were included.

³DSO start-up is a dummy variable with pre-project cases having a score of zero and post-DSO status offenders a score of one. The interaction term (DSO times month) was not significant. Other characteristics of status offenders (family stability, school status) were not significant and were omitted from the equation.

TABLE 10

EFFECT OF DETENTION & PETITIONS ON 3-MONTH RECIDIVISM
OF STATUS OFFENDERS, PRE & POST¹

N=2,285

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	DEPENDENT VARIABLE: RECIDIVISM WITHIN 2-MONTHS OF INSTANT OFFENSE				
	Zero Order Correlation	B	Beta	F Value	Probability
Petitions	-.02	-.05	-.05	5.6	<.001
Detention	.07	.06	.06	8.8	<.001
Number Prior Status Offenses	.22	.07	.20	87	<.001
Number Prior Delinquent Offenses	.16	.07	.12	33	<.001
Age	-.08	-.03	-.10	26	<.001
R ² =.07					
F=26					
DSO Intervention ²	-.14	-.07	-.07	4.7	<.001
Trend ²	-.14	-.004	-.10	11	<.001

¹The zero order correlation shows the relationship of each variable on the left with recidivism when no other variables are controlled. B is the unstandardized partial regression coefficient and beta is the standardized partial regression coefficient. The analysis was conducted on the juvenile court computerized data base.

²The effect of DSO is estimated with all the other variables in the equation. The effect of petitions and detention (upper part of table) are estimated without the intervention variables being in the equation. Cases without at least a three-month risk period were excluded.

statistically significant impact on recidivism independent of its effect on detention and petitions.

The results of the multiple regression analysis are substantiated by an examination of recidivism (pre and post) for youths with different characteristics (Table 11). Regardless of whether a three or six month "at risk" time is used, the results show that recidivism rates within selected characteristics of the status offenders are uniformly lower during the post-program time period.

Even though the previous analysis indicates that DSO had a significant impact on recidivism, it is important to ascertain whether the post-DSO change was due primarily to the experimental group or whether some (or all) of it could be attributed to the control and ineligible groups.

Table 12 contains data showing the proportion of youths within the experimental and control groups who recidivated within the same month as the instant offense, within one month of the instant offense, two months, and so on. The experimental group has lower recidivism rates for each of the different amounts of time "at risk." The differences become substantial enough after three months of follow-up (nine percent) to approach statistical significance at the .05 level and clearly are significant at or beyond that level when the risk period is four through eight months.

The differences observed in Table 12 could, of course, be due to different characteristics of the youths in the two groups because, as has been noted several times, the random assignment of youths to experimental and control groups was not perfectly adhered to and some differences exist between the two groups.

The data in Table 13 show the recidivism rates of experimental, control, and ineligible youths within each of several selected characteristics of the youths.

TABLE 11
THREE AND SIX MONTH RECIDIVISM RATES
OF STATUS OFFENDERS, PRE AND POST¹

CHARACTERISTIC	Three Month Recidivism Rates		Six Month Recidivism Rates		NUMBER OF CASES			
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	Three Months		Six Months	
					PRE	POST	PRE	POST
<u>SEX</u>								
Male	31	26.2	42	37	976	305	976	200
Female	32.1	24.6	42	33	1,354	422	1,354	263
<u>LIVING SITUATION</u>								
both natural parents	30.5	22.2	42	38	941	266	941	162
two parents, one step	36.7	21.9	46	32	327	137	327	79
one parent	31.0	29	41	25	591	209	591	134
other ²	35.9	31	46	35	345	96	345	71
<u>AGE</u>								
12-13	32.5	19	45	26	379	108	379	66
14-15	36.7	30	46	41	1,147	380	1,147	242
16-17	24	22	35	29	738	219	738	146
<u>OFFENSE</u>								
Curfew	24.1	20	33	23	177	66	177	52
Runaway	32.5	24	40	35	1,093	329	1,093	205
Incorrigible	33	33	45	39	785	213	785	157
Truant	33	15	47	24	120	67	120	17

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TABLE 11 (continued)

CHARACTERISTIC	Three Month Recidivism Rates		Six Month Recidivism Rates		NUMBER OF CASES			
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	Three Months		Six Months	
					PRE	POST	PRE	POST
<u>NUMBER OF PRIOR STATUS OR DELINQUENT OFFENSES</u>								
none	23	17	30	24	1,103	368	1,103	223
one	37	23	47	36	521	157	521	92
two	36	37	55	41	300	71	300	44
three	47	42	60	54	406	139	406	106
<u>PETITIONS</u>								
no petition filed	31	26	43	37	1,627	554	1,627	333
petition filed	33	23	40	30	703	175	703	132
<u>DETAINED</u>								
not detained	28	24	38	35	664	358	664	201
detained	33	27	44	35	1,666	371	1,666	264

¹The analysis is based on Clark County computerized data, July 1976 through June 1977.

²"Other" includes relatives, group homes, foster homes, or institutions.

TABLE 12

COMPARISON OF EXPERIMENTAL & CONTROL GROUP RECIDIVISM RATES FOR DIFFERENT LENGTHS OF FOLLOWUP TIME¹

NUMBER MONTHS OF FOLLOWUP	Percent Recidivating (re-contact w/ court)		Z Value	Prob	Difference Between E & C	Number of Cases Included In Analysis	
	Exper	Contr				Exper	Contr
0	6.4%	10.2%	1.43	(ns)	3.8	362	127
1	15.5%	14.2%	.34	(ns)	1.3	330	127
2	18.5%	21.3%	.67	(ns)	2.8	297	127
3	20.1%	29.3%	1.82	(ns)	9.2	263	123
4	24.4%	37.9%	2.58	(.01)	13.5	217	116
5	26.3%	40.6%	2.44	(.05)	14.3	156	96
6	29.4%	48.0%	2.66	(.01)	18.6	126	75
7	33.0%	56.0%	2.9	(.01)	23.0	112	59
8	38.1%	57.0%	2.11	(.05)	18.9	84	49

¹Recidivism is measured as a subsequent court contact for a delinquent or status offense after the instant status offense. Those who had no subsequent offenses within the risk period shown on the left are included as "non-recidivators" when calculating the percentage. The percentages are cumulative across the risk period.

TABLE 13

COMPARISON OF EXPERIMENTAL, CONTROL, & INELIGIBLE RECIDIVISM RATES FOR THREE & SIX MONTHS OF TIME AT RISK¹

CHARACTER- ISTICS	THREE MONTHS AT RISK			SIX MONTHS AT RISK			NUMBER OF CASES					
	Exper	Contr	Inelg	Exper	Contr	Inelg	THREE MONTHS			SIX MONTHS		
	Exper	Contr	Inelg	Exper	Contr	Inelg	Exper	Contr	Inelg	Exper	Contr.	Inelg
<u>AGE</u>												
12-13	19	31	15	18	50	24	43	13	52	17	8	41
14-15	26	32	32	40	52	38	140	72	68	68	46	128
16-17	14	24	27	16	40	33	72	34	113	37	20	89
<u>LIVING SITUATION</u>												
both parents	20	29	21	40	45	33	109	48	109	52	31	79
two parents, one step	13	19	30	17	47	33	48	26	63	18	15	46
one parent	36	33	31	25	48	37	91	40	78	48	23	63
other ²	23	43	32	(17)	(50)	36	13	7	76	6	4	61
<u>OFFENSE</u>												
curfew	(38)	(22)	16	(20)	(50)	22	8	9	49	5	2	45
runaway	16	28	28	23	46	36	113	50	166	44	35	126
incorrigible	29	36	36	32	51	40	91	50	72	60	37	60
truant	11	15	25	(33)	(0)	(14)	38	13	16	9	1	7
<u>SEX</u>												
male	25	21	28	34	50	36	112	29	164	50	14	136
female	17	32	27	26	48	31	149	94	179	74	61	128

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]

TABLE 13 (continued)

CHARACTER- ISTICS	THREE MONTHS AT RISK			SIX MONTHS AT RISK			NUMBER OF CASES					
	Exper	Contr	Inelg	Exper	Contr	Inelg	THREE MONTHS			SIX MONTHS		
							Exper	Contr	Inelg	Exper	Contr	Inelg
<u>PRIOR OFFENSES</u>												
none	19	24	13	26	42	17	151	70	147	69	41	113
one	22	40	19	39	64	24	73	25	53	36	14	42
two	32	24	48	25	40	50	25	17	29	12	10	22
three+	21	46	45	22	60	56	14	11	114	9	10	87
<u># STATUS OFFENSE PRIORS</u>												
none	20	22	15	30	43	22	186	85	200	83	47	155
one	21	50	41	26	64	38	53	18	51	31	11	42
two	27	30	58	33	38	67	15	10	24	6	8	18
three+	33	50	43	33	67	55	9	10	68	6	9	49
<u># DELINQ. OFFENSE PRIORS</u>												
none	20	31	22	28	47	24	213	102	210	103	64	160
one or more	24	19	36	35	55	49	50	21	133	23	11	104

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¹The analysis is based on Clark County computerized data, July 1976 through June 1977. Whether a youth was in the experimental, control, or ineligible group was determined from the data IPA collected for the USC national evaluation and this designation was added to the raw court data file.

²"Other" includes relatives, group homes, foster homes, or institutions.

The recidivism rate within the experimental group for both the three-month and six-month follow-up periods is generally lower than that for the control group regardless of the age of the youth, the living situation, the type of offense, and the number of prior offenses (status or delinquent). For males within the experimental group the recidivism rate is slightly higher after three months at risk (25 percent compared to 21 percent within the control group), but is lower than the control group after six months at risk. In general, the evidence in Table 13 shows that the observed differences in Table 12 are not attributable to differences between the types of status offenders handled by the two groups.

This conclusion is further substantiated with the multiple regression analysis reported in Table 14. The treatment variable, even with all priors and socio-economic characteristics controlled, produces about a ten percent reduction in the recidivism rate for a three-month "at risk" period and this is statistically significant ($F=4.07$) beyond the .01 level.

The effect of petitions and detention on recidivism, controlling for priors and socio-economic characteristics, is shown in Table 15, but the results (based only on a comparison of experimental and control group youths) differ from those found when the entire pre-post data were examined. For the former, it appears as if the filing of a petition increases the probability of recidivism, whereas detention is not significantly related to recidivism. For the entire pre-post data, detention had a significant relationship to higher recidivism, but petitions were related to lower recidivism. It should be noted that being in the experimental group (Table 15) maintains a significant relationship with lower recidivism even when detention and petitions are controlled.

A final question is whether some change in the community or at the

TABLE 14
 MULTIPLE REGRESSION OF TREATMENT EFFECTS ON RECIDIVISM RATES
 FOR THREE MONTHS AT RISK TIME, EXPERIMENTAL VERSUS CONTROL¹

	Zero Order Correlation	B	Beta	F Value	Probability
Treatment (experimental)	-.11	-.10	-.11	4.07	<.001
Prior status offenses	.10	.05	.09	3.2	<.01
Prior delin- quent offenses	-.02	-.02	-.03	.28	n.s.
Parents	.08	.003	.07	1.78	<.10
Age	-.05	-.01	-.05	.81	n.s.
Sex (female)	-.02	-.03	-.04	.61	n.s.
Constant		.46			$R^2=.11$

¹The zero order correlation shows the relationship of each variable on the left with recidivism when no other variables are controlled. B is the unstandardized partial regression coefficient and beta is the standardized partial regression coefficient. The analysis was conducted on the juvenile court computerized data base.

TABLE 15

MULTIPLE REGRESSION OF PETITIONS & DETENTION WITH RECIDIVISM RATES
FOR THREE MONTHS RISK TIME, EXPERIMENTAL & CONTROL GROUPS¹

	Zero Order Correlation	B	Beta	F Value	Probability
Detention	.04	.04	.04	.48	n.s.
Petitions	.10	.17	.10	3.2	<.01
Prior Status Offenses	.11	.05	.09	2.69	<.05
Living Situation	.08	.003	.07	1.68	n.s.
Age	-.05	-.01	-.05	.70	n.s.
Prior Delinquent Offenses	-.02	-.03	-.03	.27	n.s.
Sex (female)	-.02	-.02	-.02	.174	n.s.
constant		.35			R ² =.03

Treatment ² (control=1; experimental=0)	-.11	-.10	-.10	3.35	

¹The zero order correlation shows the relationship of each variable on the left with recidivism when no other variables are controlled. B is the unstandardized partial regression coefficient and beta is the standardized partial regression coefficient. The analysis was conducted on the juvenile court computerized data base.

²The effect of the treatment is estimated with the other variables in the equation. In the upper part of the table, the effects are estimated without the treatment variable being controlled.

court produced a change in the recidivism rates of all youths--status offenders and delinquents--and, therefore, the apparent effect of DSO has been confused with this outside influence on the system. An analysis of recidivism rates of delinquents shows 18 percent of youths whose instant offense was a delinquency had a subsequent delinquent or status offense within three months during the pre-program time period compared with 19 percent of the post-DSO delinquents. When six months of follow-up are used, the results are quite similar: During the pre-program time period, delinquent offenses were followed by a subsequent status or delinquent offense in 22 percent of the cases compared with 24 percent recidivism for the post-DSO youths. Thus, the recidivism rates for delinquents did not change at all, or increased slightly, providing evidence that the observed decrease for status offenders was not produced by some outside factor influencing all youths in the community.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The first major conclusion about the effect of the Clark County deinstitutionalization project is that the detention of status offenders was reduced both directly and indirectly. The decision to apply for a grant under the federal DSO initiative and the corresponding change in court policy about detention produced a dramatic change in what had been a steadily increasing proportion of status offenders detained. Before the change in policy, the detention rate had--at times--reached almost 90 percent and it averaged 72 percent during the entire pre-program time period. The data indicate that a further reduction in detention occurred when the DSO program began taking clients and that this reduction was due to the project activities rather than an overall change in court policy.

The second major conclusion is that the project activities reduced the recidivism rate of status offenders. Whether this reduction was due to the counseling and crisis intervention strategies of the DSO program or to the reduction in detention (and in filing of petitions) is difficult to ascertain. When the pre and post time periods were examined together, it appeared as if recidivism increased if the youth was detained but declined if a petition was filed. In the post period, however, comparing just the experimental and control groups, a different pattern was observed. Recidivism seemed to increase if a petition was filed but detention had no effect. Perhaps most important, the effects--whatever they may have been--were rather trivial, producing only two or three percent differences in recidivism at most. Given the large sample size, however, differences that are substantively trivial can be statistically significant.

It is, perhaps, quite tempting at this point to conclude that the federal DSO program was a resounding success--at least in one, relatively small, juvenile court. Before drawing that conclusion, however, it must be noted that the apparent success of the DSO program has been measured against extremely high rates of detention and recidivism that existed in the pre-program conditions and in the concurrent comparison group. The effectiveness of DSO can be heralded only when juxtaposed against the alternative conditions because even at the end of the DSO experience, almost half of the status offender referrals to the court were still being detained and the recidivism rate, for six months of follow-up in the DSO group, was almost 30 percent. The rate of re-referrals for one year of follow-up would be projected at between 45 and 50 percent.

It is appropriate to conclude that the Clark County juvenile court in Vancouver, Washington was a better place as a result of the DSO initiative

and the local project. Nevertheless, the performance of the court-- in terms of detention rates and recidivism of status offenders--leaves considerable room for improvement.

FOOTNOTES

1. The term "status offender" refers to youths whose offense would not be considered an offense if committed by an adult.
2. The 1974 act called for a cessation of detention--both pre and post adjudication--but the IJA/ABA standards recommend removal of status offenders from the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. Removal of juvenile court jurisdiction over status offenders has been called "divestiture" [Kobrin and Klein, 1980] and "decriminalization."
3. An excellent review of research--including reports on recidivism rates--was compiled by Charles P. Smith, et al [1977]. See also Palmer, et al [1979], Heuser [1979], Marra and Sax [1978], Thomas [1976], IJA/ABA [1977].
4. Studies of official reactions to status offenders include Teilmann [1978], Schneider [1978a and 1978b], McNeece [19], Monahan [19], Lynch [1979].
5. Major exceptions include the report by Palmer on diversion programs in California and the soon to be released report from Kobrin and Klein [1980].
6. Smith, et al, has a good review of these studies and the statistical information pertaining to detention rates. Studies focusing on the fact that young women are especially likely to be detained and/or incarcerated for status offenders include those by Greene [1972], Rogers [19], Barton, et al [19].
7. Prior to the evaluation reports from the DSO initiative, McNeece's report on Arkansas is one of the few dealing with this issue.
8. The Clark County juvenile court already had ceased committing status offenders to DSHS for commitment and was in the process of removing

ten county youths from the state institution for juveniles who had been placed there prior to passage of Senate Bill 3116 which limited institutionalization as a dispositional option.

9. The Clark County project was included in the national evaluation of DSO funded by NIJJDP and conducted by the University of Southern California. The Institute of Policy Analysis in Eugene, Oregon, was separately funded, also from NIJJDP, for the purposes of 1) implementing the USC evaluation in Vancouver, 2) overseeing the collection of data required for the USC evaluation, 3) conducting a separate local evaluation of the project. In addition, a Vancouver nonprofit organization (Health and Welfare Council) had a small contract (with Dr. Pat Anderson) to implement the random assignment procedures and conduct a special study of the family therapy aspect of the project.

10. The groups differed in size when they should have been equal, during the first six months, and the experimental group had too many boys. Our best assessment is that the problem was caused not by "fudging" on assignments, but because the experimental group counselors were on duty from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. and on weekends whereas the control counselors kept regular 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. hours. Each morning, a consultant to the project determined from a random numbers table whether it was an experimental or control group day and notified court personnel. Because the experimental counselors were on duty during the high volume time periods, they received more cases. This also explains why the experimental group had too many boys if boys are more likely to come in after 5 p.m. or on weekends than are girls. Even though the random assignment procedure did not work as well as it should have, we have no reason to believe that judgmental decisions of the type that the "easy" or "hard" cases were

being placed into one group or the other were being made.

11. See Cronbach and Furby [19].

12. The fact that more than half of the status offenders were female is consistent with findings from many other studies showing the obvious sex bias in parental and/or official response to noncriminal misbehavior of young women compared with males. See studies by Rogers, Green, the review by Smith, et al, and the Teilmann report on California.

13. For a discussion of the effect of DSO on filing of petitions, see the full evaluation report [Schneider, 1978].

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