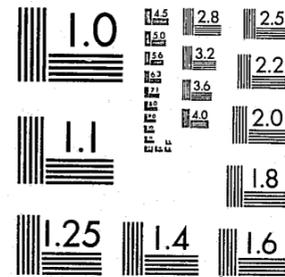


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THE FINDINGS OF SELF-REPORT STUDIES OF JUVENILE

MISBEHAVIOR: A SUMMARY

U.S. Department of Justice  
National Institute of Justice

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The major indebtedness of the authors of this paper is, of course, to the still rather small band of creative and dedicated scholars who have pioneered in and remain engaged in the development of the self-report method of studying delinquent behavior. We endeavor in the pages that follow to properly attribute the ideas herein contained, but we can not hope to convey the full degree to which the scholars we quote have influenced our thinking. More specifically, we are particularly indebted for the thoughtful advice and counsel provided by Robert Bursik of the Illinois Institute for Juvenile Research, Michael Hindelang of the State University of New York, and Martin Gold of the University of Michigan. Of course, we accept full responsibility for the final synthesis of the many concepts and points of view contained in our report.

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#### PREFACE

In recent years a considerable literature upon "youth self-report studies" has appeared. In these studies researchers have asked youth to report anonymously the nature and extent of their engagement in law-violative behavior. It is not the purpose of this paper to recite the totality of the very considerable wisdom stemming from this literature. This is ably done in the major reports upon the individual studies, to which the reader is referred. Nor is it our purpose to repeat in full the available, often trenchant criticisms of inadequacies of the self-report literature. Rather, we have attempted to briefly state the nature of the available studies and to note the major areas of agreement among them. Our focus has been on findings which have particular significance for the development of public social policy regarding law-violative youth, as well as for planners of programs for such youth. Thus, as sources of our still-partial understanding of the problem behavior of young people, these data join those available from official justice system statistics, victim surveys, and the more informal accretion of observations by practitioners.

Our work is submitted in the spirit of admiration and appreciation for the scholars who have pioneered in this field of inquiry and who are still engaged in its refinement and further development.

THE FINDINGS OF SELF-REPORT STUDIES OF  
JUVENILE MISBEHAVIOR: A SUMMARY

The societal response to the needs of young people coming to the attention of the juvenile justice system is powerfully influenced by the manner in which categories of youth are developed from official records. Youth are classified as non-offenders, status offenders, delinquents, or juvenile felons; as first or repeat, minor or serious, property or violent offenders. Their positions in such classification schemes determine the varying types and degrees of intervention into their lives. Further, records of official contacts provide much of the basis for broader assessments of the nature and extent of juvenile violative behavior in our society, of its correlates, and of its distribution by social class, race, age, and sex. Law and public policy take important cognizance of such data, and service programs come into being either for status offenders or for delinquents, or as measures calculated to prevent the behaviors represented by such classification.

Such a situation is all very well--if the fact and nature of a young person's contacts with law enforcement or justice systems truly does distinguish him from his peers along lines reflecting his behavioral propensities and resultant need for societal intervention. But if, as is sometimes inferred from studies of youths' reports of their own activities, arrest is an occurrence which may result from behaviors engaged in by a majority of American youth, then the fact of official contact with a law

enforcement agency assumes a vastly different significance for the design of policy and program. Certain problems resulting directly from youths' involvement with the criminal justice system may, it is true, create additional needs for services responsive to that specific situation. But service programs focussing on the needs of the "behavior problem child" or upon the provision of services to such children as alternatives to justice system processing may forever confront the frustrations resulting from the presence of a boundless pool of potential eligibles for service. Some of the studies to be reported upon here suggest that juvenile violative behavior of sufficient seriousness that it could, if detected, result in delinquency or felony charges, is a part of the life experience of 83<sup>1</sup> percent, 88<sup>2</sup> percent, or even 95<sup>3</sup> percent of all American youth. A miniscule proportion of such behavior--perhaps as low as 3 percent<sup>4</sup>--results in detection and arrest. It thus becomes desirable to supplement arrest statistics with data which, if made available, would present a more complete picture of the behaviors and needs of American youth.

In this paper, we turn to the available information about the extent, nature, degree of seriousness, and distribution among population groups of juvenile violative behavior reported by youth themselves. Generally, we have restricted our focus to reports published since the mid-1960's, when the efforts of President Johnson's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice brought about a considerably increased emphasis on self-report and similar data. We make only occasional reference, usually in an historical context, to some of the earlier, landmark studies. Even so, we review some 70 reports (major

aspects of which are summarized in Appendix A) stemming from a lesser but still considerable number of projects in which researchers have used interviews and/or questionnaires to secure from youth their own statements of the illegal activities in which they have engaged, whether or not such activities resulted in detection and arrest. We examine the issue of the accuracy of self-report data. Finally, we suggest still-tentative conclusions about the manner in which data so generated might contribute to the definition of the needs of American young people, to the shaping of public social policy, and to the design and administration of service programs.

#### THE STUDIES

Because they have focussed on samples drawn from broad cross-sections of American young people, in this review we frequently quote from two research groups providing four particularly comprehensive surveys: Martin Gold and associates at the University of Michigan,<sup>5</sup> and the Institute for Juvenile Research in Chicago.<sup>6</sup>

In 1961, Gold secured extensive structured interviews with a sample of 522 youths from the 13-16 year old population of Flint, Michigan. Later, in his two National Surveys of Youth, he used the same approach with stratified samples of youth in the contiguous United States: the first such survey, in 1967, sampled 847 youths 13 through 16 years of age; the second, in 1972, 1,395 youths age 11 through 17. In these studies, youngsters were asked how many times, if any, in the three years preceding their interviews, they had engaged in each of a rather inclusive list of violative behaviors. Gold then ruled out of consideration all reported behaviors considered by the study staff not to be chargeable in court.

Each remaining incident was rated on a scale denoting its degree of seriousness, ranging from the petty to the most serious (e.g., from "trespass" to "assault" resulting in injuries requiring medical attention). Thus, Gold is able to report the relative seriousness as well as the frequency of occurrence of the misbehaviors studied.

The Institute for Juvenile Research interview study of a stratified sample of 3,112 Illinois residents ages 14 to 18 was conducted in 1972. Youth were asked to report whether they had during their lives to date engaged in specified behaviors "never," "once or twice," "a few times," or "often." Here, the researchers separately tabulated status offenses (purchase or use of liquor, sexual intercourse, truanting, running away), and the more serious delinquent acts such as violence, theft, vandalism, poly-drug use, and stripping cars.

In these four studies, Gold and the Institute for Juvenile Research used rather large samples of youth to study a wide range of behaviors generally considered to be violative. Other researchers, also drawn upon for this report, have used the self-report method of inquiry to explore more specific issues. For example, Hindelang<sup>7</sup> focussed on issues related to age, personality factors, and group involvement in his notable series of studies; Gould<sup>8</sup> upon differences among racial groups; Erickson<sup>9</sup> upon the group context of misconduct; Clark and Haurek<sup>10</sup> upon age and sex role; Mann, Friedman, and Friedman<sup>11</sup> upon characteristics of those who do and those who do not become identified by courts as a result of their violative behaviors; Elliot and Voss<sup>12</sup> upon the relationship between delinquency and school problems; and Hirschi<sup>13</sup> upon etiological issues.

The comparability of the methods used by various researchers, and

thus of their results, is far from complete. Various studies used various data-gathering techniques (e.g., interviews vs. checklists), varying definitions of delinquent acts, differing time frames, etc. Populations sampled ranged from youth in Illinois or the United States to youth in a given high school. Although the study of self-reported violative behavior remains in its chaotic early stages, the data from various studies seems in quite general agreement upon certain issues. From them emerge a fairly clear picture of important aspects of the activities of America's often troubled and troubling young people.

#### VOLUME AND TRENDS IN JUVENILE VIOLATIVE BEHAVIOR

The first and most glaringly obvious finding of the self-report studies is that a very large proportion of American youth could be labeled as "juvenile delinquents" if their behavior were to become known to and was reported by the police. This has remained true over time and regardless of the composition of the samples interviewed. In one of the earliest studies, in Fort Worth, Texas in 1943, all of the several hundred college student respondents admitted that during their youth they had committed acts chargeable in juvenile court.<sup>14</sup> The average number of such acts was 17.6 for males and 4.7 for females. Roughly similar conclusions have been reached in a number of subsequent studies. The 1967 National Survey of Youth, for example (which focussed on a three year period, and asked about more serious behaviors than did the Fort Worth study), reported that 88 percent of youth surveyed had engaged in chargeable violative acts.

Clearly, the fact of having engaged in at least some degree of violative behavior which could result in arrest and referral to court does

not denote anything exceptional about the proclivities, personalities, or background characteristics of young Americans. Some such behavior is common to almost all of us--and if we are interested in the study of those involved in problem behavior, Pogo was probably correct in his observation that, "We have met the enemy--and he is us." Therefore, meaningful analysis must turn from simple classification of individuals as violators or non-violators to data on the nature, frequency, and seriousness of specified behaviors.

#### THE NATURE AND FREQUENCY OF OFFENSES

While many self-reported offenses are of a non-serious nature, large proportions of American youth also report having engaged in serious behaviors, including violent offenses. The self-report studies document much behavior of the sort that arouses public outrage, places in jeopardy the property and/or personal security of citizens, and creates the possibility of severe legal sanctions. However, it is obvious that the self-report method is not well suited to the study of the most serious crimes such as murder and forceable rape, which occur relatively infrequently. This is true both because such crimes might not be reported by perpetrators and because few of them could be expected to occur in a relatively small sample of the general population. Thus, for example, in 1975 there were a total of 1,573 reported arrests of American youth under 18 years of age who had allegedly committed murder or non-negligent manslaughter.<sup>15</sup> No such incidents are noted in any of the self-report studies reviewed by us.

The relative frequency of serious and non-serious behaviors is probably best demonstrated by the Institute for Juvenile Research (IJR)

study and the National Survey of Youth, since these studies were of samples drawn from all strata of large populations, and because they provide data on a wide range of behaviors. Two sorts of measures are available. One is of the proportion of the populations studied "ever" having engaged in the behaviors specified or having engaged in them at least once during a designated time period before the inquiry. The other measure is of the frequency with which subjects have engaged in the behaviors. Unfortunately, in the studies referred to, "frequency" is measured only relatively. Respondents are classified as having reported having committed specific acts "never," "once," or "more than once," or as in the IJR study "more than once or twice." Thus a youth who had committed a given offense two or three times could be lumped together with one having done so fifteen times. However, such data do at least permit distinguishing between one-time and repeat offenders.

Table 1 summarizes, by gender and race, the proportion of respondents in the IJR sample of 3,110 Illinois 14 to 18 year olds who reported having engaged in major classifications of offenses at least once.

As would be expected, when both sexes and both whites and non-whites are considered, the most frequently reported violations are the relatively petty ones grouped by the IJR researchers under the title "Improper Behavior." Included under this category were running away from home, making anonymous telephone calls, cheating on school examinations, and truancy. Many such incidents are probably so trivial in nature as to seem hardly worthy of note. But they may also represent steps between non-violative activity and behavior generally considered more clearly delinquent. Further, they may result in varying degrees of early alienation from and conflict with the family, the school, and even the police

and the juvenile justice system. After all, the struggle to remove juvenile "status offenders" from detention homes and correctional institutions is yet to be won in many states.

Table 1  
Percentage of Illinois Youth Ever Involved in Specified  
Misbehaviors, By Race and Gender

Offense	Males		Females	
	Non-White	White	Non-White	White
Improper Behavior	77.0	89.0	89.0	87.0
Alcohol	63.0	66.0	59.0	61.0
Drugs	25.0	22.5	23.5	21.0
Auto	50.0	61.0	28.0	46.0
Theft	70.5	72.5	63.5	58.5
Violence	78.0	69.0	67.0	25.0
Unknown = 46 N=3,110				

Source: Table constructed by authors from The Institute for Juvenile Research, "Summary and Policy Implications of the Youth and Society in Illinois Reports," 1975; Sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Department of Justice, publication forthcoming.

The other categories of behaviors reported in Table 1 generally include serious criminal acts, although most categories also include some activities of an only marginally serious nature. Thus "Alcohol" violations cover "Drinking without Permission," "Drinking to Drunkenness," and "Purchase of Alcohol." Somewhat surprisingly in view of the public concern

it has aroused, "Drug Use" was the least frequently engaged in violative behavior studied. The category included marijuana use (reported by 22 percent of all adolescents in the sample), barbiturates and amphetamines (reported by 8 percent), psychedelic drugs (3-4 percent), inhalants such as glue or freon (7 percent), and heroin (2 percent). Five percent of the youngsters in the sample had engaged in the sale of drugs.

While considerable proportions of the youth in the IJR study had been involved in auto offenses of some sort, the majority of those were also minor: "Driving without a License" or "Driving Fast or Recklessly." On the other hand, 7 percent had been involved in auto theft ("Joyriding") and 6 percent in "Stripping Parts," both of which suggest readiness to engage in behavior more widely recognized as truly criminal. The separate "Theft" category ranged from thefts of items valued at less than two dollars to "Breaking and Entering," reported by 9 percent of white males aged 14-15 and 10 percent of those ages 16-17, and 14 percent of black males ages 14-15 and 18 percent of those 16-18. The data on violent behavior suggest that adolescent participation in some form of violent altercations is high, as would be expected. Forty-seven percent report "Fist Fighting." But the more serious violent behaviors representing threats to the safety of fellow citizens are also heavily represented, with 20 percent of the Illinois sample reporting having carried a weapon, 16 percent having been involved in gang fights, 10 percent having used a weapon and 7 percent having been involved in "Strong Arming."

The 1972 National Survey of Youth data also reveal a picture both of widespread participation in minor but still significant misbehavior and of less frequent but still very considerable involvement in quite

serious offenses. This study counted the number of incidents reported per youth as having occurred during the three years before the interviews in which the data were gathered. The research interviewers discussed with each subject the circumstances of each reported incident. They were thus able to eliminate many of the reported "offenses" from the data, on the basis of their being too trivial to be considered delinquent. The resultant findings are summarized in Table 2.

Both white and black males reported an average of 6.6 offenses; females reported slightly over four. (No more than three incidents of any one type of offense were recorded.) While less serious acts contributed heavily to this score, black youth reported about one robbery for each four subjects and white and black males reported quite frequent assaults, larcenies, and use of major drugs. A somewhat similar mixture of serious and less serious acts was revealed in Gold's earlier study of a national sample of adolescents,<sup>16</sup> his study of the youth of Flint, Michigan,<sup>17</sup> the study by Elliot and Voss<sup>18</sup> of stratified cluster samples of junior and senior school classes in California, and most other self-report studies. Based on evidence taken from studies done over the years and in widely scattered geographic areas, it appears that most American youth engage in some delinquent behavior; many more than would be suspected from official statistics have engaged in serious misbehavior.

#### TRENDS OVER TIME

While the self-report studies do not provide solid evidence upon trends, there is some indication that the volume and nature of juvenile misbehavior does not materially change over relatively long time spans. Studies reported as early as 1943 suggest pictures not markedly differing

Table 2

Number of Incidents by Gender and Race:  
1972 National Survey of Youth

Offense n=	Male		Female	
	White 270	Black 33	White 211	Black 34
Runaway	.08	.06	.08	.04
Hit Parent	.12	.06	.11	.04
Truancy	.73	.94	.69	.69
Property Destruction	.56	.49	.17	.20
Fraud	.32	.46	.37	.40
for money/goods	.02	.15	.01	-0-
for alcohol	.12	.15	.10	.02
Confidence Game	.12	.30	.05	.18
Theft	.66	.79	.40	.42
Shoplifting	.23	.15	.20	.16
Larceny	.30	.27	.16	.24
Burglary	.06	.09	.01	-0-
Robbery	.01	.24	.01	.02
Assault	.52	.76	.08	.24
Threat	.26	.30	.08	.27
Extortion	-0-	.03	-0-	-0-
Trespass	.72	.64	.50	.27
Enter	.45	.27	.38	.29
Break and Enter	.10	.09	.06	.07
Drink	1.1	.73	1.0	.51
Gang Fight	.29	.30	.09	.20
Concealed Weapon	.14	.15	.02	.27
Take Car	.13	.06	.03	.02
Use MJ/Drugs	.42	.33	.51	.09
Total Frequency	6.6	6.6	4.6	4.1
Total Frequency Drink and MJ/Drugs	5.1	5.6	3.0	3.7
Total Seriousness <sup>a</sup>	3.0	4.1	1.0	2.0

<sup>a</sup>This index is an exception to the title--it does not simply reflect the number of incidents per capita. This index weights each act using the Sellin and Wolfgang weighting system with two modifications, then sums and averages the seriousness scores. For complete explanation of the weighting system see Thorsten Sellin and Marvin E. Wolfgang, *The Measurement of Delinquency* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964). We have included acts which are assigned the minimum weight of one although Sellin and Wolfgang did not in an effort to rule out trivia. Since the offenses in this study

Table 2--Continued

were already judged chargeable we included the least serious offenses in this index. Secondly, Sellin and Wolfgang did not assign a weight to running away, drinking, using illicit drugs, and truancy. While these are included in the Frequency Index they are not included in the Serious Index. The Index ranges from 1 through 7 for each incident. These numbers are then summed and have no upper limit. In this case the upper limit was 20.

Source: Martin Gold and David J. Reimer, *Changing Patterns of Delinquent Behavior Among Americans 13 Through 16 Years Old: 1967-72*, *Crime and Delinquency Literature*, Volume 7, No. 4 (December 1975): 497.

from those noted above reported in the 1960's and 1970's.<sup>19</sup> However, only one comparison between closely comparable studies done at different time periods is available. It yields somewhat surprising but also somewhat encouraging results: the data from the 1967 and 1972 National Surveys indicates that violative juvenile behavior may actually have decreased in both frequency and seriousness during the interval between the two surveys.<sup>20</sup> The data are most meaningful when those for males and females are examined separately. For boys, the 1972 study showed that the number of incidents per capita committed in the three years preceding their interviews decreased 9 percent when compared to the 1967 data, while the seriousness scores decreased almost 14 percent. Six offenses showed marked decreases in incidence: larceny, threat, trespass, enter, break and enter, and gang fighting. Two somewhat interrelated activities, fraud to obtain alcohol and marijuana and drug use, increased markedly, the latter almost 10 times, during the period in question. When the per capita number of incidents of violative behavior is calculated after excluding drinking and marijuana

and drug use, the rate for boys actually decreased between 1967 and 1972 from 6.38 acts to 5.13, or about 20 percent. For girls, the number of reported incidents per capita increased by about 22 percent (from 3.7 to 4.5) between 1967 and 1972. Again, the major increases were in drinking and marijuana and drug use. When these activities are excluded from the calculation, the number of incidents per capita for girls remained unchanged over the five years in question.

It is of interest to note that increases in drug use seem more dramatic than they actually are, as they increased from a low base. In 1967 only 2.1 percent of the male and 2.4 percent of the female respondents reported having used marijuana or other drugs. While somewhat less than 20 percent of either the boys or the girls reported such use in 1972, the increase relative to 1967 is pronounced. For both boys and girls, the data reflect mostly marijuana use, with 17 percent of the 1972 respondents reporting some such usage, compared to 7.2 percent who had used hard drugs.

Quite appropriately, in reporting those results Gold and Reimer ask, "What happened to the teen-age crime wave?" It is not surprising to note that adolescent marijuana use increased in the 1967-72 period. But this was a time when newspapers and magazines continuously proclaimed rapidly increasing rates of juvenile violative behavior in general. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reports for the same period showed a 29 percent increase in arrests of juveniles (22 percent for serious property crime and 6 percent for violative crime).<sup>21</sup> There are numerous possible explanations for this discrepancy between trends derived from self-reports and those from official statistics. The self-report data in question come from only two national surveys. But after all, as Gold and Reimer point out, while

the accuracy of some individual responses may be doubtful, there is no reason to believe that youth would be markedly less truthful in one year than in another. More probably, the variation arises from the fact that official statistics represent only a small proportion of all violative behavior. That proportion may vary from time to time, due to variation in the loosely supervised record-keeping practices of the myriad jurisdictions reporting data to the FBI, variation in methods of detection and apprehension, and/or increased police proclivity to book and arrest resulting from an expansion of diversion and other programs. Such a "widening of the net" effect has been reported to be a frequent consequence of the introduction of diversion or other referral resources for police use.<sup>22</sup>

At this point, one can only say that during the years in question American youth were engaging in a considerably greater number of violative acts than official statistics would indicate. But it is at least possible that such behavior somewhat decreased during a period in which official statistics, the general press, and most "folk wisdom" of the time suggested that it was increasing dramatically. Available explanations are speculative. The self-report data can only point the way toward further inquiry and provide a bit of additional data to be employed in responsible professional judgement.

#### RACE AND JUVENILE VIOLATIVE BEHAVIOR

The widely assumed relationship between violative behavior and ethnicity is apparently much weaker than generally believed. Young people from all races appear to violate the law with approximately equal frequency. Tabulations of offense type by race suggest that whites are somewhat more likely than blacks to commit status-type offenses and that blacks commit somewhat more serious violent offenses, but differences are not overwhelming.

The paucity of available data reported by youth from other ethnic groups tends to show very slightly elevated offense rates by Mexican-American and American Indian youth and slightly lower rates by Orientals, as compared with whites.

The impression that delinquency is largely a minority group problem is widespread. Official statistics would seem to confirm it. Nationally, in 1977 blacks represented 14.7 percent of the population under 18 but accounted for 27.2 percent of all juvenile arrests and 49.7 percent of all those for violence.<sup>23</sup> Wolfgang, in his study of a total cohort (9,945) of all boys born in Philadelphia in 1945 and living there between their tenth and eighteenth birthdays, noted that 50.2 percent of the non-white, compared to 28.6 percent of the white juveniles had police records. He reports that, "after examining the relationship between the various background variables . . . we concluded that the variables of race and socio-economic status (of somewhat less importance) were most strongly related to the offender/non-offender classification."<sup>24</sup>

This impression is not confirmed by the self-report studies. From Table 2, for example, it appears that in the 1972 National Survey of Youth, black and white boys reported engaging in almost exactly the same number of violative behaviors--an average of 6.6 incidents per capita during the three years preceding their interviews. This general picture tends to be confirmed by the larger Institute for Juvenile Research survey of Illinois youth, as shown in Table 1. Here, in fact, one sees that the total proportion of white respondents having engaged at some time in at least some of the violative behaviors about which they were queried is 63.3 percent. This slightly exceeds the 60.6 percent figure for blacks.

When we examine types of behaviors reported, certain differences by race do appear in both studies. Status-type offenses are reported by slightly more whites than non-whites. This emerges most clearly in the Illinois study. From Table 1 we see that white adolescent males in Illinois reported engaging in "improper behavior" more frequently than non-white males--a difference of 12 percentage points. Table 3 reports Alan Berger's further analysis of the same data. Berger drew six items from the Institute for Juvenile Research survey that conformed most closely to the Illinois definition of status offenses: running away from home, drinking without parental permission, buying liquor, being drunk, truancy, and coital experience. He then created a Level of Involvement Index of the extent to which each of the respondents ever engaged in these activities.

Table 3  
Race and Status Violations  
(Percentage Distribution)

Race	Level of Status Violations <sup>a</sup>				N
	Low	Mod. Low	Mod. High	High	
White	27	22	38	13	2481
Non-white	34	22	32	12	582
Total	28	22	37	13	3064
				NA =	46
				Total =	3110

<sup>a</sup>The collapsed categories are defined as follows: Low=no activities reported or only one out of six activities reported; moderately low=1 activity out of 3, 4, or 5 reported upon, or 2 out of 5 or 6 activities reported; moderately high=1 out of 2, 2 out of 3 or 4, 3 out of 5 or 6, or 4 out of 6 reported; high=all activities reported or 3 out of 4, 4 out of 5, 5 out of 6 activities reported. In terms of the proportions of activities reported the definitions are: low=0 to 19%, moderately low=20-49%, moderately high=50-54.5%, high=75% or more. The percentage

Table 3--Continued

distribution of adolescents who fell in each category is as follows:  
low=28%, moderately low=22%, moderately high=37%, high=13%.

Source: Alan Berger, "Adolescent Status Violators: A Reconnaissance," Institute for Juvenile Research, 1975; Sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Department of Justice (publication forthcoming): 14.

From Table 3 we can say again that there is a slight tendency for white youths to report more intensive involvement in status-type violations than do blacks. Fifty-one percent of the white youths report moderately high or high involvement compared with 44 percent of the non-white youth. The difference of 7 percentage points is small, of course, and pertains only to the state of Illinois.

However, more non-whites than whites report being involved in serious behavior, especially violent behaviors, and they report being involved in such behavior more often. Thus in Table 1, for both males and females, more black than white Illinois youth report having engaged in violent offenses. For males, 78 percent of the black and 69 percent of the white respondents had been so involved. The difference is much greater for females: 67 percent for blacks as compared to 25 percent for whites. The more detailed data provided on this point by IJR make clear that this trend holds for all categories of violent behavior studied ("Fist Fight," "Carry Weapons," "Gang Fights," "Use Weapons," and "Strong Arm") both for "ever" having engaged in the behavior and for the frequency of such involvement.

This general pattern is confirmed by Gold's National Survey. It is evident in Table 2 that the "Total Seriousness" score for black males reporting in the 1972 National Survey exceeds that for whites. Examination of the individual offenses listed reveals that this difference arises primarily from the greater number of robberies and assaults committed by blacks, with blacks particularly dominating the "Robbery" category. There are an average of .24 robberies per respondent listed for blacks as against .01 for whites. Again, Elliot and Voss found in their sample of high school classes in Richmond, California that blacks reported slightly more serious and whites somewhat more non-serious offenses, although the differences were sufficiently small that they did not reach statistical significance.<sup>25</sup>

Relatively few self-report studies have produced data on ethnic groups other than "white" and "black." The very limited data available provides little support for the belief that there are major differences along ethnic lines in rates of delinquent behavior, although in the Elliot and Voss study "Mexican" youth violated somewhat more frequently than "Anglos" while in junior high school but not while in senior high school. Two studies<sup>26,27</sup> suggest lower violation rates on the part of Orientals, and one<sup>28</sup> reports slightly more misbehavior by American Indians compared with a comparison group in Wyoming, after controlling for social class.

#### SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND JUVENILE VIOLATIVE BEHAVIOR

According to the self-report studies, the relationship between social class and delinquent behavior does not appear to be as strong as is frequently believed.

Social class and its assumed close relationship to delinquent behavior has long been a cornerstone in the building of both theory and policy. In its 1967 summary report, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice concluded:

But there is still no reason to doubt that delinquency, especially the most serious delinquency, is committed disproportionately by slum and lower class youth.<sup>29</sup>

Entire schools of thought have grown out of observations suggesting that the great burden of delinquency in this country is a product of "delinquent subcultures" related to socio-economic disadvantage, or to disparities in adolescent opportunity structures arising from similar sources. Very real support for these positions may be derived from official statistics. Thus, in Wolfgang's 1972 study of the careers of almost 10,000 Philadelphia boys, lower class boys were almost twice as likely to have been involved with police on delinquency charges as were higher class boys.<sup>30</sup> (It should be noted however, that this study employed what is probably a weak measure of an individual's social class identification: the median income level of youths' neighborhoods. It should also be noted that other studies suggest that the degree to which social class and official measures of delinquency actually correlate remains less clearly established than is often believed.)<sup>31</sup>

Self-reported delinquency is distributed quite differently than that which is reported in arrest statistics. Gold, as well as Empey and Erickson<sup>32</sup> provide data suggesting that the differences are not great between classes. In fact, in their data the lower class youth surveyed reported slightly fewer and less serious offenses; it was the middle class youth who had misbehaved most frequently and most seriously. This finding is summarized in Table 4, drawn from the National Survey of Youth data on youth ages 13 through 16.

Table 4

Total Frequency and Total Seriousness of Incidents by Males Per Capita by Social Class in 1972

	Boys		Girls	
	Average # Incidents	Seriousness Index	Average # Incidents	Seriousness Index
Lower Class	5.9	2.8	4.0	.97
Middle Class	7.2	3.5	4.8	1.3
Upper Class	6.6	3.1	4.4	.75

Source: Jay R. Williams and Martin Gold, "From Delinquent Behavior to Official Delinquency," *Social Problems*, Volume 20, No. 2 (1972): 209-229.

Even though frequency of juvenile law-violative behavior by youth of different social classes appears, in general, remarkably similar for many types of misconduct, some differences do appear when specific behaviors are examined, particularly if gender is also considered. Lower class boys in the 1972 National Survey reported markedly fewer incidents of property destruction, shoplifting, drinking, and taking cars, but more gang fighting; upper class boys reported fewer incidents of property destruction, fraud, and confidence games, but more trespassing and illegal entering; middle class youth reported considerably more marijuana use and drug abuse. But for many behaviors and for overall frequency or seriousness of misconduct, the social classes resemble each other to a surprisingly high degree.

Socioeconomic class had even less impact on girls' reports to the 1972 National Survey. Lower class girls were less involved in alcohol and drug use than the other two groups; middle class girls reported more truanting; upper class girls more trespassing. Otherwise, they had misbehaved rather similarly.

The Institute for Juvenile Research data on incidence and type of repeated violations by class, race, and gender also fail to reveal a pattern of dominant lower-class delinquency. This is illustrated in Table 5.

White lower class males report high involvement in carrying weapons (16 percent of all reporting), and gang fights (12 percent). Middle class white boys were also high on carrying weapons and upper middle class whites were high on property damage. Among non-whites, lower class boys were more involved in poly-drug use, stripping cars, and property damage. Lower and working class non-whites report high levels of gang fights and strong arming, but non-white middle and upper class youth report frequent use of weapons. Weapons were carried most frequently by both the non-white working and the combined non-white middle and upper middle class groups.

In short, the Institute's study also failed to reveal consistent relationships between socio-economic status and status offenders. However, in the data there is the suggestion that drinking may be handled differentially along class lines. The researchers developed a category of "frequent drinkers" which they examined for differences among groups of youth. With the exception of one group, youth who drink frequently reported becoming drunk 57 to 83 percent of the times they drank. Lower class non-white males who drink frequently were the exception to this pattern. They reported that drinking was carried to the point of drunkenness 100 percent of the time.<sup>33</sup> It would appear that this group most frequently drinks for the purpose of getting drunk, rather than for social purposes--a fact that may deserve special attention.

Table 5

Percentage of Illinois Youth Who Reported Engaging in Serious Activities "More Than Once or Twice"  
by Race, Socio-economic Status, and Gender

	Drinking to Drunkenness	Poly Drug User	Stripping Cars	Damaging Property	Larceny	B&E	Carry Weapons	Gang Fights	Use Weapons	Strong Arm
White Males:										
Lower	27	6	5	9	7	8	16	12	9	8
Working	27	6	6	9	6	4	9	8	4	5
Middle	33	6	4	9	2	2	11	7	3	2
Upper Middle	26	5	3	14	5	5	8	4	4	4
Non-White Males:										
Lower	27	12	11	15	11	10	14	13	11	9
Working	28	6	1	9	1	8	23	16	13	8
Middle and Upper Middle	17	5	2	20	13	4	22	9	22	4
White Females:										
Lower	27	10	5	3	2	2	7	1	2	3
Working	25	7	2	2	2	0	2	2	1	0
Middle	26	7	2	2	2	1	4	3	1	1
Upper Middle	18	7	0	5	3	1	2	1	0	1
Non-White Females:										
Lower	23	13	4	7	5	9	14	12	4	10
Working	12	10	3	0	7	0	4	7	7	10
Middle and Upper Middle	25	17	8	8	8	8	26	8	17	4

Source: Table constructed by authors from The Institute for Juvenile Research, "Summary and Policy Implications of the Youth and Society in Illinois Reports," 1975; Sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Department of Justice, publication forthcoming.

In another potentially valuable exploration, Johnstone,<sup>34</sup> also working with the Institute's study data, further examines the relationship between the social class of youths' families and the predominant social class structure of the neighborhood in which the family lives. Interestingly, although family social class identification did not predict violative behavior, disparity between the social class of a youngster's family and that of his neighbors apparently does increase the likelihood of misbehaving. Lower class youth living in middle class areas report more misconduct than do lower class youth from predominantly lower class neighborhoods. This finding is in conflict with theories picturing the dominant culture of the neighborhood as the major determinant of behavior. It would appear to lend some support to theories emphasizing the criminogenic role of actual and perceived disparity between culturally induced expectations and actual opportunity and achievement.

It should be noted, however, that the inability of most of the self-report studies to demonstrate positive relationships between social class and juvenile violative behavior do not necessarily demonstrate the absence of social class as a factor which at least contributes to the explanation of some behavior on the part of some lower class youth. But the studies also seem to make clear the considerable prevalence of violative behavior that must be explained by factors unrelated to poverty and other lower-class linked disadvantage.

#### GENDER AND VIOLATIVE BEHAVIOR

All self-report studies find that males engage in more frequent and more serious violative behavior than do females. However, differences by sex are smaller than those indicated by arrest statistics.

In 1976 some 936,000 males and 260,500 females under 18 years of age are reported to have been arrested: a male-female ratio of close to four to one.<sup>35</sup> In the 1972 National Survey of Youth, boys reported an average of almost seven and girls an average of about four incidents: a bit less than two to one.

Differences by gender must be analyzed by types of misbehaviors and by race and class in order to achieve their full meaning. Thus in Table 6, drawn by Silveira from the Institute for Juvenile Research data, one notes that white female youth tend to report themselves as "non-delinquent" about 20 percentage points more frequently than do males, regardless of social class.

Among non-whites 13 percent more lower class than upper class males are non-violators; about 9 percent more upper class females than upper class males are non-violators. Black males tend to be property violators somewhat less often than do white males, regardless of class, but on this dimension lower class black females are rather markedly more likely to report offenses than are black males of either low or high social class. While females report fewer seriously violent behaviors than do males, black females report such behaviors much more frequently than do white females. Males and females report a similar number of status-type offenses, i.e., running away, truanting, using and abusing alcohol, and having sexual experience. Running away is less frequently reported by either sex than might have been expected. In Illinois, about 15 percent of the youth studied reported that they had "ever" run away; only 4 percent reported doing so repeatedly. In the National Survey, running away was one of the least reported types of misconduct, with a 1972 reported mean per capita incidence of .06 for boys and .04 for girls.

Table 6

Distribution of Delinquent Types<sup>a</sup> by Gender, Race, and Socio-economic Status  
(Percent in Each Category) (N=3,110)

Delinquent Type	Males			
	White		Non-White	
	Low SES	Higher SES	Low SES	Higher SES
Non-Delinquent	48	49	53	40
Property Violator	29	36	13	17
Seriously Violent	23	15	35	43
	Females			
	White		Non-White	
	Low SES	Higher SES	Low SES	Higher SES
Non-Delinquent	70	72	44	49
Property Violator	25	25	27	19
Seriously Violent	6	3	29	32

<sup>a</sup>These "types" are constructed and are not exhaustive of the entire range of possible delinquent involvement. Some respondents are not included in any of the above types. The types are defined as follows:

Non-Delinquents--Youths who do not appear to be involved in criminal careers. These youth report not having engaged in misbehavior at all or only in small, common misdemeanors.

Property Violators--Youth who report having engaged in rather serious property violations but not in seriously violent activities.

Seriously Violent--Youth who report having used weapons, strong-armed, and/or engaged in frequent gang fighting.

Source: Frances Silveira, "Wolfgang and Ferracuti Revisited: A Test of the Subculture of Violence Thesis" (Institute for Juvenile Research, 1975; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Department of Justice, publication forthcoming), p. 13.

Perhaps of even more interest than the difference between girls' and boys' misconduct is the way these differences seem to have changed over the five year period between Gold's 1967 and 1972 National Surveys. It

will be recalled that whereas boys reported fewer and less serious incidents in 1972 than in 1967, girls reported more incidents in the later study. Overall, boys were committing about 9 percent fewer offenses in 1972, with total seriousness of offense ratings 5 percent lower. Once boys' increased drug use is removed from consideration, total seriousness ratings were 20 percent lower. Girls, on the other hand, reported 25 percent more offenses--twice as much drinking and ten times as much marijuana and drug use. When these are eliminated, behaviors for girls are essentially unchanged for the period in question.<sup>36</sup> The seriousness level of their violations remained unchanged, rather than decreasing as did that for boys. Miller, working from IJR data, also states that males and females are similar. However, she believes violations on the part of girls are increasing in all categories.<sup>37</sup>

Faine<sup>38</sup> examined both Gold's National Survey data and that from Arnold's Lake City study and concluded that the differences in the ways boys and girls misbehave were remarkably stable, regardless of the age or social status of the youths. Clark and Haurek<sup>39</sup> suggest that where a youth lives may be important. They found urban boys of all classes committing around two and one-half times the offenses urban girls committed, while in rural farm communities, the boys committed more than four times as many offenses. Another study<sup>40</sup> concluded that "social bond" variables--relationships with parents, attachment to the law, school performance and attitudes, and youth culture activities--were more important in explaining the lower rates of misbehavior by girls than by boys.

AGE AND VIOLATIVE BEHAVIOR

The data indicate that as age increases there is a trend toward the commission of more delinquencies and delinquents of a more serious nature.

In this longitudinal study of students moving through junior and senior high schools in California, Elliot and Voss<sup>41</sup> found a reported average of 4.81 violations per youth in the three years of junior high school as compared with 7.10 for the three years of senior high school. This general pattern held for both serious and non-serious offenses by both boys and girls and for all ethnic and socio-economic groups.

Other studies confirm this trend for many but not for all types of offenses. Thus, Clark and Haurek<sup>42</sup> found boys in mid-adolescence reporting more of certain kinds of misbehaving, identified as "offenses involving some daring and aggression." Researchers found no such pattern for girls. Both the Institute for Juvenile Research and Clark and Haurek found evidence that as youth get older, they engage in more of the activities which society has labeled acceptable for adults, though deviant for youth. For example, from three to four times as many youths "had ever" bought liquor and had sexual experience by age 18 as had at age 14. Older adolescents simply seem more likely than their younger peers to have experimented with adult-like behaviors.

On the other hand, teenagers' participation in some status-like and in many serious offenses did not seem to change as they got older. Most of the youth who had "ever run away" had done so by age 14; those who were highly involved in serious offenses were highly involved from early adolescence on. Further, there seems to be no strong tendency for youth

to progress from status-like or less serious to more serious wrongdoings as they got older.<sup>43,44</sup>

THE GROUP CONTEXT OF JUVENILE VIOLATIVE BEHAVIOR

While much or even most delinquent behavior occurs in groups, this is most true of (a) quite serious violations and (b) as one would expect, less serious "social" acts, such as drinking, sex, drugs, curfew and similar violations.

Erickson studied 150 youth--50 who were incarcerated, 50 on probation, and 50 in high school--who together reported almost 72,000 misbehaviors, of which 65 percent occurred in groups.<sup>45</sup>

The frequency with which youth reported violations in a group depended on the type of activity. Only 17 out of 100 incidents of defying parents, contrasted with 91 out of 100 incidents of destroying property, involved groups. Erickson found that the more serious the misconduct, the more likely it was to have been committed in a group or gang. Mann, Friedman, and Friedman<sup>46</sup> found that the degree of violence reported by the lower status youths they studied was highly influenced by whether the youths were members of street gangs. Thus the self-report researchers point to some association between group misconduct, seriousness, and getting arrested. But "group" does not necessarily spell "gang." Both Gold<sup>47</sup> and Hindelang<sup>48</sup> found few youths (less than 2 percent) misbehaving either alone or in large gangs; most youths reported misbehaving in small groups of the same sex.

PERSONALITY VARIABLES

Although the relationship between delinquent behavior and personality characteristics has been little studied by the self-report method, a very few studies do suggest some degree of association between these two variables. Nevertheless, serious questions remain as to which set of variables exist prior to the other. Furthermore, there is the possibility that any demonstrated statistical relationship between the two is spurious, resulting from the causal influence of other, unstudied factors.

The self-report literature does list a few examples of the examination of the association between personality variables and violative behavior. Ball and Lilly,<sup>49</sup> studying a sample of 1,002 sixth graders in Marian County, Pennsylvania, and using the Reckless et al. 1956 Self Concept Inventory found that the lower a child's self-concept, the more likely he was to have misbehaved.

The series of studies by Hindelang represent another major effort. Hindelang surveyed 245 boys age 14-19 from a Catholic high school in Oakland, California with the purpose of investigating Eysenck's theory that those who misbehave tend to be both more extroverted and more neurotic than those who do not.<sup>50</sup> His findings suggested that different offenses spring from differing etiological complexes. Theft seemed unconnected either to extroversion or to neuroticism. Aggressive behaviors were positively related to extroversion but were negatively related to neuroticism. In further investigations, Hindelang studied the relationship between psychological variables and youths' misconduct by administering the Minnesota Multi-phasic Personality Inventory and the California Psychological Inventory together with a self-report instrument.<sup>51</sup> After controlling for

age, sex, race, and father's age and occupation, he found, not surprisingly, that the individual tending to be less socialized, less responsible, and less controlled was more likely to misbehave.

SOURCES OF SOCIAL CONTROL

The data from a number of self-report studies suggest that failure on the part of the peer group, the school, and the family to provide meaningful pressure toward conforming behavior are among the factors most strongly associated with delinquency.

The Institute for Juvenile Research found that three sorts of youths' perceptions were the most influential factors in explaining which youth misbehaved: (1) that their peer groups were willing to make trouble; (2) that schools appeared to them to be oppressive institutions; and (3) that they were not well integrated into their families.

These findings were interpreted from two perspectives: one argued that as the adolescent approached adulthood, status-based behavioral regulations became less legitimate, accounting for the relationship between status violations and age, school control, and other indicators of adult status such as source and amount of spending money. Another perspective suggested that involvement with peers, especially those perceived as being willing or actually getting into trouble with the agencies of social control, facilitated adultlike violative behavior of adolescents. As a result, there are strong indications that differential association helps to explain the involvement of adolescents in status violations.<sup>52</sup>

Similarly, in a 1966 study, Arnold<sup>53</sup> reported that both peer and "adult role model" pressure influenced delinquent behavior, regardless of social class, sex, race, ethnicity, and city size. The relationship between family integration and differential association was also supported by a Honolulu study of Japanese Americans which found higher status boys more delinquent than lower status boys. They explained that traditionally close-knit Japanese family structure has kept delinquency low. As social

status rises, parental controls weaken at the same time that youth gain increased opportunity to associate with delinquent peers.<sup>54</sup>

The findings of Elliot and Voss<sup>55</sup> again tend to confirm this line of speculation. In their studies of youth enrolled in a sample of California school classes they found alienation and normlessness in the school and alienation in the home to be predictors of subsequent delinquency.

#### WHICH YOUTHFUL VIOLATORS BECOME OFFICIAL DELINQUENTS?

While it would in many ways be comforting to assume that those youth whose violative behaviors lead to detection and arrest are the most serious offenders and those most in need of societal intervention, it is far from certain that this is the case.

As previously noted, in the 1967 National Survey, about 9 percent of the youth in the sample (13 percent of the boys and 3 percent of the girls) reported detection by the police in the three years preceding the survey. The acts in which they were caught comprise less than 3 percent of their total chargeable acts. The frequency and the seriousness of their behaviors were associated with being caught by the police, but the association was at a somewhat low level. The chances of getting caught increased somewhat more with frequency than with seriousness of delinquent behavior. But the chances are small. To a considerable extent getting caught seems to be an occurrence unrelated to any other frequently studied variables. It has many of the elements of a chance event.

Further, getting caught by police does not necessarily result in the creation of an official record. Two years after they had been

interviewed, only 4 percent of the total National Survey sample names could be found in police files. Williams and Gold concluded that,

the seriousness of teenagers' behavior is related to their having a police record and accounts for about nine percent of the variance; the frequency of their delinquent behavior accounts for a negligible proportion of the variation in having acquired records. . . . The important point to note here is that having a police record is only slightly related to the seriousness of teenagers' delinquent behavior (and) is not related at all to its frequency. . . .<sup>56</sup>

Also of interest are the findings of Mann, Friedman, and Friedman from their comparisons of youth who had been detected for violent offenses with those who had reported such offenses but had not been detected. They report that those youth who escaped detection reported more violent behavior as well as more non-violent misconduct than did youth who had been apprehended. Non-apprehended youth were younger when they first behaved in anti-social ways and younger when they dropped out of school. They were involved in more gang misconduct, were more impulsive, and had less "behavioral control." They also differed in attitude. Those who had escaped detection were more optimistic about opportunities for future employment and had fewer conflicts about family and sex roles.

On the other hand, those youth who had been arrested for their violent activities were more likely to perceive themselves as disruptive, provocative, troublesome, and alienated from their families. They came from families where the mother was dominant. They had extremely low and unrealistic aspirations for themselves. Moreover,

an important distinguishing characteristic of youths who were arrested for violent crimes were their relatively poorer abstract reasoning ability and planning skill. In effect, these youths were less competent and effective than youths who were not apprehended. Their lower intelligence and poorer planning ability would increase their chance of being "caught in the act" or of leaving evidence of their identity.<sup>57</sup>

These factors may help explain apparent disparities between self-report and arrest data. Other explanatory factors are evident. Reiss notes that the data are derived from measures which tend to be of quite different, though related phenomena.<sup>58</sup> Most self-report studies place considerable emphasis upon the number or proportion of respondents who have engaged in specified behaviors at least once. Police statistics, however, usually reflect only situations in which police have made arrests. Little is known about the proportion of arrestees who are actual "first offenders." Many of their offenses will not have been detected. But even detected offenses usually lead to arrest only if they are serious in nature, if they are one of a known series of offenses by the person in question, if for a wide variety of reasons the individual is seen by the police as a probable repeat offender, or, very particularly, if there is a victim who will press charges. The decision to arrest may also be strongly influenced by the degree to which the family or the community offer alternatives to official processing which seem viable to the police. In sum, neither the data from the self-report studies nor that from arrest statistics should be considered as "truth" and the other as "error." Assessments of the scope, nature, and distribution of juvenile violative behavior must take informed account of both the data upon violations reported by youth themselves and of those leading to arrest.

#### DOES FEAR OF PUNISHMENT DETER?

The evidence from the self-report studies regarding the deterrent effect of fear of punishment is conflicting.

Some studies lend support to the belief that a component of the fear of punishment deters "drifters" from violating. Thus Waldo and

Chiricos<sup>59</sup> found that while university students' perception of some possibility of severe punishment did not affect their engaging in theft or marijuana use, the expectation of certain arrest did seem to lessen it. Piliavin<sup>60</sup> reported that white youths whose misbehaving would cost them dearly either at school or with their parents were less likely to misbehave; among blacks, only the high cost at school was significant. Jensen<sup>61</sup> found that as the fear of getting caught increased, delinquency decreased. On the other hand, there is some indication that actually being caught by the police exerts little delinquency-suppression effect. In the Flint, Michigan study<sup>62</sup> and the 1967 National Survey,<sup>63</sup> pairs of youth were identified, all of whom had committed at least four violations. One member of each pair had been caught by police at least once; the other had not, but had committed a delinquent act within six months of the offense for which his apprehended match had been arrested. In 11 of 20 Flint study pairs, the apprehended youngsters committed more offenses subsequent to their apprehension than did their unapprehended twins in their subsequent careers. Unapprehended youngsters in four pairs violated more frequently, and in five pairs they committed the same number of violations.

In the National Survey, of 35 comparisons, the unapprehended member subsequently committed more offenses in 20 pairs, less in 10, and the same number in five pairs. In both studies, differences in the frequency of subsequent behavior as great as those found would occur by chance less than once in ten times.<sup>64</sup> It would appear from these studies that either some unstudied factor present in the personalities or circumstances of the arrested boys but not the undetected boys resulted in detection and

arrest, or that the impact of police apprehension upon subsequent behavior may often be negative. The latter possibility would provide some support for labeling theory. Of course, within the group studied, or within any group of violators, apprehension and exposure to the justice system may have a beneficial effect on some individuals. But for the group as a whole, apprehension cannot be discerned to have deterred further delinquency.

#### SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The self-report studies make quite clear a fact too rarely perceived and seldom squarely confronted: at least some violative behavior is a part of the life experience of the majority of American youth. Further, while the studies do yield data suggesting some variations along ethnic, social class, sexual, or characterological lines, neither violative behavior in general nor any major type of such behavior is the particular domain of any one segment of youth. Along the dimensions measured by youths' self-reports of their own behavior, population subgroupings differ from each other less than has frequently been assumed.

This being the case, societal concern for violative behavior in general (as opposed to carefully defined responsibilities for a narrower range of behaviors which seriously threaten persons and property) cannot realistically be implemented by the juvenile and criminal justice systems acting alone. It is evident that in our society the periods of transition from childhood to adolescence, and thence to adulthood are times of stress. The behaviors at issue are multiform. They are dispersed through all segments of the social order. Further, verified theory which means possible specific responses to a narrow range of proven causal factors is not available. Thus the focus must be on the condition of the child in

American life. Service planning must therefore take into account a wide range of psychological, familial, social, educational, vocational, and other needs on the part of youth. Larger jurisdictions will need to support and take advantage of a variety of diverse agencies and programs to meet the needs of youngsters coming to the attention of the police, courts, or other instrumentalities charged with responsibility to respond to disparate problems. In small jurisdictions where financial constraints limit the diversity of programming, maximum flexibility within existing services should become a priority. Similarly, we should be wary of evaluation studies which leave the impression that one specific intervention was or was not helpful to all youth. The varied nature of youthful behavior necessarily implies the need for varied responses. Research done on program effectiveness needs to specify the characteristics of and particular problems of the types of youth served and those who did or did not benefit. Too often evaluation research specifies only the program components and not the population served.

The expansion of focus suggested above should not be taken as denying the need for intensive, specialized concern for very serious youthful offender behavior, particularly behavior that is violent in nature. Assault, burglary, strong arming, and carrying and using weapons are not offenses to be ignored as "a part of growing up." The incapacitative, deterrent, and norm-emphasizing role of the justice system is an obvious necessity. But recourse to it should not be necessitated by the varying availability to differing population groups of alternatives to juvenile justice processing. The self-report data provide some evidence that such differential availability may be a factor in the screening process which results in

certain demographic groups' over-representation in correctional institutions. For example, in Illinois, in 1972, 32 percent of Illinois youth self-reporting seriously violent behavior were black.<sup>65</sup> However, in that year, 63 percent of all juvenile males committed to the Illinois Department of Corrections were black.<sup>66</sup> The most scrupulous care must be taken to assure that black and lower class youth do not become over-represented in the correctional system solely because alternative responses to their behaviors are less available to them than to more advantaged population groups. Confronted with middle-class youth manifesting serious behavior problems, adults in a range of official capacities from school principals to judges can look to integrated families with financial resources, communities with effective and comprehensive youth services, and private resources ranging from academic counseling and psychiatric services to "adventure programs" in distant areas. The youth in court who come primarily from families and communities with few resources, may well be there because similar alternatives are not available to them.

The above suggested policy implications are very general in nature. The findings of the self-report studies do suggest several further social policy inferences. But they are no more than suggestions. To date, the self-report study data is fragmentary and the technique is still young. The findings provide bits of evidence that must be added to that available from other sources, to carefully weighed value judgements, and to critical analysis. In this as in almost all other areas of complex decision-making, no data base can do more than serve as an aid to enormously demanding and difficult professional judgement. With these caveats, then, the findings available to date from the self-report studies suggest such policy implications as the following:

1. The establishment of programs designed as alternatives to the official processing of youth other than those involved in very serious offenses presents particular complications. The pool of youth whose behavior is of potential concern is huge. Any meaningful service program may be immediately flooded by this enormous pool of eligibles. The most careful precautions will have to be taken in order to assure that alternative programs actually do serve youngsters who otherwise would be drawn into the juvenile justice system. Without such precautions, these programs will inevitably "widen the net" and bring a broader range of youth to official or semi-official attention. This will not materially reduce the number of youngsters officially processed. Indeed, it may extend some form of authoritative control over a range of youngsters not previously so dealt with.

2. Violative behavior by boys apparently exceeds that of girls by a factor of about two to one, rather than four to one as would be suggested by arrest statistics. While girls appear to be less involved in violence than boys, the two sexes seem more similarly involved in status offenses. Use of alcohol and marijuana may be increasing more rapidly among girls than among boys. Those observations would seem to suggest that programming for boys needs to be vigorously maintained, but that overt signs of girls' difficulties in handling the transition period between childhood and adulthood are relatively more common than generally recognized. Thus, creative attention must be given to programming directed at helping girls resolve the problems of that transition. The tendency to think of delinquency as a male problem, to be solved by programs for males staffed by males, is strong.

3. "Status offenders," "minor offenders," and "serious offenders" are not in all ways separate groups. Indeed, frequent status offenses, association with other youngsters often involved in trouble, alienation from school and family and involvement in serious violative acts apparently tend to vary together. The premature "labeling" of individuals as members of offender groups of any scale of severity may be seriously misleading. It may also tend to create a self-concept, a public reputation, and societal institutional channels which serve to confirm the label. Thus it may function as a "self-fulfilling prophecy." Program efforts might well include as a major goal the integration of offending youngsters with non-delinquent peers in conventional activities. The focus should be a "normalization," rather than diversion into stigmatizing channels. For youngsters who need them, youth services should be available to further the process of integration into society and development of personal potential--not as programs for "bad" kids, to be justified as "delinquency prevention."

4. From several of the self-report studies emerges the finding that the school is a critical social context for the development of delinquent behavior. It may be that compulsory school attendance too often forces youth to remain in frustrating situations in which they are stigmatized as failures. School extra-curricular activity programs may not solve this problem. In fact, Elliot and Voss<sup>67</sup> note that in their study population youth highly involved in school activities reported rates of delinquent behavior slightly higher than youth with more limited involvement. There may be real danger in compelling long-term school attendance for youth whose school encounters yield little but frustration and defeat. Such observations emphasize the necessity of careful consideration

of compulsory school attendance laws and programs. Of even more pressing importance is energetic exploration of the possibility of the development of new educational environments less productive of defeat for so many children.

Again, the comparability of data from many of the studies to date is limited. They tend to have been of populations selected on an "availability" basis and defined with varying degrees of precision. They have employed different methods and divergent definitions of major variables, including the behaviors subject to concern. Frequently, emphasis is upon the less serious violative behaviors. The process of checking for reliability and validity has barely begun.

The present situation provides an area of opportunity for national leadership which almost inevitably must come from the Federal level. Periodic review of progress in the development of self-report study practice and methodology by a small group of scholars with continuing interest in the pertinent sampling, definitions, reliability, validity, and associated problems would be of value. Such an effort might well result in the promulgation of periodically revised suggested standards. Somewhat more ambitiously, a considerable degree of systematization of a continuing, expanded self-report survey program would seem to promise valuable information. A possible model might be the National Crime Survey program of surveys of criminal victimization carried out by the Bureau of the Census for the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.<sup>68</sup>

While findings as those summarized above are valuable, a central finding of such a review, is that the self-report study technique has been developed to the point that it has the potential for providing

the trend -- or its absence -- has held constant in the years since 1972 remains a matter for conjecture.

Again, the comparability of data from the various studies to date is limited. They tend to have been of quite different populations, defined with varying degrees of precision. They have employed different methods and divergent definitions of major variables, including the behaviors subject to concern. The process of checking for reliability and validity has barely begun. The present situation provides an area of opportunity for national leadership, which almost inevitably must come from the federal level. Periodic review of progress in the development of self-report studies, practice, and methodology by a small group of scholars with continuing interest in the pertinent sampling, definitional, reliability, and validity, and associated problems would be of value. Such an effort might well result in the promulgation of periodically-revised suggested standards. Somewhat more ambitiously, a considerable degree of systemization, of a continuing expanded self-report survey program would seem to promise valuable payoff. A possible model might be the national crime survey program of crime victimization carried out by the Bureau of the Census for the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.<sup>62</sup>

FOOTNOTES

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APPENDIX A

Appendix A: Summary of Studies

1. Sample size
2. Population studied
3. Sample type
4. Method of study
5. Issues of study

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF SELF-REPORT

	1	2	3	4			5								
	Sample Size	Population Studied	Sample Type*	Check-List	Inter-Views	Weighted Offenses	Method	Race	Socio-economic status	Gender	Age	Personality	Groups	Violence	Theory
Akers	922	Junior High students	3	X					X						
Allen & Sandhu	358	Matched Institutional & Non-Institutional Males	3	X								X			
Androkiewicz	348	All tenth & twelfth graders in a public & private high school	3	X						X					
Arnold	200	All sophomores in six high schools	3	X			X								
Ball & Lilly	1002	Sixth graders in Marion County, Pennsylvania	0	X								X			
Blackmore	397	Males aged 14-17	3	X			X								
Brungardt	4338	All sophomores in 17 high schools	0	X				X							
Brungardt & Arnold	4338	All sophomores in 17 high schools	0	X				X							
Buffalo & Rodgers	170	Incarcerated males 13-18	3	X											X
Casparis & Voz	489	Swiss boys aged 13-19	2					X							
Clark & Haurek	1116	Public school students aged 11-19	3	X					X	X					
Clark & Tiffit	45	College age males	3	X			X								
Clark & Wanninger	1154	Sixth & Twelfth graders	3	X				X							
Dentler & Monroe	912	Seventh & Eighth graders	3	X				X							
Earle	8770	Junior & Senior high school students	3	X					X						
Elliot & Voss	2658	Fourth graders from 8 large suburban, California schools	3,4	X				X	X	X	X	X			X
Empey & Erickson	180	White high school males in Utah	3	X						X					

\* Sample Type--0=Total Population; Non-Probability Samples: 1=Accidental, 2=Quotas, 3=Purposive; Probability Samples: 4=Simple Random, 5=Stratified Random, 6=Cluster. From Claire Sellitz, Lawrence S. Wrightsman, and Stuart W. Cook, *Research Methods in Social Relations*, 3d ed. (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1976).

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF SELF-REPORT

1	2	3	4			5								
			Sample Size	Population Studied	Sample Type*	Method of Study			Issues Studied					
			Check-List	Inter-views	Weighted Offenses	Method	Race	Socio-economic status	Gender	Age	Person-ality	Groups	Violence	Theory
Epps	346	All juniors in one high school	0	X			X	X						X
Erickson (1971)	150	High school males in Utah	3	X								X		
(1972)	282	Male tenth & eleventh graders in Utah	3	X		X								
(1973)	336	High school males in Utah	3	X								X		
Erickson & Empey	200	White males	3		X			X						
Faine		Analysis of Arnold, Gold & Reimer data						X						
Farrington	411	Lower class males in London	3	X		X								
Fisher	60	Male recidivists & control group	3	X										X
Forslund & Cranston	780	High school students in Indian Reservation area	4	X			X							
Gibson	94	Males age 15	1		X									X
Gibson, Morrison & West	405	London males age 14-15	3	X		X								
Gold (1970)	522	13-16 year olds in Flint, Mich. in 1961	4		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gold & Reimer	661	National sample of 13-16 yr. olds (1972)	6		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gould	374	7th grade boys from 2 Seattle schools	3	X			X							
Hackler & Lavitt	595	7th-9th graders from Seattle schools	0	X		X								
Hardt, Peterson, & Hardt	914	7th-9th grade males in mid-Atlantic city	0	X		X								
Hindelang 1971a	245	Catholic high school males age 14-19	3	X							X			
" 1971b	763	" " " " " " "	3	X					X	X				
" 1971c	337	" " " " " " "	3	X								X		
" 1972	245	" " " " " " "	3	X							X			
" 1976	2340	Rural/urban males & females	3	X								X		
Hindelang & Weiss	245	Catholic high school males age 14-19	3	X							X			
Hirschi	5545	Junior & Senior high school students in 11 Richmond, Calif. public schools	4	X			X	X	X			X		X
Institute for Juv. Research	3110	Youth in Illinois aged 14-18	6	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
* Ibid.														

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF SELF-REPORT

	1 Sample Size	Population Studied	3 Sample Type*	4 Method of Study			5 Issues Studied								
				Check-list	Inter-views	Weighted Offenses	Method	Race	Socio-economic status	Gender	Age	Person-ality	Groups	Violence	Theory
Jensen	1558	White males grades 7-12	3	X											X
Jensen & Eve	4000	Public high school students grades 7-12	5	X					X						
Kelly	173	High school seniors	3	X							X				
Kratkowski & Kratkowski	248	11-12 graders in 3 public schools	3	X					X						
Krohn & Wade	321	College students	4	X	X		X								
Lewiska & Moszynski	60	Polish youth ages 12-13	3	X	X					X					
Mann, Friedman & Friedman	536	Lower class; inner city males ages 15-18	2	X									X		
Nye	780	9-12 graders in 3 small cities	6	X						X					X
Nye & Short	3266	High school students	3	X			X								
Nye, Short & Olson	2340	High school students	3	X						X					
Olofsson	519	9 grade males in Stockholm, Sweden	3	X							X				
Paddock	1037	7-12 graders in 7 counties in Indiana	6	X						X		X			
Piliavin, Vadum & Hardyck	693	High school males	3	X											X
	337	College students	1	X							X				
Porterfield & Clifton	337	College students	1	X							X				
Quicker	1338	High school males	6	X											X
Reiss & Rhodes	8479	White males aged 12-16	5		X					X					
Severey	296	Anglo and Mexican Amer. high school	3	X											X
Short & Nye	841	High school students in 3 cities	4	X			X								
Smith & Cartwright	337	Incarcerated males	3	X			X								
Tribble	57	Youth under 18	6	X						X					
Vaz	1693	White middle class males grades 9-12	3	X						X					X
Voss	620	Seventh graders in Honolulu	4	X						X					
Waldo & Chiricos	321	College students	5		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Weis	555	Eighth & 11th graders, middle class	3	X						X					
Williams & Gold	847	National sample of 13-16yr olds (1967)	6		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Winslow	586	Male & female adolescents	3												X
Wise	1079	Tenth & 11th graders in 1 suburban HS	0	X						X					
Wordarski, Feldman & Podi	376	Male children ages 8-16	2	(observed)											X
* Ibid.															

**END**