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Time to Play, Time to Grow Up:
The Role of Crime in Maturation

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ABSTRACT

Time to Play, Time to Grow Up: The Role of Crime in Maturation

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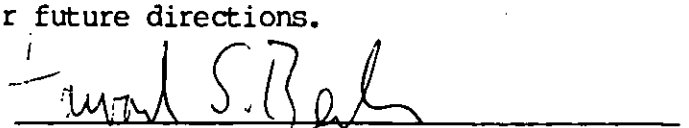
This study describes the changing meaning of crime as youths grow up. Using a quantitative analysis of placement data and a qualitative analysis of open-ended interviews with twenty-five serious juvenile offenders, I examine how the meaning of crime changes from being play to being an activity providing economic and personal independence. Young kids commit delinquent acts without defining that act as a norm violation because they have no concept of causation. Older kids gain notions of causation, responsibility and decide to stop crime, developing strategies to stay out of trouble. The dissertation discusses the maturational theory of delinquency, the impact of crime on kids' self concept, and the impact of correctional intervention. The study concludes that kids hope to stop crime, but may not be successful in their attempts. Although kids feel they control their lives, they may become frustrated when they are unable to achieve their goals. These kids may spend their adult lives in marginal jobs or they may revert to crime. Further study is needed to determine how delinquents actually make the transition to adulthood and what factors shape their future directions.

Approved: 

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is the story of how some kids grow up and the role crime plays in that process. It is the story of how kids begin crime as a way of playing around, how the meanings of crime develop from the responses of others and how expanding social demands finally encourage them to stop their criminal behavior. Growing up involves several processes. The development of a social self with multiple role expectations is a primary facet in growing up. The self develops through interactions with others. Social roles, relationships, and mobility mushroom during maturation. The meanings of spare time, risk and consequences of behavior change. Young kids have nothing to lose and plenty of time. As their roles and responsibilities expand, adult pressures of work and home responsibilities restrict time, and they have more to lose if they continue to commit crimes. Kids develop perspectives on the nature of problems, causality, and individual responsibility through interactions with police, courts, and program workers. Kids first see their behavior as normal, see no problem with their behavior, and think things happen randomly. They later recognize problems, but do not see problems as things which are under their control. They finally adopt the perspective that their behavior creates the problem and they are responsible for the solution. As kids

accept responsibility for their behavior, they accept moral definitions of their behavior and begin to concentrate on their future.

This research originally set out to examine the career of a youth in the Unified Delinquency Intervention Services (UDIS), a community-based program which contracted with several services ranging from advocacy to intensive psychiatric placement. I was interested in career pathways, differences in the degree and type of social control in programs and how the client perceived the umbrella of social services. Those career paths do exist, but youths put so much energy into growing up and finding a meaning for their lives that the social programs are only important to the extent that they provide resources for goals, act as barriers, or help cast the moral definitions of the youths' behaviors. In order to learn more about growing up and crime, I conducted in-depth interviews with 25 youths; 22 males and 3 females.

Growing up with crime is an easily observable pattern among the Chicago youths. Some downstate youths also grow up in this manner, but the meaning of crime and the availability of other opportunity networks provides a variation on the general theme of growing up. Downstate youths seem to have more opportunities to make money, even if it is working in the fields. Those who elect to get into crime appear to be more disenfranchised or have more personal problems than Chicago delinquents. On the other hand, most Chicago kids had close family ties as a youngster. As the kids grow older and begin high school, the

number of associations outside the family increase and they spend less time at home.

These kids have idle time. As they begin spending more time away from home, they spend less time in school. They see lots of things they want, but can't afford—clothes, music, and cars. While many find some sort of part-time job, they don't see this as a real job. At this point, they have several aspirations, but aren't able to achieve them because they are simply too young, don't have enough education, or don't have the right opportunities.

In that situation, kids explain that trouble just walked up to them. They started playing around, acting rowdy, and committing petty crimes. Crime was just another part of their day, another way to fill time. Most refer to it as just "playing around," something that isn't thought about or doesn't mean anything.

Crime gains meaning as parents, police, teachers and friends react to the youth's behavior. Kids often discover that they can get money from crime. Crime allows the youth to get things independently, without parental help. It also provides independent experiences which help kids learn who they are.

Kids' roles and relationships continue to expand as they near adulthood. They perceive the obligation of personal responsibility and commitment. The meaning of spare time, risk, and the consequences of their behavior change. They may have children of their own. They feel they have more to lose and realize that it is time to stop crime. They then develop strategies for staying out of trouble which includes

changing their social networks, moving, getting a job, and, occasionally, staying inside so they never have to see the police.

At another level, this is the story about how careers develop. Studies of criminal careers have been central in the sociological literature on deviance, and are certainly relevant here. These interviews modify some of the classical literature on criminal careers, suggesting that criminal identification and rejection of norms are not necessary components of a delinquent career. Crime can be fun and may involve neither a criminal identity or a rejection of social norms.

A second, more interesting, career unfolds through the process of maturation. The joint development of multiple social roles—as a son, friend, father--all requiring a lot of time, coincides with developing a sense of commitment and responsibility for actions and others. The developing sense of responsibility also reflects changes in the youth's concept of causation. Younger teens seldom see events as the consequence of their behavior, they simply see those events as a matter of chance. As they mature, they identify events as problems which are outside their control--such as poverty or lack of jobs. Later, they begin to think that they are responsible for the problem, that they have control over events. Assigning responsibility also imparts a moral definition to behavior once considered inconsequential.

Each career has its own timetable, a series of stages with various milestones, which convey differing rights and limitations based on the person's career stage. Timetables exist when a career progresses towards a recognized goal, when an interacting group goes

through the same career process, and when reference points identify a person's status (Roth, 1963). If the milestones are well-defined and rigidly applied, the career is very predictable. If, as in the case of kids' careers, the milestones are inconsistently applied and unclear, the career is more ambiguous.

Timetables make an unpredictable set of events predictable. They explain changes in status and privileges. The passage of time marks changes in status and behavior. In Roth's study of tuberculosis patients, progression to a different status in the sanatorium was determined by length of time since a specific procedure was performed rather than by a biological change in the patient's lungs. Similarly, children frequently gain more privileges or expectations simply because they are older, not because of an observable, measurable change in maturity.

While kids go through most of these steps, the interviews showed a great richness of individual variation which may be lost in the subsequent discussions of common behavior. For that reason, I have included three vignettes which demonstrate the individual differences while also demonstrating the common elements of maturation.

Bill

Bill is a 16 year-old Black male who lived on 22nd street in Chicago. Bill was referred to UDIS for criminal trespass to vehicle and later was committed to the Department of Corrections. Bill attended school occasionally and worked part-time as a stock boy in a grocery store before he was in UDIS. Bill said he spent a lot of time

at home with his family, just watching TV. He would talk to his brother about problems.

Bill first started getting in trouble by breaking into cars or stores on the weekend. During the week, he went to school. Bill also played baseball and swam with his friends. Sometimes he would commit crimes by himself and sometimes with friends. All of Bill's friends committed crimes, although Bill said he didn't do as much as they did. Bill said he would never steal a purse or rob someone, he just did burglaries. When Bill was detected committing crimes, his parents and sisters grounded him and took his money away from him. Bill thought the punishment was fair since he hurt them when he went to jail. Bill tried to stay in the house to stay out of trouble, but couldn't. Whenever he went outside, he got back with his friends and got into more trouble.

Bill's family moved to the south side of Chicago after Bill's younger brother was killed. His older brother had been killed a few years earlier. The police released both people charged with the crimes. Bill finds it particularly ironic that he has been committed to the Department of Corrections for a burglary he says he didn't commit, while the people who killed his brothers are on the streets.

Bill had a different set of friends on the south side. The neighborhood was completely different--houses--and he would play sports or sit on the porch with friends. None of these friends got in trouble, and Bill didn't either when he was around them. Bill's friends from 22nd street would find him and talk him into committing

more crimes. They needed Bill because he was the only one who knew how to break into the cars; his friends simply stood watch.

Bill feels he was burned by the police and his probation officer who wanted to get him out of the neighborhood. Bill was committed to DOC when the police claimed he committed an armed robbery 50 blocks from his home. Bill's mother and girlfriend testified that he was at home, but his probation officer recommended DOC, citing Bill's poor school performance.

Bill thinks someone else was using his name when they committed crimes. Bill said he had gained a reputation with the police: whenever anyone in the neighborhood was burglarized, the police came to him. He said he was so well known that he was accused of a lot of things he didn't do.

Bill felt his problem was simply being with the wrong people. Bill thinks he can get away from that because his mother has moved while he is in DOC. Even if his old friends find him, Bill won't join them in any more crimes.

Bill now has a son and he wants to take care of his son and teach him to stay out of trouble. Bill had been slowing down his crimes while in UDIS. Now that he has a son, Bill feels he has to get a job--a real job. Bill has been working in the laundry at DOC, but doesn't want to do that when he gets out because he says that is not man's work.

Bill decided to stop crime when he had his son. He went to school and stayed away from his old neighborhood. Bill explained that

in addition to helping to get a job, going to school showed the court he was trying to do something for himself.

Bill feels he'll be able to stay out of trouble if he finds a job where he can make good money, goes back to school, and moves to a new neighborhood so his old friends can't find him. Bill's friends were never jailed since they were older and their offenses had different implications in adult court.

Mario

Mario is an 18 year old Latino from Chicago's northwest side. He was committed to DOC for murder and was never in UDIS. Mario went to Catholic schools as a child. He transferred to a public high school which was not as challenging and lost interest. He dropped out when he was 16.

Mario found high school brought a new world. He traveled through three or four different neighborhoods to get to high school. Mario said it was like discovering a new world or new horizons. Mario discovered more things to occupy his time. He felt it was exciting. Mario met gang members and joined in high school. He said the first question he asked a person was to which gang they belonged.

Even though he discovered a new world, Mario spent most of his time in a 4-5 block area because that was his gang's turf. He hung around with his friends getting high and talking crazy. They sometimes would go to the Burger King, but usually they hung out on the street. Sometimes they went to a partner's house to listen to music or talk to

girls. They also swam, played softball and kidded around with other club members. Mario said they looked for things to occupy their time.

Mario first got into trouble at 15 for disorderly conduct--nothing serious. He explained that he and his friends were too little to get into too much trouble. Mario said he never did armed robbery; he felt it wasn't right to steal from someone. He did feel justified to protect himself or his family.

Mario's mother told him to stay out of the street and to get away from those friends and drugs. He knew his mother was right, but he felt he should find these things out for himself. Mario felt gang membership was a way to find out who he was or who he thought he was. The gang gave him a purpose and place in the world. It also gave him a way to retaliate against anyone who angered him. In retrospect, Mario thinks he was selfish and short-sighted. He and his friends committed crimes to get money for drugs or parties, not because he was hungry or needed money to pay the rent. He only thought about how things affected him and wanted to get even for anything he didn't like.

As he continued in the gang, shootings became more common as gang rivalries intensified. Mario felt he was in a kill-or-be-killed situation. Several times he had to protect himself or his family.

Mario began thinking about his future when a police counselor asked him about his future plans. Mario hadn't thought about it but started thinking about different careers. His interest in the future peaked when his daughter was born. Mario wanted to be able to give her things. Mario said he needed to be somebody so his daughter can grow

up to be somebody. Mario worked at what he called a "dummy job" in a warehouse. It was good for pocket money, but did not meet his ambitions. Mario said he could always get a job at McDonalds or Burger King, but that was true desperation. A bullshit job like that is good for pocket money, but it's not a career. Mario decided to be a heavy equipment engineer, but discovered he had to be 18 and have a high school diploma. He made plans to get his GED, but didn't know how to get a phony birth certificate, so he was unable to act on his plans. Also, Mario felt it would be hard to get into the union even if he did get the training—a friend had learned to be an electrician but couldn't work because he couldn't break into the union. Since he was going to have to wait two years to get into that training, Mario decided to get his diploma in night school while working days at the warehouse. He was committed to DOC before he could do that.

When Mario was in detention, other kids taught him about the different DOC institutions and what they were like. He learned there were several gangs in St. Charles and a lot of Ambrose in Valley View. He heard that little Joliet might be OK because kids don't do as much time there. Mario was charged with murder and the State's Attorney wanted to try him as an adult. Mario worked out in the detention gym so he would be able to protect himself in adult jail. He also attended school, was respectful, and didn't get in any fights so the detention workers could give a good report when he went to trial. Mario was not tried as an adult. He feels it was because his past record, while

long, had no other violent charges and because tests showed he had a high IQ and had something going for him.

When Mario got to Valley View, he again began to search for careers. He read Opportunity Outlook for the 80's and decided to become a biochemist or a physician. He planned to attend Elgin Community College while in Valley View. Before he got into the program, it was cancelled because another kid ran away while at the college. Mario was then limited to the college courses offered at Valley View. He abandoned those plans when his girlfriend and their daughter moved to northern Illinois. Mario doesn't think he'll ever see his daughter, and has no legal proof that he is the father. Mario has been depressed since his girl friend left with his daughter and is now working to define what kind of future he wants for himself. Mario now hopes to get an associate degree from a community college and go into the Army as an officer. The Army will then pay for the rest of his education.

Mario decided to stop crime because he didn't like being locked up and because he decided that life was not about crime. Mario thought seriously about leaving the gang. He realized crime wasn't going to get him anywhere. He also realized that he hurt others--they needed their money or things, too. Mario explained that learning a trade isn't enough to keep someone out of trouble; they can work and still do negative things. Mario felt it was not enough to realize that there are other ways to do things, but he must develop a new identity to replace the old. Mario once thought he would buy guns with the income

from his future career, but now he wants to do something socially acceptable. Mario found few DOC counselors could help him, but another student introduced him to Freud, Jung, and Kafka. He decided he could look out for himself, but should not step on his fellow man.

Mario also thinks a person has to be ready to change his life--a person must do it on his own. Mario feels a lot of kids don't know how to change their life and many counselors don't really have their lives together. Mario explains you can't lecture a kid—that's like trying to force pieces of a puzzle together.

Ted

Ted is a 16 year old Black male who was in DOC, placed in UDIS for burglary, terminated from UDIS and returned to DOC. Ted lives in Kankakee. He did not attend school regularly before going to DOC the first time. Ted said he is known and not liked in Kankakee which made it difficult for him to handle school. Ted dropped out of school and didn't have a job.

Ted was the youngest of five children and was close to his mother. Whenever he had a problem he talked to the sister nearest to his age. Ted knew a few people in his neighborhood, but didn't know everyone. Ted said he spent most of his time with his family, even after he began getting in trouble; he didn't spend a lot of time with friends.

When Ted was getting in trouble, he spent time with his partners. Ted explains that you can't have friends when you're doing crime because no one can trust you. Ted said that when he was getting into

trouble, he roamed all over the city--he didn't like staying in his own neighborhood. Ted also went to discos in Chicago whenever he could.

Although Ted didn't spend a lot of time with friends, he did do several things with them. He would go skating, party, or spend time at a girlfriend's home. Ted wanted to join the Y so he could work out with his friends, but his mother couldn't afford the $25 membership.

Ted started breaking into cars when he was about 12. He explains it was just for kicks and was exhilarating. Ted hung around with people five or six years older and they led him on to bigger things. Ted explains that he knew what he was doing was wrong, but he was thick-headed; he didn't realize it was wrong until he was in UDIS. Ted never thought about the potential impact of crime because it was just for kicks.

Ted's family lectured him on the value of school when he started getting in trouble. They warned him that if he didn't go to school, he would grow up poor like some of their less successful neighbors. Ted's mother felt his friends were getting him into trouble. His neighbors said he'd end up in jail. Ted's neighbors called kids in trouble "crazy" and said they had a lot to learn. Ted said that many call him by name even though he doesn't know them. The community was strict on the law and not extremely interested in helping kids from Ted's perspective. Ted thought the neighbors wanted to get kids like him out of the neighborhood. Ted's mother got him a Big Brother. His family tried to give him the things he wanted, saying he didn't have to steal.

Ted says that caused even more problems, because the more they gave him, the more he wanted. Ted's family couldn't keep up with his requests.

Ted didn't listen to anyone's advice at that time. He didn't think about what might happen in the future, all he thought about was the clothes he wanted. Ted explained that his problems were money problems.

Although Ted began breaking into cars for fun, he later did it for the money. Ted loved fancy clothes and it required money to buy them. He learned he could make $40 or $50 by breaking into a car. By this time, he assumed he would go to jail, but never thought about it too seriously. Ted felt that the police were waiting till his crimes added up to enough that they could get rid of Ted.

When Ted was picked up by the police, he would try to look sad when the police lectured him, but they didn't fall for it. Ted was committed to DOC and spent time at Valley View. After he was released, he didn't attend school and couldn't find a job. Since that was a condition of his parole, Ted was referred to UDIS. UDIS found him a job washing dishes. Ted quit the job because it was too hot to wash dishes in the summer. Ted's father tried to get him into a jobs program, but Ted's sister found him a job. Ted said UDIS constantly reminded him of his future, asked him to set goals, discussed how to achieve those goals and suggested other options.

Ted said he made a mistake while in UDIS. He was with one of his partners when his partner committed a crime. Ted was charged as an

accessory because everyone knew Ted and his partner were tight. Ted feels if he didn't have a record, the police would have let him go.

Ted's hopes to get a job and an apartment. Ted and his partner tried to share an apartment, but they couldn't pay the rent. Ted moved home after his partner lost his share of the rent money. Ted plans to go into the service after getting his GED. He may make a career of it since he'll pick up a special trade.

Ted decided he didn't want to get in trouble anymore when he realized that he could tell his older brothers all about being in jail, but they couldn't tell Ted anything about it. Ted was embarrassed for himself and his family. Also, the police started telling him to act like a man--that Ted knew what he was doing was wrong. Although Ted had slowed down his crime, he said he wasn't quite ready to stop.

Ted says being in DOC makes you mad because you want to do other things—that gives you the urge to stop. That, in combination with thinking about his future, encourages Ted to change his life.

Ted wants a job to occupy his time and give him some money. Having a girlfriend and a son also takes up part of Ted's time which he would have spent in crime. Ted now thinks he needs school to get a good job. He realizes he will have to stay away from his old friends—his downfall came earlier when he started getting back with his old friends. Making new friends may be more difficult for Ted than others living in larger towns since Ted already knows everyone in Kankakee, and most have opinions about him.

Ted now believes that his life is his responsibility. If Ted wants something, he must make it on his own. Ted thinks life is like a game which must be played by the rules.

These three brief vignettes illustrate some attributes shared by these kids. Their meaning of crime changes with their experiences. They all experienced school problems and sporadically attended school. They began crimes for fun or excitement, although they later learned other uses for crime. Their parents always reacted negatively to their crimes, but kids paid little attention to their warnings. Kids associated with different types of people, frequently doing crime with only a few of them. As they became older, they planned to stop crime and get a job. Having a child marked the turning point for this decision for two.

There are some differences as well. Bill speaks of a sense of injustice, both because his brothers had been killed and because he was incarcerated for something he says he didn't do. Ted grew up downstate and his experiences are indicative of less-tolerant community reactions outside Chicago. Mario was a gang member convicted of murder. He was never in UDIS, but went directly to the Department of Corrections, probably because of the seriousness of the offense and because of his gang membership. These individual differences mediate the common experience of growing up with crime.

My description of growing up is based on the accounts of twenty-five youths with lengthy delinquent careers. While these interviews can not provide sufficient data on all aspects of

maturation, they provide clues and glimmers about what growing up in inner-city Chicago is like, and how that is different from growing up poor or black in white, middle or blue collar towns such as Kankakee, Joliet, or Champaign. While I will describe everything I think is happening, I will specify areas in which the data are thin.

In addition, this data will not allow me to generalize to all delinquents. For example, Brown describes Harlem delinquents who engage in meaningless violence as a common part of their crimes (1984). None of the community-based delinquents I interviewed committed violent crimes, so I can not talk about the career patterns of more violent youths. I attempted to address this issue by interviewing kids who had been incarcerated in the Department of Corrections without being in a community-based program with the thought that those kids might have different meanings for crime. I found few differences in the meaning of crime for incarcerated and community-based kids. Nevertheless, more violent delinquents do exist and they may differ in their meanings of crime and the ways they grow up.

Youths' accounts are limited in two ways. First, all the interviews are retrospective accounts and many studies have shown the inaccuracies of those kinds of data. For example, kids have difficulties remembering time or ages at which certain things happened; time isn't important to the young. However, they remember important events and cluster activities around these events. Most of the interviews referred to certain milestones in their lives--before high school, before getting in trouble, after being put in a program, after

becoming a parent, or after deciding to stop crime. Thus, I will refer to events occurring before high school or before getting in trouble. A true socialization theory would be age-specific and would begin at an earlier age. These youths found it impossible to verbalize or remember events happening that far in the past. However, a theory of career development can hinge on common turning points and milestones. Some of those milestones are not age-specific, while others such as the fear of being waived to adult court occur at specific ages. The following chapters detail two intertwining careers: the career of growing up into adulthood and the criminal career.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF MATURATIONAL REFORM AMONG CHRONIC JUVENILE OFFENDERS

The problem of juvenile crime has long been a concern for both researchers and policy makers. The concern is warranted: estimates of juvenile crime range from one-quarter of all violent crimes to nearly one-half of serious property and violent index crimes in the FBI Uniform Crime Reports (Dinitz & Conrad, 1980; Weis & Sederstrom, 1981). The fact that many juvenile offenders stop committing crimes receives less attention. Arrest rates for vandalism and property crimes peak between ages 15-16, fall to half their peak in 2-4 years, and decline rapidly thereafter. Arrests for narcotics and crimes against persons peak between ages 19-21 and decline with age (Greenberg, 1977). Delinquent careers frequently end in the later years of adolescence (Dinitz & Conrad, 1980; Hamparian et al., 1978; Robins & Wish, 1977; West, 1976).

Maturational reform has never been well documented or explained. There have been few longitudinal studies of delinquency; none have explicitly focused on crime cessation or examined maturational reform in more than a cursory manner (Hamparian et al., 1978; Wolfgang et al., 1972). When maturation is examined, it is seen largely as an independent variable (Bazemore, 1982). Maturational reform has never

been examined by race or income group. We therefore know little about the phenomena of maturational reform or its determinants.

Methodological difficulties limit studies of maturational reform. Both maturation and reform are common-sense concepts, but are difficult to operationalize (McCleary et al., 1978; Murray et al., 1978). Many hypothesized causes of reform such as moral development or access to jobs are correlated with age, as is the observed reform. In this situation, causal links can not be established and multicolinearity is a continual problem. Finally, the attrition in longitudinal studies hampers them.

Delinquency Theory and Maturational Reform

Many sociological theories try to explain how and why youths become delinquents. Many focus on entry into delinquent careers and career progressions (Johnson, 1979; Garabedian & Gibbons, 1970; Matza, 1969). Few examine when or why delinquents stop crime. The ways various theories explain maturational reform are discussed below.

Control Theories of Delinquency

Early work of pioneers such as Shaw and McKay (1942) and Thrasher (1927) viewed delinquency as a result of the social disorganization brought about by urbanization and rapid social change. The changing social world weakened the individual's commitment to the prevailing social norms, permitting delinquent behavior. Delinquency occurs in some neighborhoods more frequently because they are transitional areas of the city experiencing the greatest amount of anomie.

How can control theory explain maturational reform? If delinquent behavior begins because the ties to normative behavior are weak, what changes? Most social disorganization theories do not discuss these questions but we must assume that the delinquent stops criminal behavior by developing commitment to the normative order. The exact process of becoming committed is unclear. An emphasis on individual commitment is inconsistent with a theory which explains deviance in terms of community characteristics. If the weakened bonds are due either to rapid social change or to inequality structures, it will be difficult to explain why some individuals are entering into delinquent careers while others in that community reform.

Strain Theories of Delinquency

Merton modified control theory by suggesting a greater strain in society (1949). Delinquency occurs when a disparity between aspirations and achievements weakens normative bonds and permits deviance. Cloward and Ohlin (1960) refined this concept into opportunity theory. Youth who experience a disjunction between the goals they wish to achieve and the means to achieve them may repudiate the goals, the means, or both. This decision matrix results in a typology of delinquent behaviors.

Cloward and Ohlin explained maturation by noting that crime brings extremely negative sanctions as a youth gets older. New community expectations of adult behavior limit the utility of deviance to overcome status deprivation. This explanation is not satisfying: why does the elimination of some illegitimate means result in a return

to legitimate behavior? Why didn't community expectations pressure kids to stop crime earlier in their career? Finally, why do kids stop crime as they enter adulthood, precisely when the discrepancy between their means and goals is the most visible?

Subcultural Theories of Delinquency

Subcultural theories of delinquency explain delinquency as commitment to deviant norms, rather than an absence of norms. The individual joins a subculture out of frustration and a need for self-esteem (Cohen, 1955). A youth may join a subculture out of frustration occurring from school or through differential association (Sutherland, 1956). Subcultural theories rarely discuss maturational reform. The subcultural member could leave delinquent subcultures by changing reference groups and developing attachments to conventional norms. The motivation for such a change is unclear, unless we assume that the frustrations leading to subcultural membership dissipate with age. This explanation does not seem plausible, given the continued frustrations of adulthood and the assumption that an individual becomes more committed to subcultural norms during his/her career. Perhaps resocialization may explain reform. A third explanation would be that the individual may gain other sources of self-esteem as he or she gets older, but this has never been thoroughly examined in a subcultural theory of delinquency.

Societal Reaction Theories of Delinquency

Labeling theory moved the focus of deviance research from the perpetrator to the officials. Labeling occurs when an individual

incorporates the definition enforced by agents of social control into his or her self image. The deviant self image then perpetuates crimes (Lemert, 1972). Labeling theory's focus on courts and institutions encouraged policy makers to divert youths whenever possible. Labeling theory does not describe a process for removing a label. Different reactions from people in power or a change in self image could occur. Nevertheless, from a societal reaction perspective, maturational reform probably could not occur without the cooperation of social control agents.

Developmental Theories of Delinquency

Social psychological theories relate delinquency to incomplete social development. Robins (1977) notes that childhood deviance is not a random event and that the deviant child progresses through a series of deviant behaviors. One deviant act leads to another both in quantity of actions and the content of the acts (Robins & Wish, 1977).

Robins does find that delinquents reform, explaining that they ultimately experience societal pressure to stop doing things in conflict with their norms (1977). Although Robins goes outside the developmental model to explain maturational reform, she argues that the timing of reform is related to developmental deficits. That is, failures in socialization can be measured not only by the appearance of deviance, but also by the delayed end of deviant behavior. The more undersocialized commit more deviant acts and persist longer. Such an explanation ignores the social world in which these events occur: people deviate because they have experienced incomplete socialization.

When they stop crime it is because they heave either gained more socialization or overcome personal deficits. If they lag behind others in this reform it is because they had more deficits than others. But how do deviants receive this additional socialization or resocialization? Why are they receptive to social pressures at some times and resistant at other times when their deviant career escalates?

Kohlberg explains maturational reform as a part of moral development (1976, 1969, 1964). Kohlberg elaborates on Piaget's concept that adolescence is a period when personality development is crystallized, a time when moral values and conscience are formed. According to Piaget (1932), the formal operational reasoning necessary for moral development does not occur until adolescence. Thus, moral development is a function of passing time. The adolescent refines moral definitions through verbalization and role rehearsal (Zorber, 1981; Kohlberg, 1976). In addition, moral level is tied to cognitive functioning, implying that IQ influences moral level (Gavaghan et al., 1983). A child develops morally unless his or her logical development is retarded (Piaget, 1932). Thus, children become deviant because of retardation of their moral and logical level. This assumes that the moral level results in universal patterns of behavior among people at a certain stage. Moral development explanations can not explain situational deviance or variability among individuals. Some research compares the moral development of families with delinquent members assuming that parental deficits affect the youth's moral development (Jurkovic & Prentice, 1974; Hudgins & Prentice, 1973). If a delinquent

stops crime, it must be because he has developed to a higher moral level. But how does that development occur? Why does it occur at different times among different people? How does logical reasoning improve? If moral development is dependent on cognitive skills, are less intelligent people doomed to a life of deviance?

Drift and Neutralization

Matza criticized earlier subcultural theories of delinquency noting that the moral values of delinquents were not very different from those of nondelinquents (1964). Delinquents drift in and out of deviance because they employ neutralization techniques which allow them to engage in behaviors conflicting with their norms.

The utility of neutralization theory has been sharply debated. It may be related to the emergence of delinquency but can not explain its persistence or severity (Ball, 1977). Delinquents and nondelinquents may not differ in their neutralizing attitudes (Ball, 1977; Ball & Lilly, 1971). The generality of drift has been questioned; Matza recognized that not all delinquents drift, but others claim Matza underestimated the number of unconventionally committed youths (Austin, 1977). The temporal nature of neutralization has been questioned. Neutralization occurs before a delinquent act is committed; rationalizations occur after the act (Mannle & Lewis, 1979). Most studies of neutralization can not ascertain the temporal element. Some feel neutralization is merely the process by which subcultural commitment occurs (Minor, 1981; Hindelang, 1970).

Matza began by noting that previous theories could not explain maturational reform. Unfortunately, even Matza does not offer a detailed explanation of reform. Although neutralization permits deviant behavior, other influences simultaneously strengthen the bonds. The desire to marry, the higher cost of crime and the prospect of a job all reinforce commitment to the normative order.

The Chronic Offender and Maturational Reform

Chronic offenders are responsible for a large proportion of juvenile crimes. Wolfgang found that 18% of all delinquents committed 52% of all delinquent acts (1972) while a study in Columbus, Ohio found that chronic offenders accounted for 61% of violent crimes and more than two-thirds of all arrests (Dinitz & Conrad, 1980; Hamparian et al., 1978). Clearly, if we are to control juvenile crime, we must learn to control the chronic offender.

The number of chronic offenders has been estimated to be between two and six percent of a birth cohort (Wolfgang, 1972; Dinitz & Conrad, 1980). Hamparian (1978) found that race is not related to chronicity, but chronic offenders are usually male and from a low income family. Chronic offenders with a history of violence may not be the hardened criminal we expect: Dinitz and Conrad found many crimes of chronic offenders were impulsive robberies with a convenient target or inept crimes with some provocation.

The definition of a chronic or serious offender is imprecise. Wolfgang (1972) and Hamparian (1978) both use the criteria of five or more arrests. Coates (1981) argues that category of violent offender

including youths with two or more convictions for violent offenses is more appropriate.

Dinitz and Conrad disprove myths about the chronic offender. Many commit no crime more serious than assault, nor is the career of the chronic offender disproportionately destructive (Dinitz & Conrad, 1980; Hamparian et al., 1978). Second, the early start of a delinquent career does not predict a long career for many. Chronic offenders are more likely to begin crime at a young age, because they need time to become officially chronic; other young offenders simply commit a few crimes and stop. In addition, there is little evidence that chronic delinquents progress from minor delinquency to violent offenses (Hamparian et al., 1978; Rojek & Erickson, 1982). Over half of the violent offenders in Hamparian's study were arrested for a violent offense as their first offense (1978). Finally, we assume chronic offenders are the most committed to delinquent subcultures or the most free of guilt feelings. In that situation, they should not hold beliefs requiring neutralization (Austin, 1977). However, Ball (1968) shows that serious delinquents are more likely to employ neutralization techniques than others. While Austin argues that neutralization may actually be an indicator of unconventional norms, Ball's findings may indicate that chronic offenders' morality isn't that different from other juvenile offenders.'

Most studies of dangerous or violent delinquents have been clinical studies (Healy, 1915; Friedlander, 1947; Menninger, 1968) or empirical work (Glueck & Glueck, 1934, 1940, 1950, 1968). In addition,

most examine criminal behavior in large urban areas such as Philadelphia, Chicago, New York or Los Angeles. Delinquency in smaller urban areas may involve more trouble making and norm erosion rather than delinquent subcultures (Ball, 1983; 1977). Nevertheless, the chronic offender in smaller urban areas may be the result of different social processes.

Even chronic juvenile offenders stop committing crimes although they are less likely to reform than are other juvenile offenders or to reform at an early age (Bazemore, 1982; McCord & Sanchez, 1983; Hamparian et al., 1978). Only 13% of chronic offenders stopped committing crimes by the age of 16 while 50% of all delinquents had stopped by that age (Hamparian et al., 1978). Ultimately, approximately 34% of chronic offenders stopped committing crimes by age 17. Chronic offenders who begin at a younger age also stop earlier: 49% of offenders achieving chronicity before age 13 stopped by age 17, while only 30% of those achieving chronicity later stopped by age 17 (Hamparian et al., 1978).

How can delinquency theories explain the reform of the most frequent, ostensibly the most committed, juvenile offenders? While few theories can adequately differentiate between the chronic juvenile offender and other delinquents, fewer can explain the maturational reform of the chronic offender. The term chronic offender symbolizes an unlikely reform, reminding us of chronic illness, a long-term condition afflicting the individual throughout the life span. A

chronic illness may be controlled, but is never cured. The use of the term chronic offender may imply a similar prognosis.

The maturational reform of chronic offenders raises several questions. How do the most committed offenders, those with the weakest bonds to the normative order or with the most labeling, stop crime? Why do some chronic offenders stop when others don't ? When does a chronic offender stop crime? Does he stop through the same processes the occasional offender does?

McCord and Sanchez examined the recidivism of individuals who had been in two different types of reform schools twenty-five years earlier (1983). One reform school emphasized punishment, while the other used an Adlerian treatment plan. Youths in the Adlerian program had a lower rate of recidivism through age 24, but their recidivism rates increased and became higher than the recidivism of individuals in the punishment oriented program after age 24. McCord and Sanchez found that ethnicity affected recidivism; when race-specific recidivism rates were computed, the recidivism of Blacks increased slightly over time, the recidivism of Hispanics increased sharply and the recidivism of Whites declined sharply. The Adlerian treatment program was successful in helping youths stop or slow down during their adolescent years, but was unable to protect them from the inequality they faced as an adult. McCord and Sanchez wonder if the Adlerian program may have even done them a disservice by building dreams which could not reasonably be accomplished in a discriminatory world (1983).

Structural Explanations of Maturational Reform

Most of the previously discussed delinquency theories view delinquent acts as a moral statement. The commission of a delinquent act indicates either commitment to a delinquent subculture, weak bonds to the normative order, inadequate socialization, or the ability to neutralize normative attitudes. Perhaps the delinquent behavior has no implications from the youth's perspective. As Austin (1980) notes, there may be no moral evaluation of delinquent acts. The acts may simply be regarded as adventure, excitement, mischief or fun (Tannenbaum, 1938). Kids see no inconsistency in committing delinquent acts while accepting conventional norms. Neutralization is unnecessary. Crime results more from amorality than immorality, unconventional commitment or neutralization.

When we realize that delinquency does not necessarily make a statement about the normative order, we can examine other factors that may also affect delinquency and maturational reform. Greenberg notes that the increasing involvement of juveniles in major crime can be understood by examining the position of juveniles in industrial society (1977). Delinquency is a response to age status problems of adolescence. Adolescents are denied the prerogatives of adulthood but are told to act like adults. Minor crimes such as drinking, joy riding and sexual experimentation may be symbolic substitutes for inaccessible adult activities (Bloch & Niederhoffer, 1958). Serious crime may also substitute for adult activities.

Kids do crime for money. Juveniles are excluded from adult work which exaggerates the youths' dependence and eliminates a legitimate source of money. Teen unemployment has frequently been dismissed as a product of a high incidence of unemployment among youths, rapid turnover, seasonal opportunities and pressures of the job market Mincer & Leighton, 1981). However, recent research indicates that teen unemployment includes a small minority of persons who are without jobs for extended periods of time (Clark & Summers, 1981; Bowers, 1982). Bowers studied the length of unemployment in successive years, multiple spells of unemployment, and the nature of youth unemployment using data from the Current Population Survey. The data are limited by recall biases and attrition, especially in the 18-24 age group. Bowers found that neither the persistence hypothesis--the assumption that people unemployed one year will also be unemployed the next, nor the hypothesis of a different group of unemployed fit the data. A small core of youths appear to contribute disproportionately to youth unemployment. In 1974, 8.6% of the labor force of 16-17 year-old men who were unemployed more than 14 weeks accounted for 69.3% of the total weeks of unemployment. Younger kids and Blacks have a higher incidence of joblessness. Thus, Bowers concludes that much youth unemployment is concentrated in a small subgroup, but business cycles and seasonality also affect unemployment (1982). We should remember that these unemployment figures do not include the potentially large number who are unemployed and not looking for jobs.

The monetary motivation for crime has been particularly salient in recent years. Between 1950 and 1973, Black teen labor force participation dropped from 67.8% to 34.7% (Greenberg, 1977). White teen labor force participation remained stable at approximately 63% during the same time period. The recent recession seriously affected Chicago youths. During the data collection phase of this study, only 20% of Black youths age 16-19 in the Chicago SMCA were employed (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981).

Theft may finance adolescent social life. Delinquents told Sullivan they needed money for clothing, marijuana and recreation such as going to movies, roller rinks or amusement parks (1983). Kids may commit crimes only when they need money:

> [Stealing] was regarded as an acceptable and necessary means of getting needed provisions or more usually cash. Members of the groups frequently engaged in theft when they were broke, usually selling articles other than clothing and often using the money for group entertainment or treats (Sherif & Sherif, 1964).

Sullivan estimates that about half the juvenile crimes committed in New York City are income-oriented. He found that Black, Hispanic and White kids all engaged in crime for money. The white kids stopped after a short period of time, when other sources of income became available. By the age of 16, most obtained jobs through the family network usually for more than the minimum wage. White kids continued to do sporadic thefts as an income supplement or as excitement.

Black and Hispanic kids extended their early stealing to systematic theft during their middle teens. They were increasingly motivated by money more than excitement. Blacks and Hispanics stopped crime when it became easier to identify them as the assailant. By the age of 18, legitimate employment opportunities were emerging for the Black and Hispanic youths. They no longer needed crime as their major source of income and the sanctions were greater. Thus, kids stop crime when they find legitimate sources of income and experience increasing sanctions.

Some delinquent activities such as vandalism do not have a monetary basis. These actions may express independence, in spite of the forced dependence and public degradation ceremonies occurring in school. Leaving school seems to result in a drop in these destructive crimes; Elliot and Voss note an immediate decline in delinquency when kids drop out and during the summer (1974). A longitudinal examination of 304 juveniles showed that 48% stopped crimes six months after completing high school (Bazemore, 1982). In both England and the United States, the peak year for delinquent involvement is the year before school ends, even though school ends at different ages in the two countries. Greenberg further notes that crime may be a way of spending leisure time (1977).

From this perspective, kids stop crime when they begin to fully participate in adult society. Opportunities limited to older youths such as jobs, marriage, or enlistment in the service create new stakes in conformity, fill time, and provide new sources of self esteem. At

the same time, the costs of crime increase. As youths get older, victims are more likely to complain, the police are more likely to arrest and the judge more likely to incarcerate. The youth is in danger of losing much of the independence he or she was just beginning to enjoy. Crime is no longer functional.

A structural theory of delinquency can explain serious delinquency. The serious delinquent may want more money or have a harder time finding legitimate income than other delinquents. The core of unemployed youths Bowers described (1982) may include many chronic offenders. The persistently unemployed may continue in their delinquent careers for a longer time and have a greater opportunity to become "chronic."

Chronic offenders stop crime when their social status changes. This may include a new job, possibly in conjunction with increased sanctions. A structural theory of delinquency can also encompass the chronic offender without major adjustments. Structural factors relating to age--leaving school, getting a job, making commitments--encourage the youth to stop crime. Success in stopping crime appears to depend on getting a job, associating with nonoffenders and controlling a past reputation. As McCord and Sanchez note, the long-term success of stopping crime is questionable. Kids must cope with inequality. Nevertheless, serious offenders want to stop crime, regardless of their success.

The process of growing out of crime and the meaning of crime varies for different subpopulations although the overall pattern is

consistent. Dahrendorf's concept of life chances may help explain how the role of crime differs among different age groups, races or sexes (1980). Dahrendorf notes that "life chances are attributes in society and not attributes of individuals." Life chances are different from opportunities. Social bonds to the family, friends and community give meaning to the choices one makes. One can be rich in options, but poor in bonds to society. The combination of opportunities and social integration shape the meaning of crime. As opportunities and integration are different for older and younger kids, downstate and Cook County kids, or males and females, crimes will have different meanings.

The following chapters describe the criminal careers of twenty-five "serious" offenders who have been placed in a community-based program or in an institution. They explore how the youth comes to perceive his or her situation, what the meaning of crime is to the youth, changes in that meaning, the impact of interventions and the chronic offender's perceptions of the future.

CHAPTER III

STUDYING COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS FROM THE CLIENT PERSPECTIVE

I initially planned to study the way youths interpret community-based programs, so I was especially interested in the meaning of organizational processing and the social control techniques used in community programs. I conducted a quantitative analysis of factors affecting placement decisions. The quantitative analysis suggested categories which should be examined in the open-ended interviews. Through the interviews, it became clear that many of the details of program operation were less important to kids than they were to program workers and evaluators.

The Setting

The Unified Delinquency Intervention Services program (UDIS) was established in 1974 as an alternative to incarceration for serious juvenile offenders, inspired by the Massachusetts deinstitutionalization experiment. Two key leaders from Massachusetts, Paul DeMuro and Jerome Miller, moved from Massachusetts to Illinois. Miller became the Director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the agency charged with the care of dependent and neglected youths, as well as status offenders who had come through the juvenile court. DeMuro became the first director of UDIS.

Delinquent youths were the jurisdiction of the juvenile court probation office. Youths who repeatedly committed crimes could be

referred to the Department of Corrections (DOC). DOC operated seven institutional facilities throughout Illinois and also operated smaller residential facilities in Chicago.

When Miller came to the Department of Children and Family Services, he formed an alliance between DCFS, DOC and the Cook County Juvenile Court to establish an alternative to incarceration for serious juvenile offenders. UDIS was designed to be an innovative program. It maintained that even serious juvenile offenders could stay in the community. It diverted youths in danger of incarceration from DOC. UDIS developed several goals: to provide intensive services in a community-based setting for a brief period of time, to work with serious offenders without expanding the number of youths affected, to use case managers to monitor and coordinate services provided by independent community programs, and to keep youths as close to home as possible. UDIS contracted with a variety of programs to provide services: foster homes, group homes, outward bound or wilderness programs, counseling, educational programs, and intensive psychiatric care.

Juvenile court judges referred kids to UDIS; there was no random assignment. Kids referred to UDIS frequently were in several different programs during their tenure in UDIS; many were in more than one program at a time. One youth was in seventeen different programs during his stay with UDIS.

Youth usually stayed in UDIS for three to six months. Some remained nine months or more. Youths could leave UDIS in three ways:

they could complete the program successfully, or "egress;" they could unsuccessfully leave the program but remain in the community, or "terminate;" or they could be committed to a DOC institution.

UDIS developed a two-tier management system where case managers monitored kids' progress in different placements and changed placements when they or the youth felt it necessary. Case managers did not provide direct service to the kids, but maintained close contact with kids and the program workers.

Kids helped make decisions about their UDIS "treatment" and placements. When entering UDIS, they made a performance contract. The contract outlined the youth's goals as well as what the case manager would do, what the parents would do, and what the kid would do. The youth could also express opinions about placements.

In 1978, UDIS expanded from Cook County to the entire state of Illinois. The expansion created the challenge of establishing relationships in many juvenile courts and finding programs in less populated areas of the state. Downstate communities had a different perspective on delinquency: case managers explained that downstate families were less willing to keep a kid who continually messed up than were black, Cook County families. In any respect, UDIS developed a regional character as it expanded through the state.

In order to keep records on all the kids in their multiple placements, the Center for Urban Affairs at Northwestern University developed a tracking and monitoring system to maintain data on the kids and their placements. The tracking system produced monthly operating

reports, lists of kids who had been in the program more than six months, and case-manager specific reports.

After three years, UDIS was evaluated by the American Institutes for Research (AIR). The AIR evaluation focused on few of the operating characteristics of UDIS, but examined recidivism rates of youths in UDIS and a comparison group of incarcerated youths. AIR reported a suppression effect for both groups—the offense rate increased sharply prior to intervention and declined markedly after intervention. The suppression effect was largest among youths incarcerated in DOC. Among UDIS youths, those placed in more restrictive placements exhibited the greatest suppression effect. The AIR evaluation then concluded that more restrictive interventions must be recommended since they result in greater suppression effects (Murray, 1978).

The AIR evaluation sparked substantial controversy and received publicity. Murray delivered congressional testimony and appeared on the Today show. Subsequent reevaluations discussed regression and maturation artifacts which might limit the conclusions (Gordon et al., 1978; McCleary et al., 1978; Sechrest, 1978).

Unfortunately, the analyses told very little about the unusual components of UDIS; they told even less about how the program affected the kids. How did kids experience the program? How did they handle a series of placements? Did different programs have different sorts of social controls? Were there set career paths through the variety of programs?

The Data

In order to address these questions, I used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. I first analyzed data from the UDIS tracking and monitoring system to examine placement patterns and predictors of different outcomes, using both loglinear and regression analyses to address these issues. The details of these analyses have been reported elsewhere (LeBailly, 1980). Since those findings do not relate to the question of growing up, only those analyses which helped select the interview sample are reported here. A sample of youths stratified by some of the variables important in the quantitative analysis, such as race, age, geographic location, and being placed away from home, were selected for intensive interviews based on the variation, thus insuring that conceptualization arising from the qualitative interviews was as broad as possible.

The tracking system collected demographic data such as age, race, and sex, offense data such as the referring offense, number of petitions with a finding of delinquency, the referring judge, and geographic data such as home county, region and police district. For each program, the tracking system monitored the program type, length of stay, and location of the program. Data were supplied by the UDIS case managers and the UDIS juvenile court liason. Northwestern staff entered the data and checked for inaccuracies and omissions. Nevertheless, the data suffered from the limitations of most administrative data sets: some data were inconsistent, others were missing. There was no external validation of the data.

Although the data contained inaccuracies, they still provided a rare opportunity to examine the placement patterns of youths in a community-based umbrella organization. As the time of the analysis, the data base contained information on almost 1500 youths. I examined placement patterns and the impact of demographic or offense characteristics on program outcome.

The Impact of Demographic and Placement Variables on Program Outcomes

Coates and Ohlin analyzed placement patterns among Massachusetts' deinstitutionalized juvenile offenders. While much traditional literature on organizational processing and labeling suggests the importance of personal characteristics on placement decisions, Coates and Ohlin demonstrated that few variables predicted the initial decisions made about a client, but those initial decisions predicted subsequent decisions (1975). Using data from the UDIS tracking and monitoring system, I analyzed the 24 programs serving at least 50 youths. The analysis included 1190 of the 1478 youths who had been in UDIS at that time.

Youths eliminated from this analysis have many significant differences from the others. Kids who were never in any of the 24 most common programs ought to be different. Women ($p<.01$), whites ($p<.001$), downstate youths ($p<.001$), kids on parole from DOC institutions ($p<.05$), and youths meeting none of the serious requirements ($p<.01$) were more likely to have been in no common programs. There were no

significant differences in age, number of previous petitions, or referring offense.

Two differences cannot be overlooked. First, the analysis excluded a large proportion of downstate youths. Only one exclusively downstate placement, Home Away From Home, was included in the analysis; some downstate youths were also placed in Cook County programs such as ICU, Darrow Hall, and other rural programs. Second, the analysis file does not include many DOC referrals. Perhaps their placement patterns differ from the court-referred Chicago population included in the analysis, since the kids were older, had a longer past record, and parole officers also monitored placements.

Coates and Ohlin suggest that the first placement shapes the direction of subsequent placements. For this reason, I did a regression examining whether the youth's first placement was at home. Regression with a categorical dependent variable is not a robust technique, so I confirmed these analyses with discriminant function analysis, which produced essentially the same results. Rural, group, foster, diagnostic, intensive/residential programs were defined as "being away from home;" advocacy, vocational, counseling were defined as being "at home." The independent variables included the demographics available from the tracking system. The Coates analyses included variables such as school attendance and family characteristics which were not available from the tracking system. Using a stepwise regression, the demographic variables predicted 15% of the variance in whether the first placement was away from home (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

FACTORS AFFECTING HAVING A FIRST PLACEMENT

AWAY FROM HOME

Intercept	.678***
Lives downstate	.372***
White	.201***
Referred for Violation of Probation	-.267**
Referred for Major Felony	-.111**
Met UDIS Seriousness Criteria	.045*
Male	-.011*
Multiple R Square	.146

***p<.001
**p<.01
*p<.05

Downstate and white youths were more frequently placed away from home for their first placement. Kids referred for a violation of probation and major felonies were less likely to be placed out of the home. Males were also placed at home. Thus, it appears that demographics can predict the first placement with some success, suggesting that personal characteristics affect initial decisions about the youth's treatment in the justice system.

The successful completion of UDIS was more predictable (R^2=.290), with program events having the greatest impact (see Table 2). The relationship of program aspects to outcomes supports Coates' findings that demographics did not predict outcomes but initial decisions such as the type of initial placement or had a stronger effect. In sum, there seems to be a two-step process where demographics have some effect on program decisions, and things which happen during the program and a person's status (e.g. court referral) affect outcomes.

Routing Kids to Different Programs

Since the programs seem to have a great impact on the way a youth leaves UDIS, I examined the assignment of kids to different UDIS programs, using loglinear analysis, a technique designed to deal with categorical data (Goodman, 1970; Feinberg, 1978). I examined relationships between region (Cook County or downstate), crime (person or property), and race (white or nonwhite), and type of placement. Loglinear modeling tests for interactions between all variables in the model. The basic process begins with a hierarchical, saturated model. For example, if a model contained four variables, the saturated model

TABLE 2

FACTORS AFFECTING SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING

THE UDIS PROGRAM

Intercept	.578***
Detained during Program	-.340***
Placed Away from Home during UDIS	.088***
Referred by Court	.155***
Referred by DCFS	.266**
Lived in North Chicago	-.073*
Multiple R Square	.290

***p<.001
**p<.01
*p<.05

would contain a four-way interaction term, four three-way interaction terms, twelve two-way interactions, and the individual variables. Loglinear analysis sequentially eliminates interaction terms. If the resulting chi square is non-significant, the interaction terms deleted from the proposed model can be deleted without significantly changing the model. A measure of association, tau, can be multiplied to produce an odds ratio indicating the odds that individuals in one category of variable A are also in category one of variable B. Odds ratios are a powerful way to explain the relationships between variables in terms common to more people.

Odds ratios are difficult to compare because tau is not symmetric about zero and does not have a standard deviation of one. The logarithm of tau, lambda, is symmetric, additive, and when doubled, is equivalent to a beta. Since all the terms in the model have been found to be significant, there is no need to question the significance of any of the terms: if they are in the model, they were significant. Although loglinear findings were represented in a model, the models were not causal.

Race and region were the more related to placement. Programs most readily identified as community based--advocacy, vocational, educational, and counseling programs--were used more often in Cook County than downstate. Group and foster homes which still have community contact were the away-from-home placements used most frequently in Cook County. Downstate youths were placed in intensive and outward bound programs more frequently than Cook County youths; it

seemed that property offenders were more likely to be in rural programs and person offenders were more likely to be in intensive programs.

Advocacy

Cook County youths and Blacks were most often placed in advocacy programs. Cook County Blacks were 3.5 times more likely to be in advocacy programs than Cook County Whites; downstate Blacks were twice as likely to be in advocacy programs as were downstate Whites. Cook County Blacks were five times more likely to be in advocacy as downstate Blacks while Cook County Whites were 2.6 times more likely to be in advocacy as were downstate Whites. Property offenders were slightly more likely to be placed in advocacy programs as were person offenders.

Counseling

While advocacy was primarily a Black, Cook County program, counseling was used more often for White, Cook County kids. The effect of region was most important in predicting whether a youth will be in counseling, with race also having an effect. Cook County youths were twice as likely to be in counseling as were downstate youths and White youths were 1.5 times more likely to be in counseling. This suggests the lack of counseling in downstate areas, or the unwillingness of downstate communities to permit youths with psychological problems to remain in the community. As noted below, downstate youths were more likely to be placed in intensive psychiatric programs. In addition, downstate youths define their problems as psychological family problems more frequently than do Cook County youths, as described later.

Vocational Programs

Vocational programs more often were used for Black Cook County youths. Cook County youths were five times more likely to be placed in vocational programs than were downstate youths; Blacks were nearly twice as likely to be in vocational programs as were Whites.

Foster and Group Homes

Although infrequently used, both foster and group homes tended to be Cook County phenomena. Cook County youths were twice as likely to be in group homes than were downstate youths and were nearly five times as likely to have been in foster homes.

Outward Bound

Placement in outward bound programs was particularly interesting since these programs were frequently used when a judge demanded that a youth be removed from the city. One would assume that the most troublesome youths must be taken out of the community. The loglinear analysis indicated that property offenders were 1.5 times more likely to be placed in outward bound programs, White youths were twice as likely to be in outward bound programs, and downstate youths are 1.5 times as likely to be in outward bound programs. Thus, it appears that property offenders were more difficult to keep in the community than person offenders. In part, this may be because fewer person offenders were referred to UDIS. Nevertheless, this suggests that traditional conceptions of seriousness may have little to do with the ability to remain in the community.

Intensive Psychiatric Care

Downstate placements were very different, perhaps because of availability of services. Downstate youths were more often in intensive residential programs than were White youths regardless of location. Cook County Whites were three times more likely to be placed in intensive programs than Cook County Blacks, while downstate Whites were 1.5 times as likely to be placed in intensive programs as were downstate Blacks. Downstate Black youths were 4.4 times more likely to be in intensive placements as were Cook County Blacks; downstate Whites were 2.5 times more likely to be in intensive programs. Person offenders were 1.5 times as likely to be in intensive programs.

Detention

There is a three-way interaction between region, race, and detention. In Cook County, Blacks were 1.3 times more likely to be detained; downstate, Whites were three times more likely to be detained than were Blacks. In Cook County, property offenders were 1.5 times more likely to be detained. Cook County Black property offenders were eight times more likely to be detained than were downstate Black property offenders. Cook County White property offenders were twice as likely to be detained as were downstate Black property offenders. Cook County Black person offenders were three times as likely to be detained as were downstate Black person offenders. Downstate White person offenders were 1.4 times more likely to be detained as were Cook County White person offenders. Different standards seem to be used for detention in Cook County and Downstate. In Cook County, Blacks and

property offenders were more likely to be detained; downstate Whites and person offenders were more likely to be detained.

Three different scenarios can explain the differences in placement patterns. The differences in types of programs may be the result of true differences in the type of kids referred to UDIS, differences in judicial behavior, or differences in the community. For example, downstate judges may refer more youths with psychological problems to UDIS, or downstate repeat delinquents may be more likely to have psychological problems. Differences may also relate to differences in judicial behavior. First, judges may differ in the point in a youth's career when they intervene. For example, although there are few females in UDIS, they more frequently receive psychiatric care. Case managers explained that few females were truly in danger of commitment to DOC and those few represent a different kind of problem from males in danger of commitment. Second, the judge may have a substantial impact on the placements within UDIS. A series of regression analyses indicated that a variable for the judge explained 5.8% of the variance in first placement and an additional 3.6% in the way they left the program, in addition to the variance explained by demographics, offense characteristics and region. Finally, the differences in program placements may be the result of different community attitudes towards delinquent behavior. Case managers have explained that they felt downstate communities were less willing to allow a kid who has messed up to remain in the community. In addition, they felt that white families had fewer extended family networks. When

a Black kid couldn't stay at home, case managers often could find a relative willing to take him. White kids rarely had that option. These different explanations indicate how delinquency may have different meanings in different contexts.

Using Quantitative Findings as a Sampling Frame for Qualitative Analysis

One common criticism of qualitative studies is that their generalizability is limited. Beginning with a quantitative analysis and drawing a random sample can remedy this situation. The findings should have somewhat greater generalizability because of the random sampling. Unfortunately, the generalizability of this research is limited by the attrition rate within the sample. But the quantitative analysis provided the opportunity to observe a wide variety of kids. Field workers try to make observations in a variety of situations so they can expand the generality of their hypotheses by testing them in diverse settings. Testing hypotheses with a variety of kids refines the emerging analytic categories. I used the quantitative analysis to identify groups which might be different and deliberately sampled them to insure that my interviews included the widest range of kids and experiences possible.

I drew a stratified random sample of kids who had recently left UDIS and who represented variables with a significant effect on outcome. I oversampled kids under 15, Latinos, females, DOC referrals, detained youths, and kids who had been placed in group homes or vocational programs because the quantitative analysis indicated those

kids were likely to have more placements away from home or were less likely to succeed in UDIS. I also sampled geographically. Since the region of the state had a substantial impact on the types of programs used, I interviewed youths from different parts of the state. In order to pick geographic areas, I examined county level differences in race, sex, offense type, and proportion of residential placements. I graphed the distribution of these variables and grouped counties into categories. The maps showed that counties cluster on some variables, yet the variations were not simply explained. For example, Cook, Will, and Kankakee counties have a higher proportion of kids referred for crimes against persons, while surrounding counties were low on that variable. The value of this analysis is limited. Ecological fallacies could result if I assumed that the individuals in a particular county had the same characteristics as the summary county data. What is important is that different counties referred different kinds of kids to UDIS. Table 3 summarizes county characteristics for counties which had several UDIS clients and were included in the sampling frame.

I included youths who had been in UDIS at least one month or who had left UDIS in the last two months in the sample pool. These criteria insured that respondents had been in UDIS long enough to have developed meanings for their experiences and had not been out so long that they forgot their experiences.

In addition to sampling youths in the above categories, I drew a twenty percent random sample of all kids currently in UDIS. This resulted in a sample pool of 99 youths, more than double the number I

TABLE 3

CONCENTRATION OF PERSON OFFENDERS, WHITES, FEMALES AND RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS IN STUDY COUNTIES

County	% Person	% White	% Female	% Residential
Cook	34.8	26.1	7.2	51.1
Rock Island	16.1	58.1	6.5	90.3
Whiteside	6.3	75.0	0.0	93.8
Henry	8.3	100.0	8.3	91.7
Madison	9.1	68.2	0.0	31.8
St. Clair	13.0	30.4	4.3	43.5
Champaign	38.5	34.6	23.1	53.8
Will	25.8	67.7	0.0	25.8
Kankakee	20.8	58.3	25.0	25.0

planned to interview. I intentionally drew a large sample since I anticipated having difficulty finding youths and getting interviews.

The sample differed from all others in the UDIS data base in only one respect. Even though I oversampled young kids, my sample was slightly older than the UDIS youths ($p=.05$). This difference resulted

Using Clients as Informants

Few evaluations of social programs have used information provided by clients. As Mayer and Timms note, this practice loses some important information:

> ...clients are rarely asked to appraise the effectiveness of the services received. When appraisals are made, it has consistently been the social worker, not the client, who has made the appropriate series of judgements. On some occasions, judgments of effectiveness have been made by the worker who has provided the service; in other instances, external social work judges, on the basis of the case record, have made the assessment; in still others, social work researchers have interviewed clients, and on the basis of the data collected, have judged whether improvement in social functioning occurred or not. Rarely, however, have the clients themselves been asked for their opinion (1970).

Evaluations may ignore clients as informants because they hold a discredited social status in the professional-client relationship. They are seen to need help and as morally deficient (Ryan, 1971). In consequence, client informants are viewed as inaccurate, unreliable, or ignorant. Clients' opinions may be seen as more subjective that the opinion of a professional (Bush & Gordon, 1982). Evaluations may also ignore client informants because clients do not share a vocabulary with

professionals and evaluators—their responses often do not easily fit into preestablished categories. Client interviews often show a perspective different from that held by professionals. Client information can also reflect on the adequacy of outcome measures (LeBailly & Gordon, 1982; Bush & Gordon, 1982, 1978).

The trend to ignore clients as informants is particularly ironic in the evaluation of juvenile corrections, given the history of studies in delinquency. Classical delinquency theory commonly relies on clients as informants whether through life histories or self-report studies. As traditional delinquency theory has demonstrated, client informants can provide valuable information on the meaning of crime, how it fits into their life and what the program means. The client perspective can be useful for understanding program operation. If a program is to have the desired effect, it must understand the client's perspective. The meaning of crime to the youth and the way he or she perceives the intervention will clearly have an impact:

> Actually there is a great deal of logic in using [clients] directly rather than workers or research interviewers as the chief judges of outcomes. They are the consumers of the service. It is they who define their problems and choose where to go for help. It is they who directly experience the helping process and live daily with the results of that help. Only they can really say whether as a result they are or are not better able to cope with their particular problems...Clients can also report what went wrong, if anything, and why they terminated. They can likewise report what more they needed and did not receive (Sacks et al, 1970).

Contrary to concerns of those disdaining client informants, the kids spoke freely and only two refused to answer one question. Although it is always possible that informants will not be honest in an interview, I felt that nearly all were being honest with me. Many said they were impressed that someone wanted their opinion about things, while others wanted to tell their side of the story so things might change. Kids are frequently willing to talk about their experiences at length, providing opportunities to verify their accounts (Bush & Gordon, 1982). In any case, the kids I interviewed had some incentives to be honest and the length of the interview provided an opportunity for the youth eventually to open up or to catch himself in an inconsistency. Bush and Gordon similarly found that children provided reliable information:

> Dependent children are selective in their criticisms, do not exaggerate their problems, and do not grumble about minor inconveniences. A statistical analysis of the difference in perspective between the children and their caseworkers on key issues showed that the children's account either conformed to the adults' accounts or provided variations that, on inspection, represented genuine and important differences of perspective and interests (1982).

It is also important to remember that these interviews do not represent an account of "truth" or even what kids actually do with their lives. The interviews instead represent the youths' perspective on their lives and the way they perceive and interpret events. This is not an account of kids who get in trouble and then never do it again; it is the account of the meaning and interpretation of crime, how that meaning

changes over time, and the strategies kids develop to act on their goals.

Conducting and Analyzing the Interviews

I began interviews with the Cook County youths. I obtained addresses and telephone numbers from the UDIS office. I mailed letters to youths in the sample requesting that they call me or return an enclosed post card if they wanted to participate in the study. I mailed the introductory letters in batches, so there would not be a large lag between the initial contact and the interview. Of the 14 youths in the first wave, 4 (29%) called me for an interview, 2 (14%) had moved leaving no forwarding address, 2 (14%) had no telephone and 4 (29%) had run away from home. After 10 days, I sent follow-up letters to those without telephones and began telephoning those who had reported telephone numbers. In some instances, I left messages for kids: sometimes the phone belonged to a relative who would then contact the youth; in another instance, I left messages at the tavern located downstairs from the kid's apartment.

One female without a telephone returned the post card, but was not home at the time she had scheduled. She again responded to another letter, but was not home again. This was the only respondent whom I failed to contact after arranging the interview. Only one youth contacted declined an interview: he explained that he was now working full time and going to school and was too busy to be interviewed.

Scheduling interviews was a time-consuming process. I phoned many three or four times never finding anyone at home. Disconnected

Chicago telephone numbers often did not provide a taped message, so it was difficult to know whether I was calling a nonworking number or simply failing to find the youth at home.

UDIS case managers helped provide updated addresses or telephone numbers on some of the youths in the sample. They were most likely to have new addresses on youths still in the program. It was more difficult to locate kids who had left the program. In part, this difficulty may result from the growing up process. Kids expressed a desire to move away from home or start over; the difficulty I had finding youths suggests that many may do so. Several of the youths I interviewed were subsequently incarcerated in the Department of Corrections, they were easier to find than those youths successfully remaining in the community.

It was more awkward to arrange downstate interviews. Downstate interviews were scheduled in a two or three day period. I made long distance calls to these youths and blindly scheduled downstate interviews since I was unaware of the travel time between interviews. Although this process was more time-consuming and anxiety-provoking than the Cook County interviews, I had similar experiences scheduling interviews downstate, with the exception of the Rock Island area where I had great difficulty locating kids. I interviewed four youths in Champaign, four in Kankakee and one incarcerated youth from the Rock Island area (see Table 4).

Most interviews lasted one and one-half to two hours. An interview with one youth who spoke slowly and had been in 12 UDIS

TABLE 4

CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH INTERVIEWED

UDIS Program			18
Race	White	4	
	Black	13	
	Latino	1	
Sex	Male	15	
	Female	3	
Age	Under 15	5	
	15-16	13	
County	Cook	9	
	Will/Kankakee	4	
	Champaign	4	
	Rock Island	1	
DOC Only			7
Race	White	2	
	Black	4	
	Latino	1	
Sex	Male	7	
	Female	0	
Age	Under 15	1	
	15-16	6	
County	Cook	6	
	Will/Kankakee	1	
	Champaign	0	
	Rock Island	0	

placements lasted three and one-half hours. All but three interviews with kids in the community were done in the youth's home. One came to Northwestern for the interview, another was done in a park, and the third was done sitting in the car on the side of the highway. I was treated as a guest in the homes I entered. I was always introduced to the whole family, frequently offered cookies and coffee and occasionally received a tour of the house. The hospitality I experienced was similar to that which Stack describes (1974). We then sat privately in a room and talked about the kid's experiences.

The difficulty in finding youths has some effect on the analysis. Only two of those interviewed were Latino. More important, a larger proportion of my interviews were conducted with incarcerated youths than are represented in the overall population of UDIS. My sample also overrepresents youths who have remained at home. Youths who have run away or have successfully integrated themselves into the community might have different accounts of growing up and their experiences in UDIS. Both runaways and those later incarcerated might be seen as failures. The interviews with incarcerated youths and those remaining in the community were so similar, I am led to believe that the youths I didn't find had similar experiences and attitudes, but simply may have been more effective in implementing their strategies for making the transition to adulthood. Conversely, kids who run away may not experience the same process of growing up because they revert to crime to support themselves. Subsequent research in this area should examine the function of running away in growing up.

After half of the interviews had been completed, I prepared a preliminary summary of findings which guided revisions in the interview topics and sampling. I added more probes about neighborhood and parental responses to behavior, decisions to begin and stop crime, perceived resources, and the concepts of "play" and "being busy."

The preliminary analysis showed the recurrent theme of deciding to stop getting in trouble. Given the non-random assignment of youths to UDIS or DOC, I wondered if this decision process occurred only among the potentially "less serious" youths referred to UDIS or whether the decision process was common to all youths. In order to examine the generality of the decision to stop crime, I also interviewed seven youths who had been incarcerated in DOC without being in UDIS.

I interviewed a total of 25 youths. Eighteen had been in UDIS; seven had been only in the Department of Corrections. Table 4 shows some of the characteristics of those I interviewed.

I took brief notes during Cook County interviews and dictated full field notes after the interviews. I taped downstate and DOC interviews since several were scheduled in a day. After the interviews were transcribed, I summarized the interviews and coded them on McBee Keysort cards for analysis, using techniques described by Becker and Geer (1960), Wiseman (1974) and Roth (1974). As Geer describes (1972), coding of qualitative notes does not involve conceptual coding, but is more closely related to a topical index of subjects covered in the interviews. Multiple codes could be attached to segments of the

interview and the page number of the interview allowed me repeatedly to return to the original interview.

After coding the summaries, I examined all the material on a specific topic. I sorted those materials into more conceptual categories using techniques described by Becker (1984). For example, I started with the stack of cards discussing school experiences. Some cards described the kids' frustration in school, others described problems with behaviors "inappropriate" for school or someone their age, still others described the value of school for later adult life while others described the value of school in court reports. I then made lists of these simple propositions and the interviews and pages supporting them. If other components provided a negative example, I also included that with a brief notation. I kept these lists of propositions on a word processing program so I could repeatedly move sections around into larger conceptual categories and look for contradictions to earlier propositions. A detailed outline of analytic components resulted from this process.

I then returned to the original interviews to confirm that the propositions made sense in light of the verbatim text. I selected quotations which illustrated the propositions and counted the frequency of different events. Throughout the report, I mention these frequencies. These counts tally the number of individuals making a specific response. Even if a youth made several references to a specific phenomena, I counted that as only one. Thus, the frequencies are somewhat conservative in their reporting, but I felt that counting

events would be too unreliable given individual differences in the interview (some were very verbal; others weren't), the perceived importance of an event, as well as the difficulty in identifying discrete events. For example, one youth who felt he had been mistreated by the court system spoke repeatedly about some of his arrests. Although he described more than one example of mistreatment and described these inequities several times during the interview, I counted his accounts as one instance.

This study reports a case study of the experience of serious offenders growing up in Illinois in the early 1980's. It may be seen as a composite life history. Its generality is clearly limited. This story of growing up may not apply to all categories of juvenile offenders, nor does it pretend that each youth's intentions become actions. Instead, it offers a new look at the meaning crime has for some kids.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY ADOLESCENCE: CONFLICTING MESSAGES ABOUT DEPENDENCE

The years surrounding the transition to high school are filled with many changes in the social world of these kids. Kids intensify their search for self, develop aspirations such as getting clothes or stereos, want independence, and want to be "busy." While they are developing those aspirations, the social institutions they interact with--the school, the family, and the work place--do not permit that independence. Those institutions give the kids conflicting messages about their own status by telling kids they must now behave as responsible individuals while also telling them that they are still children--it doesn't matter what they now do. This conflicting set of messages confuses kids and makes them feel powerless and frustrated. It also lets them believe that their current behavior has no impact on their future and it encourages them not to think of the future at all.

This chapter is based on kids' accounts of what their life was like before they began high school. Many described events and relationships two or more years in the past. Precise recollections are difficult, but this is not a critical flaw because this account of life before high school serves as a baseline to show how their life changed. It also offers a basis for interpreting subsequent events.

Enforcing Feelings of Dependence

School life

Schools contribute to the feeling of lack of control by providing few skills valued by the kids while requiring school attendance. By the time they began high school, over one-third of the youths I interviewed attended school occasionally and one-fifth had dropped out of school completely. Three youths described school as boring and no longer a challenge:

> I went to Catholic [grade] schools and if you didn't do the work you got the ruler, you know, and that was the reason I was a little bit ahead...of other students my age in Chicago...my sister went to a public school in the suburbs and I went to a Catholic school in Chicago and later on to a public school and it wasn't the right grade, it wasn't challenging in my grade, I dropped out, I wasn't interested.

Another youth reported that classes in his neighborhood school were simply designed to warehouse kids. He felt the teacher didn't teach and refused to go to that school:

> I won't go to this school over here. Mosely [the school], I wouldn't go over there. This man he won't do nothing but come in, sit down, and read the paper, something like that. He don't work. (This was the teacher?) Yes, he don't do no work, so I got tired of it. I don't need that.

In these instances, the school itself teaches kids that school isn't important. Parents also contribute to the feeling that school is no longer relevant by emphasizing obligations other than school. One missed school to do things for his mother:

> [I didn't go to school] all the time. Most of the time my mother would make me stay home and watch my brother, do stuff for her.

Most kids attending school did things which school administrators defined as inappropriate for school or a high school student, such as smoking, putting an arm around a member of the opposite sex, or "cussing." One female explained that most school problems concerned inappropriate behavior:

> [I've had] some minor [problems at school], fighting and stuff like that...other than that, I've got in trouble a couple of times for walking down the hall with the guys and having their arm around me.

Again the school reinforces the notion that kids were too young for adult behaviors or did not have the right to determine their own behavior.

School rules also frustrate youths and remind them that they aren't in control of their life. While youths attending public school spoke of the chaos in school, the few in private schools resented stricter rules and restrictions:

> I was going to St. Clair school, it was a Catholic school, it was a private school and they told me if I would go there til I'm 15, then they'd put me back in public school. And at first, well, I didn't want to be there. I wanted to be in my brother's grade, but see they put me in that school any time until I'm 15, if I mess up, they put you back at first grade. And I already got my eighth grade diploma.

Most of the youths attending school experienced some frustration. That frustration often was part of a cyclical process of acting out and

being expelled from school. One boy seemed to need a teacher's reactions and destroyed property when he didn't receive that attention:

> Sometimes [the teacher] would come up to me and he would wake me up, or I would try to be doing my work and he would be talking to me and I'd tell him to shut up and he'd push me around and that. I'd go off on him, start hitting him and that. He won't report it to the principal or anything, he'll deal with it himself. So most of the time it would just end up me punching him once or twice and him swinging back at me and that got me rowdy then. Most of the time after school, I would be going out after school and being all angry and that and destructing something and totally destructing it...buildings, fences, windows. Almost all the time, I just get carried away doing it. I couldn't help it at times you know. I'd just take out all my aggravation on that instead of the teacher.

Problems in school and infrequent school attendance are a cyclical process. It is difficult to identify a cause and an effect. Nevertheless, school problems increased as kids attended school less frequently because of suspensions or dismissals. One youth, who seemed to have a particularly volatile school experience, described his "revolving door" school attendance:

> Mainly I would get kicked out of school. Most of the time I would come back and I would be mellow, I wouldn't do nothing. I'd turn around, boom! And it would happen again, they would catch me smoking or ditching school or something. They'd say, "Well, we got to kick you out again." So that's what I was mainly doing most of the time--coming in and going out of school.

Another youth, who frequently ran way from home was detained so often he rarely attended school:

> I got locked up [for running away]. It was too late to go back to school, school was almost over and so they just didn't put me back in school. (Who didn't?) My probation officer and the people at school. This will be my fourth year of seventh grade from running away and skipping school and all. It has added up.

While most of the kids I interviewed either dropped out of school completely or attended occasionally, four regularly attended school. Two of the four were females, which may suggest that females do not have the same concerns about independence and resenting rules. The other two who regularly attended school were younger kids. The time when they regularly attended school was prior to high school; they simply began their criminal career at an earlier age.

Jobs

As kids begin high school, they search for jobs, so they can make their own money and be more adult. All the kids I interviewed tried to find a job when they entered high school. Although teen unemployment is frequently double that of adults' (Bowers, 1982), 56% found a job at one time or another, but most were not satisfied with either the job or the pay. They felt most of their jobs, such as washing dishes in a restaurant or working at a gas station, were trivial jobs. Nearly half of those who found jobs kept the jobs only a short time; four quit their jobs because they didn't like the work:

> I had a job for two weeks at this restaurant. I liked to work, cleaning up and stuff but I didn't like cooking, cause I could get burned. See the girls did the sweeping and doing the cash register and things and the men the cooking, washing pots and pans. You know, and I got all these burns all over my fingers and

> stuff. Not little teeny burns, but burns. I didn't like it so I quit.

Two felt their employer didn't treat them fairly or respectfully:

> I had a job at Burger King, but I quit after a while. See it just wasn't right. They had me washing windows, washing the floor and I'd see what the other people were doing and then I saw what they were giving me. I just didn't like it. It just wasn't right. I didn't like it at all. So I told the manager there that I wasn't going to do that kind of stuff cause no one else was. And so he said, "Well fine, I'm letting you go." And I said, "Well fine, I'm letting <u>you</u> go." So I didn't work there very long.

Two others had seasonal jobs. One-third of the kids hadn't been able to find a job. Many Chicago youths explained that it was hard to find a job. Kids downstate sometimes had an easier time finding temporary work because they could do farm work:

> It was a summer thing out in northern Champaign, where they have detasseling. You know, we would go out on this truck and ride out of town and detassle the corn off the machines and things.

Half of those who couldn't get a job said their age kept them from working. While it is hard to find a job, it is particularly difficult to get a good job if you are under 16:

> Oh, it is easy, there are a lot of jobs. The only problem is you have to wait until you are 16. But just regular jobs, they want you to have a high school education and they want you to wait till you are 16.

Parents hinder young kids' job searches. One fourteen-year old explained that he wanted to get a job, but he wasn't sure what he could do--it depended on what his parents would let him do. Two kids

controlled the age problem by simply saying that they were 16; one even printed his own photo ID with a false birth date. Two others didn't know how or were afraid to falsify their records:

> I thought about lying about my age, but if you get caught, then you are in a lot of trouble, see cause that is a crime...to say that you're 16 when you are really not.

Trying to find work frustrates these kids. When they are able to find a job, they frequently are dissatisfied with the work. Jobs they found are likely to be seasonal or temporary. It is also difficult to find a job when you are young, don't have a high school education, and don't have any experience.

Activities

As kids reach high school age, they find that most organized neighborhood activities are either geared toward younger children or closed for lack of funds. Four explained that the available activities were for younger kids:

> It was kind of a funny thing. Cause it was a church, but about every three days they would try to get people to come and they would have all this activity stuff. Every week or so, they were selling ice cream, well they weren't selling ice cream, but they would have the world's longest banana split. You know, to get people to come. Some people just went there to eat. It wasn't really religious...It was mostly like a children's thing. Cause you know the pastor's son, he was alright. And it was mostly like the pastor and his wife and then all the rest of us were kids.

> Oh, there is a place over on Michigan...a youth club, but that's mostly for younger kids.
>
> ***
>
> There is a boy's club there. I don't think anybody goes there any more because it was all torn up. I mean, they have some games for kids, but they're all torn up.

Four reported that the recreation areas in their neighborhood were closed either by lack of funds or were simply torn down and not replaced:

> Yeah, we got...there is a lot of things to keep everybody active out there. We got a rec area. They got all sorts of groups, I don't even know most of them. You know there are youth groups and everything. YMCA, all sorts of stuff like that. They got bowling alleys, they got pinball places, you know they got, they had a disco place, an amusement park. They <u>had</u> all of that, but once they closed Old Chicago, they don't have none of that no more. They took it all out and closed it all down, turned it into a big shopping center. It would keep quite a bit of people out of trouble and that. There are going to be a lot more assaults with that also. A lot of people will be going up with their pockets full of money. People like me, well used to be like me, people like me would go out and be hitting people for their wallets, purses and that. They are going to see a lot of problems with it.
>
> ***
>
> There used to be a place, Boys' Club and it used to keep a lot of kids busy, they had weight lifting, baseball, basketball, swimming. When you're growing up you want to do a lot of that stuff and it kept a lot of people out of trouble...[when] I was 11, they closed the

> place down, took it down with a mess of old buildings.

Three felt that existing activities were simply too expensive or uninteresting:

> They charge you $25 a month just for the card. That is just too much money to spend. There is also this place called the Center and I used to go down there and study and hang around. We could play pool and do other stuff, that was real good. It was a church too. But they changed into this store. You know, like a Salvation Army store and after they changed it, I didn't go around there very much.

Existing neighborhood activities sometimes were highly structured and conflicted with the adolescent's desire for autonomy. One complained that there was too much supervision at the recreation centers and that he wasn't willing to tolerate authority:

> They would give you arts and crafts and things like that or drawing, or you would go swimming, go to the pool place, go horse back riding and stuff like that. I was in it for a little while. I went horseback riding, bowling with them and that, but I really didn't like it too much. It kept me out of trouble you know and a few of my friends was in there, but then I just says, "No, I can find more enjoyment out on the street instead of going with them all the time." (What didn't you like?) Always being supervised, that's one thing. I can't really take authority. I can take it now, but before I couldn't. I just say, "No man, you ain't going to make me do this. I ain't going to do it, you can't make me do it"...you know. They always made me do something when I was in there. I just says, "No, I can't take that no more. I want to get out of it."

The youths' dependence is also illustrated by their limited social contacts and geographic isolation. Before they enter high

school, kids can not control their own geographic mobility: even if the family has access to a car, the kid can't drive, doesn't have money for public transportation, and can't go far from home without parental permission. One Chicago male explained, "You're sort of like a rookie when you're in grade school, you ain't got your money together, you never leave your neighborhood."

Seeking Identity

Youth entering high school are also searching for an identity or sense of self. Cooley's concept of the looking glass self explains that individuals develop their self concept through interactions with others (1902). Young children are socialized through reactions to others; high school age youths intensify their search for identity.

Kids gain their current identity through interactions with family members, neighbors, peers, and authority figures such as teachers. Before entering high school, several explain that they had a relatively limited range of social contact--they spent most of their time at home or at school and usually traveled only within a radius of a few blocks as the youth quoted above.

Youths also elaborate their self concept through interactions at school with peers, teachers, and administrators. The wide range of behaviors with these individuals may be seen as an effort to elicit as many reactions as possible.

The school provided an ideal audience for acts. Some youths experimented with behaviors and personae through fights. Three youths mentioned fighting in school. Others simply disrupted classes with

their behavior and seemed to use it as a way to get attention:

> Almost all of the teachers, almost all of them will come up to me and talk to me, cause I'll be clowning a lot when I was in school. I'll always be the class clown you know. Just try to make people laugh cause that is one thing I like the most. It's just seeing people laughing and that. And I'd always be trying to do it and all the teachers liked me about that. You know, they all got a kick out of that. They would always sit down and talk to me all the time.

In many instances, the youths knew that behavior would result in a reaction from teachers or school administrators; when that reaction did not come, some were upset:

> When I got into high school everything just fell out. We got this one teacher, he didn't give a damn what we did, I'd walk in there, I would be smoking a cigarette and he would just let me sit there and smoke it. And there is no smoking allowed in school. And other times, I would just fall asleep in the class and he would just let me sleep, he didn't care what I did, I would be swearing at him and I just started getting carried away after that and everything started happening all at once.

This youth sought reactions from others as part of the search for self. His analysis of his own behavior is also an example of how youths assign the responsibility for the situation to the school at this point--the teacher didn't enforce the rules, or the teacher didn't teach. Kids have no idea that they had any role in the interaction.

The Limitations of Age

Kids describe the frustrations of high school, the difficulty of finding a regular job, and the lack of age-appropriate activities in their neighborhood. The dilemma of age is clear: the adolescent is

too old for children's games, but is too young to become an active participant in the adult world. College students experience the frustration of a prolonged childhood. These youths represent the rebellious college students' counterparts; lower class kids must make a rapid transition from high school to adulthood without benefit of the additional time college provides to make that transition. They may have a more difficult task to change from a dependent child to an autonomous adult quickly.

Kids have an implicit timetable for growing up. In much the same way that a tuberculosis patient has a timetable for recovery (Roth, 1963), adolescents and adults have timetables marking when certain behaviors are acceptable. Behaviors are not judged appropriate or inappropriate per se, but are inappropriate for certain ages just as recovery from tuberculosis is measured by time since a certain event, rather than from empirical evidence of improvement. Signs of "appropriate age" frequently relate to the youth's physical appearance or chronological age, rather than a contextual assessment of readiness. One boy explained that he was tall for his age, so he looked older than he really was. That made it more difficult to get along with kids picking fights, but made it easier to date his girlfriend. Another told how his mother lectured him that he was too young to have a serious girlfriend. Another explained he gets along better with his mother than when he was younger:

> My mother doesn't get mad at me for the same things she used to. Now that I'm a little older she doesn't get mad at the same things.

The period of early adulthood involves role dislocation and requires that participants find new ways of organizing social time (Markson, 1973).

Young kids can't drop out of school. Many stop attending regularly before the age of 16, but can't officially drop out. Some manipulate events so they can be expelled from school and stay away without penalty:

> I'd deliberately try to get kicked out because I wasn't 16 yet and to drop out you have to be 16. I wanted to go and work and they wouldn't let me. So I made them kick me out of school. I got suspended for six months, I went back to school and said, "Well, I'll try to get my high school diploma." Junior year, three days and I wound up getting locked up on the third day of school.

Age and the lack of jobs keep kids in their neighborhood longer than they wish. Two wanted to move from their neighborhood, but haven't been able to convince their parents to permit it:

> ...[I'm] going to get out as soon as I am old enough to be out of the control of my parents. When I turn 18, I'm leaving here. I don't want to stay any longer than I have to.

When these kids enter high school, they do not have a clear timetable for growing up. They recognize a general goal: someday they will be an adult and will control their own life. They have not yet discovered that one event leads to another; they have not learned the sequence or causality of events. They constantly press for more privileges from their parents--permission to date or to associate freely with whomever they want. But it is not clear that they see

those behaviors as steps toward growing up--they are simply fun at the time. They sometimes refer to acting cool or grown up, with the implication that there is a simple change from child to adult--not a progression of steps.

Wax (1959) describes two time perspectives. The closed time system views life as a series of cycles with turning points. In this perspective, there is no need to plan or work toward the future because the future is the result of the supernatural. An open time system has a linear sense of history--a concept of time, a sequence of causes and effects. Actors view progress in terms of passage of time--years of age or school. The youth just entering high school does not clearly fit into either category. He does not have a cyclic view of events, nor does he view life as a progression of events. He is simply told by parents, teachers and employers that he is not old enough for many of the things he wants to do.

Passage into adulthood, then, clearly revolves around chronological age. The kid must simply wait until he is "old enough" to do certain things. Teens are in a vacuum. They begin to experience conflicting timetables. Their family may see them as old enough to work, but the legal system says they should still be in school. School doesn't appear to be important and jobs are hard to find.

Social Integration among Dependent Youth

Social theorists relate the lack of cause and effect, or the feeling of a void to a sense of anomie. Delinquency theorists have explained delinquent behavior by the concept of anomie, noting that the

lack of social integration and the lack of acceptance allows youths to engage in asocial behavior. The youths I interviewed are not anomic: most have close relationships with their family. They are integrated into family and help networks. They simply live in an isolated world where their current behavior has little meaning or consequence.

While kids are integrated into family networks, they do not feel the family has control over circumstances affecting their lives. Kids feel that their families and neighbors are powerless when faced with problems such as housing or poverty. When asked whether they could do anything about problems, one replied:

> Well, in some ways, if they had a real problem like a housing problem there is probably nothing they could do. But they [neighbors] wouldn't help [us] with other things.

While they perceive themselves and their families as powerless to change things affecting their life, a perspective reinforced by school and job experiences, these youths are by no means anomic. Families develop help networks among kin and neighbors by sharing goods and services (Stack, 1974), suggesting that there may be more social organization than delinquency theorists or program planners have assumed (Moynahan, 1965). The help networks allow the families to survive the economic and social conditions they can't change.

The family remains important to kids as they reach high school. While it was difficult for them to explain the importance of family members, one boy described the closeness of his family:

> My brothers and sisters, it was just that I loved them, I just loved my brothers and

> sisters. And I'd respect them any way I can. They didn't have to do nothing for me to respect them and love them, it was just outright respect. I was born to love my sisters and brothers. I just loved them.

Four said that family members were the only people they could trust, because as one explained, "I know I could trust them because they trust me...they gave me trust." Forty percent talked to family members about problems. Some talked to siblings and others talked to parents:

> I talk to my sister more than anybody, even my mother. See my mother doesn't really understand. She doesn't understand why I like to talk to my sister. This is my older sister, she's 23. She doesn't live at home anymore, she's married. But she understands everything. So if I want anything or need to talk to anyone I talk to my sister I don't talk to my mother.

One youth explained that the only people he considered friends were his family. Family members watch out and protect each other. Older brothers serve as bodyguards for younger siblings, sometimes with little thanks:

> So they started messing with my little brother and stuff and my mom told me, "Don't let your little brother be jumped on, I don't care what you do, if you get hurt, but try your best cause if you don't fight back they keep on picking on him." They used to take my money when I'd come to school when I was small. So one day, I got up, I don't know what happened after that. I went to school and they were messing with [my brother]. I thought like somebody was against him, trying to take his stuff, but he just got up on the wrong side of the bed, and he just started kicking <u>me</u> in the head.

One female explained that relationships with peers weren't that important since she was close to her family:

> Because I have a big family and I have friends, but I have [some] friends closer than my other friends. Like Patricia, I call her my friend because you know a friend is a person who when you need something they have it. But other girls, I just talk to and hang with you know, associates. I have associates, but I have friends too. But it's not that important to have a lot of friends when you have family.

Family means an extended family for many; grandparents raised several:

> See I still got family living around 109th, too. See we used to live two doors down from my grandma, when I was little, really my grandma was raising me, and all that stuff, but see how she came up, I don't know. When my mama was 16, she adopted my sister and when mama grew up, you know, 23, the older ages, then she took her back. And then she became my grandma, and then she didn't have all of us, she'd be adopting, she adopted my brothers.

Family can also include non-relatives who have been in with the family for a number of years:

> The reason I call her grandmother is because she used to baby sit us all the time when my mother wasn't home. We have been knowing her ever since I was a little baby. She's old and she ain't got nobody staying with her so I go and stay with her sometimes.

While kids reported being very close to their families, they do not do many things with families--their interactions generally are limited to exchanges at home or at a relative's home for a visit:

We would get together and talk or we would just visit. We would play a lot. Or I would ask them for stuff and they would give it to me and that would be about it.

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We would just sit around and talk and just visit. My cousin has a baby and we would play with the baby. That was about it, we would just sit around and talk.

Kids do more things with siblings and cousins:

We do most everything together. We go skating, we go to the show, we go to school together, we would fight together, we would play pool together. Just about everything we would do together.

***

I would take my little cousins riding on my motorcycle, not on the motorcycle but get a wagon or something and pull them, just riding around. Most of my cousins got motorcycles too. We would just go out to the trails by my house and ride all day long and then come back and wash up, probably go to a party or something. Or have a party at one of our houses. We would probably go some place. You know, I got BB guns and everything else, bows and arrows, we spend a lot of time out at the river. They have an inflatable raft that you have to pump up and we would go out to this place called Honey Creek and sit out there all day long and just lay around, splash in the water. You know and every once in a while we would get into the water, but it was cold, and then we would get right back out. I did a bunch of stuff...most of it was sports stuff, basketball, football, wrestling. Cause me and my brother, we go out for wrestling every year. He goes to state every year so far. He went to state in seventh grade to eleventh grade. This is his last year of school now and he has gone to the state twice. I have been wrestling ever since sixth grade, I used to wrestle in junior high.

Downstate youths frequently do not have the same type of family experience. The helping networks described by Chicago teens did not seem to exist in downstate families. Downstate kids felt like an outsider in their own family, or had family problems:

> A long time ago, our family was spread apart. I mean really spread apart. Nobody would talk with anybody. We would be at each other's throats all the time. Most of the time when I be burglarizing I would be giving my brothers money...Me and my brother was pretty close. And me and my little sister was close, but that was it back then. Once my brother got sent up [to adult prison] and all this started coming down and my other brother, he turned out to be an alcoholic, and that started bringing the family closer and that. We used to have a bad reputation...the whole town knew us, things we did and everything. After a while, when everybody started growing up and realizing that we gave ourselves a bad name, everybody is trying to work their way out of it. I been the last one, like they say, the spoiled apple of the bunch, I'm the last one to mess up.

There isn't much evidence, but the difference in downstate families may be that family members worked two or three different jobs to make ends meet. Chicago youths may have had at least one working parent, but the emphasis on work and family was different. A Black youth from Champaign described his family relationships:

> Well, me and my father, we never had a close relationship, he was always gone working, he has two jobs now and he use to have three. So I never got to see him and the rest of them was girls. I didn't too much like to do anything with them. My grandmother, well all of us were working. You know, for a while everybody was there but we didn't converse too much with each other. Me and my sister, we used to argue all the time.

Perhaps help networks do not emerge downstate because many do not have an extended family nearby; the primary family unit has moved and has been disassociated from the rest of the family. Perhaps as an outcome of this separation, downstate communities also seem to stress individual responsibility for problems, an attitude which may limit the extent of help networks.

Neighborhood Relationships

Help is a common activity in many cohesive neighborhoods. The neighbors help each other survive problems they can't solve. Thirty-two percent reported that their neighbors would help them; 12% reported that their neighbors wouldn't help even if they could or "would probably want money just to fight."

Neighborhood help may involve fighting on the same side, watching each other's homes, providing loans, rides or a place to stay when needed. Whether neighbors would take your side in a fight is a frequent measure of help:

> They would help you out any time. Any time they see me in a fight, I can just bet on them jumping right in and helping me.

***

> If I ask them, but if I can handle it, I don't need nobody. If I need someone I ask my brother or my cousin, I don't ask these people around here. They probably want some money or something just to help me fight.

> No they wouldn't help you. In fact, if they didn't like you they would get the other people to beat you up. They're just that kind of people.

Kids report few close relationships with neighbors not in their help networks. Thirty-two percent feel they know their neighbors well, but most reported they weren't close to them. Three didn't know their neighbors because it was a mobile community:

> People are moving in and out around here so fast that you usually don't even know people by name.

Neighbors rarely make an effort to befriend kids in the neighborhood. Some feel kids are a lot of trouble:

> They hate [kids]. I mean they think kids are the biggest problem there is. See they're always stealing or breaking into a house. There was this one woman, she was complaining because her house was broken into five times in a week. She was complaining, she was so mad at the kids in the neighborhood because they are the ones who do it. And it got around that she had been complaining about it, so they broke into her house just one more time to get even.

Females have less contact with their neighbors and haven't built the same sort of fight-help networks the males have. One female described her neighbors:

> They don't act anyway to me. I'm not out in the neighborhood enough for people to really act towards me. I just stay in the house most of the time.

Neighbors can help kids by fighting, they can harass kids by taunting them and fighting against them, or they can show they are indifferent by ignoring the kids.

The social world of the youth beginning high school leads the youth to believe that his or her actions don't have a consequence. The lack of control enforced by school, the inability to get jobs, the lack of age-appropriate activities and the limited geography make kids feel they have little control over their life. This perspective extends to the family—several explained that their families or neighbors were unable to do anything about real problems. Their emphasis is on surviving or adapting to a situation, rather than changing it. Kids receive conflicting messages from different social institutions. They are told they should start taking responsibility for their actions. At the same time, they are told that their current actions don't matter: juvenile records won't be held against them as an adult, acting out in school doesn't result in any consistent response, their current time isn't worth anything. They are supposed to stay in school even though the school isn't teaching them anything.

There may be several reasons kids feel their current actions have no consequence. First, perceptions of time are dependent on age. Piaget (1952, 1929) and Fraisse (1963) have written that most children do not even begin to understand the concept of time or its allocation until they are adolescents. Without a concept of time, children can not spend their time in ways that represent trade-offs or ranking the importance of activities. Adulthood is far away.

Many youths find it difficult to accept causation when responses to their behavior happen sporadically, when there is a time lapse between their behavior and the response. The boy who got in trouble in

school didn't see the teacher's response as a direct result of his own acting out--they were two independent events. It may be as difficult for an adolescent to perceive causation as it is for the sociologist to demonstrate it. Young kids explain events as luck or chance.

Third, kids have little reason to worry about the future when they do not believe they are in control of their own lives. Adults control the time of dependent youths. In addition to the age differences I've outlined, lower class families may place a different emphasis on planning for the future and the impact of the current life. As noted, many of the kids interviewed feel they and their families were unable to deal with "real problems." Lillian Rubin describes differing attitudes toward the future:

> For the child—especially a boy--born into a professional middle-class home, the sky's the limit, his dreams are relatively unfettered by constraints. In his earliest conscious moments he becomes aware of his future and of plans being made for it—plans that are not just wishful fantasies but plans that are backed by the resources to make them come true. All around him as he grows, he sees men who do important work at prestigious jobs. At home, at school, in the neighborhood, he is encouraged to test the limits of his ability to reach for the stars.
>
> For most working-class boys the experience is just the reverse. Born into a family where survival is problematic, he sees only the frantic scramble to meet today's needs, to pay tomorrow's rent. Beyond that it's hard for parents to see...such boys face a "series of mounting disadvantages"--that is, poverty, lack of education and occupational guidance, no role models in prestige occupations, no personal contacts to help push careers along--all come together to create a plan for the future and

> form a vicious circle from which few ever escape. It is in this process that the class structure is preserved--as if in ice--from generation to generation (1976).

Arlene Skolnick also recognizes social class differences and relates them to different opportunity structures:

> ...working class and poor people are often descried as passive, lacking in the ability to delay gratification and fatalistic--believing that luck rather than hard work leads to success. Rather than reflecting deeply rooted inadequacies of personality, however, these differences--to the extent that they exist at all--may reflect realistic assessments of the opportunity structure and the amount of control lower income people actually have over their lives (1977).

Finally, if a youth doesn't perceive the connection between present behavior and the future--either because he or she has no concept of the future, or feels that he or she has no control over the future--it is possible to see why kids don't feel that their behavior matters. Similarly, Herbert Blumer found that teen drug users often engaged in a normal load of activities, but felt that only a fraction of their time was important (1967). Perhaps kids at this age try a variety of activities while searching for meaning.

Summary

As kids begin high school, they are still highly dependent on family for money, shelter and the permission to do things. The school and the kinds of jobs available to kids reinforce their dependent status. School may be just a way to keep the kid occupied until he or she is old enough to do something else, as evidenced by classes where

teachers don't teach or where disruptions prohibit learning. Kids want to earn money and get a job, but they either can't find any job or one they would like.

Given this dependent status, kids have no reason to believe their current behavior has an impact on anything in the future. They have an orientation to the present, and would prefer immediate gratification of their desires.

Such an orientation might be seen as evidence of anomie--a lack of commitments to social norms, a lack of social ties. The commitment to family and neighborhood help networks, however, indicates that this is not the case. These youths are socially integrated, but see little relationship between their current actions and anything else.

CHAPTER V

NORMAL PLAY

Kids' social worlds expand greatly when they begin high school. They make new friends, they develop more complicated roles requiring them to manage multiple role relationships, they begin spending more time away from home, and they spend that time further from home. They search for activities to replace things they did when they were younger. While they do many normal adolescent activities, they also play around, as they call it, engaging in minor criminal offenses. Playing around has no immediate consequence for these kids, but is a way to be sociable with new friends. More important, playing around is a way to fill time. This chapter describes how their social world expands as they begin high school and how playing around contributes to the youths' changing social worlds.

At the heart of symbolic interactionism is the concept that interactions shape a person's identity and sense of self. The self grows and changes through a succession of interactions with others and a reflection on the other's response (Mead, 1934). Identity develops through a dynamic of "viewing and responding to one's own behavior" (Manis & Meltzer, 1967). Cooley describes this as the "looking glass self" where an individual comes to see himself as an object and

reflects on his attitudes and behaviors based on the attitudes and reactions of others (Cooley, 1902).

While the development of self begins in infancy, the adolescent seeking an identity enters a new era in interactions. The adolescent develops a more sophisticated set of roles and relationships and experiments with different behaviors. As McCall and Simmons explain, the adolescent experiences greater independence in the roles and behaviors assumed:

> As the child begins his interactive career, he is quite dependent upon others for his material and social wants. As a result, he is relatively powerless in his early interactions and relationships. He is seldom able to dictate the terms of interaction directly, to control which roles will be performed by the various actors. Others successfully dictate to him which roles he will perform and which ones they will take on. His only recourse is the tactic of obstruction, to protest and to try to resist this imposition of roles.
>
> As he grows older and acquires much more refined interpersonal tactics and manipulating the assignment of roles by poignantly appealing to certain role-identities of the others, he is able to win for himself a certain measure of independence. Furthermore, his social horizons have broadened, so that he has alternative sources of role-support beyond his family. If he cannot have his way within the purview of the family, he may resort to external sources of support. This possibility, too, increases his independence; the greater the number and significance of alternative audiences, the less dependent he is upon any one of them (1966).

Thus, the broadening horizons experienced in adolescence offer the opportunity for new roles, new identities and new independence. Leisure time provides an opportunity for youths to test new roles and

relationships and to engage freely in erratic behavior. Play and leisure prepare young children for future roles and let them test the limits of proper behavior (Reilly, 1974; Stone, 1965; Mead, 1934). Play can serve a similar function for adolescents:

> Leisure can operate in a similar fashion for adolescents. Young children may learn basic social rules through game playing, but there are subtleties that remain to be decoded. Rules are often rules in name only, and one must understand more than the exact content of rules if one is to know how to behave. One must also know which rules are enforced and which are not; which are to be given lip service and which are to be strictly observed; which may be broken with impunity, which can be circumvented, and under what conditions. Adolescents may face these subtleties during leisure hours. Since the choice of leisure activities is a relatively wide one, it may be a useful time to put rules to a behavioral test (Richards et al., 1979).

Adolescents' independence allows them to engage in unpredictable behavior. As Becker notes, "It may be that the erratic behavior of the juvenile delinquent is erratic precisely because they boy has not yet taken any actions which commit him more or less permanently to a given line of endeavor" (1964). Becker describes how medical school instructors feel students' interest in patients is erratic, but the students' behavior was understandable since they never feel fully responsible for their actions. Adolescents who experience expanding social networks are similarly free to engage in erratic behavior because they have not developed commitment to any set of actions and because they do not feel responsible for their behavior. As noted in

the previous chapter, they also fail to recognize the consequences of their actions, another factor which may permit erratic behavior.

Broadening Social Networks

Making New Friends

Kids make new friends and try out new identities when they begin high school:

> I never knew these cats before, you know, I never knew them before I went to high school...we weren't school boy chums, not grade school, right. They were new people I met. So I guess when we went to high school we met new people and new people found out new things.

Starting high school was a turning point when new identities could be developed:

> See, I ran with the wrong bunch of kids. When I started high school, that's when I started hanging around with them...I was more or less hanging around with this new group of kids cause they were new to me.

Kids experiment with new identities by auditioning new behaviors and new audiences. Five youths reported that they began spending less time at home and spent more time with their friends. They recognized this shift as a major change in their lives:

> I don't know, I was down at the pool hall most of the time and hardly was ever going to school. I'd go to school say about three times a week, something like that. Then at night time I don't know, I just stayed out in the streets all night.

> It was a lot different. Before, I'd stay home a lot, lay around the house. Later I use to stay out all night and stuff like that, hanging around with my friends.

Family relationships change, both in the quantity of time spent with family and the type of things done with the family:

> When I got bigger I was always on the streets, I was never around my family except my sister. I believe that is why me and my sister are really tight now. Me and her, her husband is a DJ, I'm crazy about him. I look up to him because he is a DJ. That stuff fascinates me because I'm crazy about music. I used to help him DJ. And that sister, I believe she is my favorite sister.

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> I saw them, but I used to see them all the time. It used to be when I was going to church, I used to be with them all the time, but I don't be with them or be around them all the time...when I started getting into crime, I started being out on the streets all the time. I'd still be with my family sometimes, but I'd be out on the streets most of the time.

While family remains important to these kids, as we'll see in later chapters, peers become more important to the youths (see, for example, Sewell, 1963). The importance of the peer group is illustrated by one youth who does not engage in activities he likes because none of his friends want to do them. This downstate boy explained that he really liked fishing but never did it since his friends didn't like it:

> I like to go fishing. There's a lot of things I like to do, it just doesn't seem like I got time to do it. I mean like I'm on the street everyone else wants do do this. I mean every one of my friends wants to do something

> different. When I was on the street I never really did too much fishing, but I really like to fish.

It is interesting that he feels too busy to fish. His time is occupied by new social relationships demanding other behavior. Being busy, which increases as youths move out of their criminal careers, results from social responsibilities with time commitments.

Expanding social networks--developing new social relationships and spending time away from home--result in a greater complexity of roles and relationships during adolescence and a growth in self concept. The greater complexity of social relationships is demonstrated by the development of specialized roles and, for some, the development of open social networks. Twenty percent reported that many of their friends did not know each other, frequently because they lived in different parts of the state or went to different schools. However, 32% said that all their friends know each other, even when they live in different towns. Two youths who said their friends all knew each other explained that they lived in such a small town that everyone knew everyone else. One summarized his relationships with his new friends and his old friends:

> I was more or less hanging around with this new group of kids cause they were new to me. Like now, I'll hang around my old friends. It's a whole different situation more or less cause they just got to me.

Another explained that certain people are fun to be around sometimes, but didn't fit into all situations:

> I'd steal with some friends and I wouldn't with others. Some of my friends don't steal and some of them do. But some of them I would go places, I would want to be with them there, a certain kind of person or personality that they had. Not somebody who would be out rowdy at some place and you want to have a nice person.

Several explained that they had one set of rowdy friends and another set of mellow friends:

> I'm a rowdy person but there are times I like to be quiet, sit back and have a good time with my friends, sit around an apartment or something and get drunk. Out here, when I'm drinking, I know I'm either going to get into something cause there is always something up. If there ain't a fight here there's something good going on over there. You know somebody is tearing apart something. I like to get into it sometimes. But out in Kentucky, every time I been down there, I get drunk and I just sit back. There are things to do but we really wouldn't get up and do them. We would just sit back and mellow out, we wouldn't really do them. They are the kind of friends they don't really like to get into mischief.

Some have different kinds of friends living in different neighborhoods:

> I was born on 22 and Cermak. That is where all my friends are. I got a lot of friends on 52 too. But when I go on 22 that is when I be going to jail and stuff. When I'm on 52nd, we would just be walking around or something. We never got into any stuff out there on the streets. We'd play football, baseball, go swimming at this Dodge school back on King Drive. Go swimming over there at the school there. Come on back, play tennis at the school or something, or play basket ball. If there wasn't nothing to do we would just sit out there on the porch or something.

Expanding Geographic Horizons

Kids also broaden their social networks by expanding the physical space in which they independently travel. They begin to spend a lot of time outside their neighborhood. Many go downtown, and five reported spending time all over Chicago, riding the el for fun. In addition to the eight who spent a lot of time downtown, six others spent time in other city neighborhoods. Five spent time outside their neighborhood because there was too much crime or drugs in their own neighborhood:

> I don't have any friends there, the west side is the bad side of town. You don't want to go there. It's full of drug pushers and dope dealers. That's just the bad area of town, its right around the corner from the projects too. There's glass on the ground all the time and there are wineheads on the street corners. I don't mean just living there, I mean just lying down on the corners of the street asking you for a quarter as they go by. You can get mugged any time. Even me—they don't care how young you are—they'll mug me too.

As kids reach high school, they make friends in different neighborhoods or towns, thus broadening their geographic boundaries. With the ease of public transportation and the mobility of families, many found it easy made friends throughout the city. Fifty-two percent said that they had friends all over. Of that 52%, over half explained they had friends outside their neighborhood when the friend or the youth moved. Two reported having friends across the state whom they hitchhiked to visit. Approximately 20% reported that most of their friends live

close by in the neighborhood. These youths reported living in the same neighborhood for a long period of time.

Females and Their Networks

The development of social networks just described depicts the growth which males experience. My limited interviews with females suggest that they meet new friends when they begin high school, but the female's social world does not expand in the same way male's does. Females speak of a few friends and staying close to home with them--they don't talk about hanging out, or going downtown with their friends:

> We spent a lot of time together, they have babies though. I'm the only one that don't, so I was more free than they were. They couldn't go whenever, I went by myself most of the time.

Social life for the females revolved around their home:

> Most of the time, I just stuck around here. We went skating at Pulaski and Chicago. Sometimes we would go bowling there, but we haven't done that in a long time.

Staying at home may satisfy the expectations of others. One female waited at home for her boyfriend to call:

> My new boyfriend likes me to stay at home. Cause when he is at work he calls me on his breaks and at lunch time. I guess he expects me to be there. And then when he gets home, I have to call him 15 minutes after he gets off. Then by 7 o'clock he is over at my house.

The home is central in the social life of these females. When the females think about meeting new people, they think about changing where they lived. Two of the three females said they would like to have

moved or been in a group or foster home because they might have made some new friends.

Filling Time

When kids expand their social networks, they look for meaning or roles they can play as an adult or in preparation for their adult life. Although their social relationships are expanding, the activities in which they can participate are limited. They have a lot of time to fill. They spend a lot of time at their friends' homes. Thirty-six percent spent time at friends' homes either watching TV, listening to records, or talking. Kids also just "hang around," either downtown or in neighborhood places. Sixty-four percent hang around. One described it as aimless pursuits with no obligations:

> Well, its not having any specific place to go, just doing whatever comes. "Let's go over here." Or, "There's a party, lets go over there." You know, having no specific place to go like, "I've got to go to school," or "I've got to go to work" or "I've got to go home."

Even though a large proportion spent time hanging around, they didn't spend all their time that way:

> We would just bum around mostly...cutting out of school, go downtown, goof around, just hang around town. See if there were any parties. (Every day?) I wouldn't say every day, but just about two or three times a week. We'd go downtown mostly just to bum around and check out the sights.

Thirty-six percent hung out downtown. The variety of activities downtown—shopping, movies, game rooms--provided a special lure for the kids:

> I spent all my time in the neighborhood or downtown. If you had asked people about me before, they would have just laughed and called me "Downtown Freddie Brown." See I used to go down and see shows every day. I was going to high school and I had class period 1 through 7. That is 8 in the morning until about 1. Well about 12, I would just leave and go downtown and go to the show.

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> Well, there is this store like a game room and you go in and you play the games and stuff. That was our meeting place, we would meet down there and play games. I met some people downtown too. Our friends, we would all get together there. Or we would go to the Greyhound Station there at Clark and Lake and hang around there. Then they would chase us out.

Twenty-four percent hung out with friends in the neighborhoods:

> After I went home and ate, I used to hang around my neighborhood over on North Avenue. Just get high and act crazy with my friends. Just shooting the shit, we'd talk about whatever was up.

The neighborhoods lack theaters and shopping, but neighborhood restaurants and the streets offered places to hang out:

> There was a Burger King and a McDonald's you know, and a little hot dog stand. We ate there at times, you know, we'd stay there for an hour or two but usually we'd just hangout on the street.

Many spent their time playing around. Twenty-four percent spoke of "playing." Kids may play while they are hanging around, but the two activities are different. Play includes rowdiness and horseplay:

> I got to get up and horseplay some. I'm naturally rowdy. You know I've been rowdy since almost the day I've been born, I've been

> moving around and once, "No horseplaying, no nothing like that," I says. I try to stop, but I go back to it again. Just mainly shadowboxing, you know. Tagging each other once in a while, winging swings at each other, mainly that. Just off the wall garbage mainly. Most of the time. Or swearing back and forth at each other, that's what they call horseplaying.

Downtown provides wonderful opportunities to play:

> We was really just playing, you know, we'd do a lot of things and play, running and stuff. We weren't really doing too much crime downtown, we'd just be playing a lot. First we'd go shopping and then we'd just be running and playing. We didn't do nothing downtown.

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> We used to always go downtown on Saturdays and Sundays. We'd go messing around there. Try to get in [places like] the Playboy Club. Or we'd look for things to steal. We go to the John Hancock, sneak in there. Go up to the 95th floor. Try to get in there. There's another floor there and there's some lockers. We would try and get like tuxedos. Sometimes there'd be some reefer in the pockets and there was this one place that had a garbage chute and it goes down two stories and we'd jump in the garbage chute.

To these youths, minor criminal acts and disorderly behavior are simply play. Play provides a social outlet with friends, gives them something to do, and is fun.

Kids also fill time with more conventional activities. Hanging around and play were only a part of their activities:

> You know, I don't mean to make it sound like it was a ghetto and all we had to do was hang out on the street. You know we'd go to one of my partner's houses and we'd stay there, you know, listen to the stereo, talk to some girls, you

> know. You go out and play with your friends, we went swimming. You'd play softball, kidding around, this and that, all kinds of stuff, you know.

Fifty-two percent "party" with their friends. Partying involves getting high or drinking with friends, as well as going to lounges, discos, or parties at friends' homes. Two others went to block parties with friends. Sixty-four percent played sports with their friends--either skating, swimming, biking, fishing, ball, or weight lifting. Two went job hunting with their friends and two went to church socials. Three went to community centers, but either didn't like the supervision or lost the option when the center closed.

A few youths have hobbies which keep them busy:

> We would go over to Rollerina. It is a roller skating place. Or we would go to the show over on Rosalind or we would go over to this Mendel School. I have this friend and he does some painting, and I am helping him too. I also like to do stuff like the martial arts. I really like to lift weights and I like to sing. My brother and I, we won a trophy singing in a contest. But the main thing I like to do is tumbling. My main skill is tumbling.

Thirty-two percent said they still spent a lot of time at home, with friends coming over for visit. One said he spent time at home on the weekend when no one else was there, but stayed out of the house during the week. The three females reported spending most of their time at home.

Downstate youths spend time in some activities not available to Chicago youths. All downstate males spoke of motorcycles or cars, while only one Chicago male had access to a car. One downstate youth

described his activities:

> Everyone pretty much sticks to themselves. Everyone around our age, they will get together on Saturday, go out to the motorcycle trails, everybody has got a motorcycle and you know sometimes we will ride double and stuff like that. I remember one time there was at least fifteen or sixteen of us on motorcycles and the cops came down the street and we thought they were after us and everybody was gone all of a sudden. I thought we were going to get busted, but other than that, it is pretty peaceful except for when we ride our motorcycles.

Getting into Trouble

First Crimes

From their perspective, youths make decisions about how to spend their leisure time based on rewards, costs, and personal preferences. Delinquency may be part of their leisure activities. Richards et al. proposed a leisure-decision-making perspective to explain how middle-class youths engaged in delinquent acts (1979). While that perspective may apply to middle-class youths, the lower-class youths described here did not think about the costs or benefits of their behavior (Rubin, 1976). Their lack of a future orientation prohibited such thoughts of play. Most youths describe the process as something which happened on the spur of the moment without thought:

> One night we decided we would start stealing from people. I don't know why. We started going out ripping off bundles of things, everybody was doing stuff like that.
>
> ***
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> Usually I would just get up and call a couple of friends and go to the gym early in the morning around 11 to about 1, messing around

> playing basketball. After that, there is a park right over there and we would go over there sit around, get something to eat, and just mess around really. There wasn't really nothing special to do. But we would go over there for a while and then we would go to this other park and that is where all the people and we were kind of devilish then, we would kind of take advantage out of the park...things out of people's cars and stuff like that..and if we were successful, we would go sell it and go get some beer and drink it, just mess around that is all there was really to do.

At the beginning, then, crime was simply an extension of playing around.

Most kids begin their criminal career slowly with small, frequently unnoticed events. Thirty-eight percent began doing petty things like shoplifting small items or not paying for public transportation or a movie. Two youths explained that no one knew about the crimes they started doing. One was not suspected because his parents thought he was too young:

> When I first started getting into trouble they didn't know about it, because I was so young they figured I didn't know any better. I didn't tell them. Then as I started getting older, they started asking more questions about what I was doing.

On the other hand, two were caught immediately. Once a youth has been caught, his or her past activities are reconstructed in order to make sense out of his or her current activities:

> When I was 13, I broke the headlights on my mother's car and that was really the first time that I got into much trouble that they knew about, at least. That was the first time the police got involved. But then they went around and started checking up on me and learned about

> other stuff...they go through the neighborhood after they learn who you are. They ask like the older people in the neighborhood if they have seen you doing anything or if you get in trouble.

Although the kids do not have a motive when they began their criminal behavior, crime played a functional role in their life: it is a way to be sociable and establish status, and it is fun.

Their broadening geographic boundaries and social contact provide more opportunities, not all legitimate:

> When you're in high school you travel through, you take a bus, see, you travel through three or four neighborhoods, you know, three or four different groups. It's sort of like discovering the world, new horizons and that...it was just exciting, you know, it was just exciting...more things to get into, more things to occupy your mind and time.

Crime does not have a meaning because kids do not reflect on their behavior. Kids engage in crime without thinking: their criminal actions have no more meaning than do other events in their life:

> See I was into the martial arts also. Taikwando, you know, and there would be all these houses and they would have bars on the windows and stuff and my friends like they wouldn't know what to do, or how to get into these places. So I would just unscrew the thing where the bars were and then I would kick the door down. I just wasn't thinking. I just wasn't thinking about anything I was doing.
>
> ***
>
> I got into a lot of trouble cause I was smoking reefer and stuff and I didn't know what I was doing, I just wasn't thinking about anything.

When actions have no meaning or consequences, kids simply commit crimes because its something to do. It is important to remember that these kids spend much of their time in normal activities, they simply commit crimes too.

Crime is also fun:

> It seemed more fun. It was challenging, that is what it was. Maybe I can do this and not get busted. So I would do it for the thrill.
>
> ***
>
> It was fun at the time, you know, with friends.

Most sociological theory has failed to recognize that deviance can be fun, but delinquency theorists have recognized this possibility (Riemer, 1981). Gibbons' typology of delinquents included the casual gang delinquent who perceives himself as a nondelinquent but likes to have fun (1965). Briar and Piliavin suggest that some delinquency may be committed simply for kicks (1965). Matza (1961) and Cohen (1955) have also described some deviance as an adventure, play or fun.

Crime also is a way to be sociable and establish status. Kids begin committing crimes when they are around new friends, as 32% indicated. Playing around was frequently a group activity. Sixty-eight percent reported doing crimes with their friends, although nearly all refuse to use this as an excuse for doing crimes.

Many times, new friends encouraged the kids to commit crimes. Perhaps these new kids are not already delinquents, but these criminal behaviors become a "hazing" or ritual when adolescents meet new friends, a ritual not needed for childhood friends. This view is

supported by the fact that most kids commit crimes with new friends. Forty-eight percent reported that their friends urged them to commit crimes:

> I went to school some of the time, but only as much as I wanted. See I ran with the wrong bunch of kids when I started high school, that's when I started hanging around with them.

Friends frequently act as an accomplice for criminal activities. Thirty-six percent reported that most of their crimes were done as part of a group.

Crime becomes one more way to play and fill time. Since crime has little stigma at this time in their life and is seen as only a temporary activity with no consequence, kids do crime as just one of their routine activities--it did not control their life. Five youths reported that there were certain times when they did crimes:

> I went to school, right. I got out of school, then I go. First I go home and eat dinner and then I'd go out and see my friends and then we'd go out and probably rob somebody or whatever, do those sorts of things...all the things I was doing, they were happening after school. I was going to school. It would just happen after school.

Another youth only committed crimes on the weekend; he went to school and worked during the week, but didn't have anything to do on the weekend:

> The only time I'd be getting into trouble would be on Saturdays and Fridays and stuff. School days is out. I'd be going there.

Many kids felt bored. Forty-eight percent said they didn't have much to do:

> We would just walk around town all day and try to find something to do that is what got us in trouble. Boredom. And we would go swimming, we would walk a couple of miles out of town to a lake and we would go swimming there, ride motorcycles mostly. We had a trail right across from the house.
>
> ***
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> If they build more discos, build more places for you to go. Besides staying at home all the time. Its hard getting jobs really. They just need more activities for the younger people. It's a nice little place but there is nothing much to get into.

Some recognize that they could have found more constructive activities to occupy their time, but it was easier to get into trouble:

> There isn't anything to do down here, but you don't have to go getting in trouble. I guess that is all they know how to do.

Downstate youths have fewer activities available to them. Some were several miles away from other activities. While both Chicago and downstate kids often felt there was nothing to do in their neighborhood, Chicago kids could go downtown or to a different neighborhood. Downstate kids found it difficult to overcome the geographic distance involved in reaching activities.

As we can see, crime plays a functional role in these kids' lives. It is a way to be sociable with new friends, it is a way to fill time, and it is fun. Criminal activities are aimless pursuits—they are very similar to their other activities.

Hanging around, playing, and doing crimes provide kids with ways of expressing themselves as young adults. While the spare time created by not attending school or not having a job is often filled by these activities, the failure of those social institutions does not create the need to hang around, play, or commit crimes. Even kids with jobs or still attending school engage in these activities. Rather, it appears that these activities fill a gap created by the awkward age of adolescence. In a study of middle-class delinquency, Richards et al. found that the dominant youth culture embraced hedonism, immediate gratification, and had a sense of resignation (1979). Richards concludes that delinquent behavior was a logical outgrowth of social class or social integration. Play and crime provide a vehicle for testing different identities and evoking reactions from others. They're fun, too.

Reactions to Crime

The female experience with broadening social networks described earlier differs from the males' because society defines appropriate female behavior differently. Similarly, the male criminal behavior described is also seen as a usual part of growing up for many Chicago youths, while reactions are different for downstate youths.

For Chicago youths, parents respond differently with beatings, groundings or lectures. Some parents tell their children they don't have to steal; they should ask the parent when they want something. Several youths did ask their parents for things, but were told that they couldn't spare the money. Regardless of the immediate response,

most Chicago kids felt their parents saw their behavior as a normal part of growing up. As such, it was not terribly unusual, but parents were still compelled to warn of dire consequences if the youth continued in crime.

Downstate parents and neighbors react differently. Because crime is less prevalent, kids are identified rapidly by police or neighbors. Once they have been identified as troublemakers, neighbors define the kids' behaviors as more deviant and permanent than would Chicago neighbors. One downstate youth described his relationship with the neighbors:

> This old man will be talking about how we rip up their gardens and stuff. Just because I did it once. We did it once to this one guy; he was throwing rocks at my dog, he hit my dog, so that night you know, me and my partner went driving around and I said I'm going to get this old guy back man, so I peeled all his vegetables for him and I tore up his yard and things like that with my motorcycle.

Downstate kids frequently offered a more psychological explanation of their behavior. Some cite family problems as the reason for their trouble--either the lack of attention, or wanting to get back at the neighbors.

Accepting Conventional Norms

Although they engage in crime, these kids don't reject conventional norms. They aren't using crime to achieve goals or as a reaction against blocked opportunities. They are just playing around. Even though crime is a common part of their lives, these kids have not adopted a totally deviant set of norms. Several things suggest that

they still accept conventional norms. First, they are not part of a delinquent subculture, but still accept conventional norms. They admire law abiding people such as their parents and don't see them as foolish or wrong. Second, a few admit they knew that their behavior was wrong or embarrassing at the time they were doing it. "It [stealing] didn't seem funny to me at all, or unusual. I'd go out with my friends and do it, but I knew it wasn't right." Four others felt embarrassed by their own actions:

> I was just looking at myself and comparing myself to the rest of my family and it was embarrassing to myself.
>
> ***
>
> I was with some friends and we were down at the CTA stop and we were laughing and joking and they said, "Come on, let's just jump over the post." I wasn't going to do it. I was so embarrassed. They were just so loud and so noisy. I thought it was just stupid. And I told them so. And I told them, "I got money in my pocket and I'm going to pay." They started calling me names and they said that was dumb, they said, "What do you mean, are you afraid?" They just went on and on until the train came. So I just jumped over and went with them...I felt so dumb about it, I was embarrassed, I thought it was just so silly.

Third, many developed their own moral limits on the kinds of crimes they would commit. Twenty-eight percent identified activities which they would not do. Four never committed burglaries or stole purses:

> My primary reason for not doing it was because I didn't like doing stuff like that. I didn't want to. Like I said, I wouldn't want somebody ripping me off. Cause they haven't done

> nothing to me. Now if somebody would have come up and ripped me off, then I would have gone back there and taken what was mine. Plus probably burned their house down for ripping off my house when I hadn't done nothing to them. If they do me wrong, I'll do them wrong. If nobody else hurts me, I'm not going to hurt them.

Two said they would never hurt anyone. One said he would never join a gang or take part in gang bangs. Finally, one youth who frequently ran away from home said he would never lie about his age. Twenty-four percent identified activities which they felt were acceptable. Five of them felt fighting was a matter of self or family defense and necessary to maintain pride and self respect:

> As far as having a gun or stealing, I won't do it, but I'll still fight. That's one thing I'll do for the rest of my life is fight. That I can't help, but everything else, no. That's no good.

One felt selling dope wasn't too serious. Others did not identify specific crimes they would or would not do, but explained that they did fewer things than their friends: 32% said they would not do everything that their friends did and 16% said some of their friends refuse to do everything they did.

Finally, kids still spend much of their time engaging in socially acceptable activities. Many have two sets of friends and committed crimes with only some. Moreover, kids do a lot of noncriminal activities with their new, criminal friends, as described earlier.

Neutralizing Crime

Kids can neutralize social control (Sykes & Matza, 1957). Neutralization techniques negate social controls so the youth can engage in delinquent behavior without serious damage to his or her self image.

If kids do accept conventional norms, how can they commit crimes? The most common neutralization technique used is denial of responsibility. The twenty-five youths I interviewed provided 41 reasons why they aren't responsible for their behavior (see Table 5). First, the crimes do not seem real because they do not perceive the implications of their actions--as we've seen, they have little concept of causation or impact at this point in their life. Their actions do not have much meaning. People talk about what would happen and why it is wrong, but it is abstract and far-removed from their immediate situation:

> When I first started getting into trouble, I really didn't think about the future cause like I said it was just for kicks. After I started, well I knew I was going to end up in jail sooner or later, but I really never figured on it this far.

In addition, while they can intellectually say that a certain behavior is wrong, it is easy to ignore that feeling until the behavior gains more meaning, either through the reaction of others or through the context of their life. Many used the excuse that everyone did crime. Fourteen (56%) explained that they were talked into things by their friends or that their friends did these things as well. One youth

TABLE 5

NEUTRALIZATION TECHNIQUES

Technique	Number of Times Mentioned	
Not responsible for behavior		41
Talked into crime by friends	14	
Not think about behavior/no control	10	
Crime common in neighborhood	8	
Family problems	5	
Neighborhood changed	2	
Accident	1	
Medical problem	1	
Appeal to higher loyalties		5
Protect self	3	
Protect family	2	
Not have a victim		4
Not hurt anyone		3

distinguished between peer pressure and gang pressure with physical threats:

> It's just that I wanted to belong. It wasn't peer pressure, or well it wasn't peer pressure like that. I just wanted, well like I had my friends, you know, and so they were in the club, so I wanted to join the club too. But it wasn't because they...well maybe it was. Maybe peer pressure in my mind. I guess it was sort of the "in" thing to do.

Eight (32%) explained that crime was a very common event in their neighborhood:

> This movie came out, called Scared Straight...I watched it but that didn't scare me or nothing, cause that's the area they live in. I'm a black person and I grew up on that type of thing. You get in fights every day, you's running away from home.
>
> ***
>
> I don't know. It just happened, you know. In our neighborhood, you just get in trouble, like a lot of other people be doing it now.

Changes in the neighborhood or moving to a new neighborhood can provide new opportunities for crime, as two youths explained:

> I first started getting in trouble when we moved around here. Before that, we had lived in the projects and when I got here I had never seen so many houses...houses with garages. I used to steal bikes and I just looked around and saw all these people breaking into garages and I figured, well if they could do it, I could do it.
>
> ***
>
> Old Chicago...that's one thing that made Bolingbrook what it is now, you know cause Bolingbrook, it was kind of quiet. But once Old Chicago got there a lot of things started

> happening. Lots of burglaries, people getting shot, getting knifed and everything...you know gangs from Chicago would come out to Old Chicago and it would just start an outburst...There are going to be a lot more assaults [now that Old Chicago is a shopping center]. A lot of people will be going up with their pockets full of money and people like me, well it used to be like me, would go out and be hitting people for their wallets, purses and that.

Twenty percent of the youths, all but one from downstate, explained that they committed crimes as a result of family problems. They may have learned this excuse because in areas where crime is not seen as a usual part of growing up, psychological explanations are used:

> A long time ago our family was spread apart...nobody would talk to anybody. When we was younger my dad never paid no attention to us, he'd never talk to us, you know. If we did something wrong, he would beat us for it...not totally beat us, but he'd give us good lashings for it. And you know he thought he was going to straighten us out. After a while he started slacking back from it, he said he didn't want to do it no more...he said you just going to have to learn for yourself or one of these days you're going to end up getting put away...Once my brother got sent up [to Vienna prison] and my other brother turned to be an alcoholic, and I got sent to DOC, that started bringing my family closer.

Only one kid whose main offense was running away from home and another who had committed sexual assaults claimed that their crimes were a direct result of family problems. They described family problems that they experienced and later claimed that their parents couldn't or didn't talk to them about crimes because of family problems:

> My father never did [talk about getting in trouble], but I didn't really have that kind of relationship with him.

Accidents and medical problems can absolve youths of responsibility. One youth explained that the only crime he had committed—involuntary manslaughter—was an accident. Since he never intended to shoot his friend, he saw no reason to accept the responsibility for the shooting:

> Like in court, the states attorney made a big issue of remorse. Now that's the primary reason they locked me up. No remorse. I feel its dumb. I figure fine, I feel sorry about it, you know. But it's not like I went out and killed him, it was just bad luck. What's done is done. I can't bring him back. And they made a big issue out of that. They said well you're going to jail because he died.

Another youth described how his counselor decided he had a medical problem:

> I used to get in trouble a lot...but I don't be doing that no more, I guess, cause they be giving me some medicine, some Ritalin medicine, and it stops me. I take those things before I do anything now and I don't feel like doing it...They just started doing since they found out, see I had a blackout and they started doing it since they figured out something was wrong with me. They did this EEG thing and they found out that something's wrong with me...But on the test they said they couldn't find nothing wrong with me, but in here they think something's wrong with my head cause I fell down that time, but nobody could figure out what was wrong, but when I fell out...they still think something's wrong with me, so they put me on this medicine.

Three youths neutralized their behavior by explaining that they never hurt anyone:

> Well, you know, I'm not just crazy and trying to kill people, or shoot people, not just for the hell of it.

Four denied that there was a victim--they never stole from a person or robbed them, they just stole from cars:

> Break in cars and stuff. That's all most of the time I use to do--break in cars. They use to just go out there and snatch people's purses and stuff. I ain't never snatched no purse. I just usually break into cars and steal out of stores mostly.

Finally, kids explained their crimes as a way of protecting or providing for their family or themselves. Some had to fight to protect their families:

> Well, in Chicago, it's a matter of the area you live in. If they want you in, one way or another, they'll get you in. They'll keep threatening you, hit your house until you join. They just told me they were going to come over unless I joined and I wanted to keep my family out of it.

Others stole or dealt drugs to support their children:

> I've got kids two and three years old. I never could find a job. I was messing around with apartments and marijuana, so I would get money there. Do anything I could for my kids and myself.

***

> But even now, I won't hurt someone or do anything to someone unless they're gonna hurt me, or they're gonna kill me or my family. If I can stop it, I'll stop it. I'll stop it anyway I have to stop it.

Situational Deviance

Youths are able to engage in crime without developing a deviant identity when they are able to compartmentalize the crime and control knowledge of crimes. Having different sets of friends with different activities allows the youths to compartmentalize their crime. Crime is only a piece of their identity, and at this point, not an important part of their identity. Jane Mercer developed the concept of situational mental retardation to explain how some children can be labeled mentally retarded in the classroom but look and act like normal children in the rest of their life. She explains:

> Individuals play roles in various social systems: their families, the school, work groups, neighborhoods, church and friendship groups. Their performance is constantly being evaluated by members of these groups. When mental retardation is defined as a social role played by a person holding the status of a mental retardate in a particular social system, mental retardation is social system specific. A person may play the role of the retardate in one social system and not in another...he may play the role of retardate in some systems in which he participates and not in others. In the latter case, he is a "retardate" part of the time and a "normal" part of the time. We have called the latter group the situationally retarded because their retardation varies with the situation or the social system in which they are participating at a particular time (1973).

In the same way that an individual may appear retarded only when certain expectations are imposed, a youth may be delinquent only in certain social settings. These kids engage in rowdy or delinquent behavior in one social group with a certain set of expectations and

acted differently in another setting. Since their deviance was compartmentalized, they were able to control their deviant appearance and did not develop a deviant identity.

As we have seen, kids frequently develop two sets of peer relationships; they distinguish between friends and associates. They commit crime with associates, but not friends. As the youths begin making more friends, their interactions lead to better defined roles, or more specialized roles. They distinguish between people who are their friends and people who are merely associates for some activities:

> Well, a friend, you're a lot closer to and a friend you'll do a lot more with than your associates.

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> I wasn't...they really weren't my friends, it was that I'd be doing things with them. Others I'd consider other people that I'd be with, my partner and all, but it wasn't really that important to be around. There wasn't anyone I cared too much about, except that I cared about my family, that's all. So it didn't really matter if I'd be around them or not.

With the greater distinction in roles, kids began to do things with one set of people which they would never consider doing with another set of people. As they began engaging in crime, for example, several noted that they got into trouble with their acquaintances, but not their friends. By having multiple sets of peers or open social networks, youths can control their deviance as evidenced by those who commit crimes only on the weekend or after school.

Kids usually do not talk much about their criminal activities with people other than their associates. By not talking about it, they are able to keep their deviance situational. One youth angrily described how one associate bragged about their crimes:

> Then I broke into an office with a boy I knew....we stole something, I don't know how valuable exactly and every time I'd see him, he'd be talking about it cause he's really different, saying we got some good stuff.

After that, other kids harassed them, trying to steal money from them and simply trying to engage them in fights. Openly talking about crimes makes it much more difficult to compartmentalize the behavior.

Sometimes one or two friends will know about crimes and act as a gate keeper--keeping the youth from engaging in crime or keeping his associates out of the primary social group. By keeping the distance between the two groups, this friend was able to help one youth control his delinquent identity. The youth grew to expect his friend to serve such a role:

> A lot of times I appreciated it when he said no. After a while I started expecting the answer all the time. And all the time I started thinking about going into something I would go over to his house, I'd sit down and I'd say, "Ah, Rudy, I just come up with something, I been wanting to go hit it really bad." He says, "Stay there." I'd get up and he would punch me and I'd say, "OK." He kept me out of trouble, he kept me out of trouble quite a bit.

Even though Rudy wouldn't do many crimes, he did know the partners:

> See, I hung around a big group of people about twenty people. They would usually come over to Rudy's house all the time. Almost all the time,

> almost every night they would be over. Sitting around watching TV, playing music or something. They all knew each other and almost all of them that was there, if they got in trouble, it way by themselves. A few of my friends, Rudy knew somewhat, but he wouldn't let them come over to his house. I'd usually go out with them and do all my things, burglarize things here and there. Most of the time when I went in a store and stole a bottle of whiskey or something, I was with one of my friends, I'd bring them over to Rudy's house and Rudy would let them in and we would drink it and Rudy would throw them out.

As long as youths continue to compartmentalize their criminal activities, they can control their identity.

Summary

As kids' social worlds expand, they must learn to juggle several roles and expectations. The importance of time spent with friends increases as does the amount of time spent away from home. Kids do many things with their friends, including playing around.

For the most part, the kids I interviewed began crime as an inconsequential activity. They had time on their hands, wanted something to do, and began to play around. At this point in their criminal career, the crimes were committed for the fun of it--it was just a game.

Playing around is a marvelous way to elicit reactions from others. Parents, teachers, neighbors are quick to react to horseplay or what they perceive as inappropriate behavior. At this point kids experience few harsh sanctions for their behavior--perhaps a warning from parents or police, but for the most part they learn that nothing

serious will happen to them. If something does happen to them, they attribute it to bad luck. They do not associate anything with their behavior, except that it was fun and it was something to do.

Delinquency policy has recognized that kids commit delinquent acts when they have spare time. The usual response is to establish Boys' Clubs or other group activities. While these actions may be met with polite acceptance, they miss the point: these kids are looking for a way they can express their independence. At this age, even discussions of adulthood would probably fall on deaf ears because it is too far in the future. At this age, youths do not feel that they are in control of their destiny or that their current behavior matters. As one youth explained, "they [young teens] just think it [doing crime] is a play thing and that going to DOC is going to be some sort of Toyland where they can continue playing just like before." Youths at this age are so involved in expanding their immediate social world, they are unable to perceive the ultimate implications of their activities.

While Cloward and Ohlin developed the classic description of blocked goals and aspirations (1960), they did not discuss age as a barrier. These youths provide limited evidence that age is a barrier to goals by limiting them from jobs they would like and forcing them to continue schooling which they feel is unnecessary. From this perspective, the playing around and hanging around would be reactions to their blocked goals. But these youths have very few goals to which they aspire. Perhaps since the youths did not believe their current behavior had an impact on the future, they did not develop an

attachment to illegitimate means or illegitimate goals in the manner opportunity theory suggests. When there is no sense of causation, behaviors have little meaning other than their immediate response.

It now appears that much delinquency is not the result of subcultures, socialization, or strain. Many youths who tacitly accept conventional norms and lead largely conventional lives also commit crimes. They do so because they do not perceive the consequences, nor do they worry about the future. The moral implications of his or her behavior are too abstract for a youth who has not yet reflected on and assigned meanings to these actions. Youths are also able to use neutralization techniques to justify their behavior. As they continue to commit crimes, its meaning changes, as we will see in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER VI

MOVING INTO MORE CRIME

As the youths continue crime, it gains meanings besides fun. A few change the types of crimes they commit; they learn that crime can offer independence and new experiences. With more reflection, they learn how to negotiate the criminal justice system through information from peers and parents. Negotiating the criminal justice system involves learning timetables, manipulating outcomes, and managing reputations. Through the process of learning about crime and managing careers, the youths learn social skills. They become aware of the response of others, as evidenced by the concept of reputation. They recognize consequences of behavior and change their concept of time. They learn various presentations of self. In general, they become more sophisticated in their interactions with others and social organizations. Their behavior is so codified that kids speak of making mistakes.

This study focuses on youths who have committed several crimes, some of which were serious. Their story is how crime was a routine part of growing up. But we can not assume that all youths who engage in minor crimes or play continue to commit more serious crimes. The sampling techniques eliminated from study other youths who did not progress to other crimes.

Why did these youths continue to commit crimes? Kids find it difficult to verbalize the reasons, but it appears that they began to develop meanings or interpretations for crime which fit into their original goals of being independent and busy. In other words, they discover that committing crimes provides rewards and the perceived costs are not high.

As kids begin to develop new meanings for crimes, we wonder if they are progressing into secondary deviance (Lemert, 1972). Secondary deviance includes a set of responses which people make to societal reactions. Secondary deviance has an impact on interactions and the individual's identity and occurs when youths experience widespread stigmatization, feel a sense of injustice arising from societal reactions and experience increased social control and intervention. Secondary deviance may result in further deviant activity or the adoption of a subculture.

Many youths I interviewed appear to continue committing crimes without experiencing the stigmatization and identity changes inherent in secondary deviance. The fact that most of the kids think of interventions as mistakes, continue to accept conventional norms, and have not developed a deviant identity suggest that secondary deviation has not occurred. If nothing much happens in response to the deviance, it remains primary (Lemert, 1972). The failure to progress into secondary deviance does not necessarily negate Lemert's concept of a deviant career, but may indicate the success of persistent juvenile court efforts to minimize labeling.

Progressing into Other Crimes

As kids play, they learn more about the crimes they are committing. They develop a more detailed philosophy of crime and learn how to continue doing things while avoiding serous outcomes. While it is commonly assumed that kids move on to more serious offenses, only three youths explicitly stated that they progressed to more serious crime, a finding consistent with Dinitz and Conrad (1980). However, several others seemed to progress to other crimes, but they themselves did not recognize the progression. Two others changed the type of thing they were doing because of their own tastes and perceived risks. One stopped stealing wallets because it was too easy to get caught:

> Instead of breaking things, I would be breaking into things and stuff or going up to a rec center by us where they are having a volleyball game and I would be lifting ladies' purses and all of that, guys' wallets and all of that. But I was never caught for that. I quit that after a while, I was only doing that for two months...cause I was afraid one of these days I was going to get shot by somebody. They see me grab a purse or grabbing their wallet and turn around and open up on me. I quit doing that and I just stuck mainly with my burglaries and stealing ten speed bikes and that.

The other stopped vandalizing cars while on drugs when he realized how much he enjoyed cars; he stopped drugs and started stealing cars:

> I was doing it [drugs] and finally after I got where I couldn't support the habit, I started breaking into cars, not going to school and I found out how to steal cars and I was stealing a car and then stealing another car and take that car apart and steal another car, and sell the tires and battery. Eventually as I was stealing cars, I started slowing down on drugs, because when I got high driving a car, I would

> a lot of times go behind the Amphitheater and just floor it, stuff like that and tear it up...I started getting into cars. I didn't like driving when I got high. Well, I liked driving when I got high, but I messed the cars up...So I slowed down on that. Because if I mess them up, I ain't got another car that I can strip and take the tires and all, I just have to take the car if it was driveable and get another car and I won't have nothing off that car.

Even if kids don't change the type of crime they are doing, they learn new meanings for crime. They realize that committing crimes can be a resource. Sullivan describes the economic basis of crime (1983); similarly, 52% reported that crime was a good way to get money:

> So I started doing that and after a while it just wasn't for kicks anymore, it was for the money. I knew I was wrong, but I never really realized it until after I was in UDIS.

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> All the things I did, it was just things that I needed. I guess I needed money. There was something that was making me do it, but I was doing it on my own. I wanted to do it, I just wanted to do it. It felt real good and I liked the things I was going and doing.

Three youths (12%) said they only did crimes when they needed the money. Three others explained that crime was easier than finding a job:

> When I got money in my pocket, I know I don't got to go steal more cause I know I got a good enough wad in my pocket--money right now. And I can just sit back with that, sit around with my friends, get high or something, drink some beers, watch television or something you know. Once I got the money, everything seems clear, it seems OK. If it would go low, I'd bust into something, steal something here or there. Go

> into stores and steal bottles of whiskey and sell them to people. Just start messing up totally.

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> Of course, it [stealing] is the easiest way, working most of the jobs I've worked at, they have been easy jobs but they have been low money, really low. You know I would have to wait a full week to get my checks. And by the time I would get my check, I'd blow it for the whole week and I'd have to work another full week to get another check which would go on the weekend again. I made $150, $200 at that job, but like painting I was making $200 a week. I know I was paid $10, $15 an hour for painting houses and the weekend would come and they would be gone like that. Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, I would go out, I'd either go out and buy some dope or just blow it on all my friends and food and stuff like that. Then I would turn around and when I run out of money, I would just go steal something from somebody.

Three did crimes because they wanted their own money:

> I never did get in no trouble. I'd just go to school, play around the house. I never did go stealing or anything. My mother used to, she'd give me money and stuff, but then I stopped taking her money, you know, I didn't want her money, I wanted my own, so I started getting into trouble.

Sometimes parents tell their children they don't have to steal, they should ask if they need money. But as the kids discover, the parents don't have it and won't give it for the things kids want:

> She was telling me that's not exactly the right thing to do. If I needed some candy or something to ask her for money. But like when I asked them, they always said they didn't have it. And see we didn't even get an allowance. It was something like we were almost on our own. We had food to eat, sleep and clothes,

> but for going out and other activities, the only thing we would get money for was like going to the fair. And that was about it.
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> Another hangup I had was gangster movies. I was crazy about gangsters...not the way they were, they way they dressed. I was crazy about good looking clothes and the only way you can get that is to have money. So I was doing crime, cause my mother, she couldn't buy me, see she could buy me clothes, but not the clothes that I wanted. She would buy me a $14 pair of pants when I wanted a $30 pair of pants. So that's what I thought about.

Thus, parents merely reinforce the youth's feelings of dependence by limiting their access to money. As the above quotes illustrate, the kids have little difficulty finding ways to spend the money they earn and they also develop rather expensive tastes. Brown also noted that kids need money to get clothes and posessions critically needed for their self esteem (1984).

In addition to purchasing clothes, food or drugs, a few learned that crime could also get them attention from their parents. One youth said that the crimes he and his brothers committed brought the family closer than they'd ever been before.

Kids also realize that crime is a way for them to have independent experiences. Some speak of broadening their horizons or learning things for themselves in much the way more affluent youths might speak of traveling to Europe or taking a challenging class. Crime is another way of stretching yourself. Kids also find crime is a way to gain independent experiences. Four (16%) reported that they did

crimes because they felt they should experience things for themselves. One explained that he wanted to find things out the hard way:

> I'd just, the way I see it is that I was just going to do it anyway. I was going to do what I wanted to do. Nobody was going to say what I did. It wasn't the people I was hanging with. I wanted to do it to see how it was, then. That was why I was doing it, I just wanted to see how it was. Things they was telling me, they was right, you know. See I just wanted to see, I wanted to find out the hard way and they was telling me the easy way. I wanted to find out the hard way.

Making independent decisions was important in other areas of their lives as well. One female decided to join the army even though her friends and family warned her about it. As she explained:

> I just want to experience it, you know. See what its like. Cause I've heard so many different things...I'm going to make my own decisions, so I think I'm going to go to experience it for myself.

The way she describes her legitimate decision to join the army is remarkably similar to descriptions of decisions about crimes.

In addition to offering new experiences, crime can be a wonderful way to retaliate or express frustration. Two expressed frustrations in school by committing crimes, while another said he might punch someone out for looking at him the wrong way. As he said, "At that time, it was just to get even with who ever riled me."

Crime can also provide an identity for the few who join a gang. One youth had difficulty explaining what he <u>did</u> with the gang; instead the gang was his identity:

> That wasn't the, that's what I am, but I wasn't doing things with them. They don't get together like that, they just do things on their own. See I was doing things on my own. They didn't know nothing about it and they were doing things that I didn't know nothing about.
>
> ***
>
> I was thinking I was in it because it helped me find out who I was or who I thought I was, right, it was like for an identity thing, giving you an identity. I didn't know this at the time...I think that's what the thing with the gangs was. It was my little identity, it was my little place in the world. So that was the way I liked it, I had a little purpose, a little plan, you know, the man with a plan, something like that.

The few who were in gangs may have experienced secondary deviance since their identity was involved with their deviant activities.

A few others expressed a sense of injustice about their apprehension. One youth whose two brothers had been killed felt it was unfair that he was institutionalized for attempted burglary while his brothers' killers were set free. Another claimed that he was committed for a crime he didn't do. The remaining youths feel that they deserved the punishment they received, that things merely happened by chance, or they made a mistake.

As Lemert notes, negative activities can have positive aspects (1972). Crime continues to provide some of the benefits discussed in the previous chapter. It is a way to get out of the neighborhood, it is a way to protect family members, and it may be seen as an accomplishment. Kids discover new meanings for crime as they continue

to commit crimes. Crimes provide money, provide independent experiences, and provide an identity for a few.

Developing Timetables

As kids continue committing crimes, they begin to think of the short-term outcomes of their actions, even though they don't think about their future. Nonetheless, they develop timetables based on the socialization provided by peers, parents and social control agents. While they do not define events as totally within their control, this is the first time they have dealt with the consequences of their actions. A few general rules are outlined below.

1. Nothing happens at first. Twenty-eight percent explained that nothing happens when you first start getting into trouble. Associates explain that you won't get caught, or the youth assumes the worst that might happen would be getting picked up and subsequently released. One boy explained what he thought would happen at first:

> Nothing, nothing at all. That's what they told me. (Who?) My friends said nothing would happen when I did this and they were right, nothing did happen.
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> I wasn't worried about what was going to happen, so it was all right. I don't like our juvenile judge cause he's mean, but still I wasn't worried about it. The first time I went nothing happened, they put me on supervision, which is nothing. The second time, I had so many people that I was working with and my PO and everything, I knew nothing too much was going to happen.

2. When apprehended, the outcome does not result from the seriousness of the crime. Four youths explained that sometimes something happened when they committed crimes. To their amazement, they may receive harsher punishment for a lesser offense:

> I figured the serious charges, I'd be in there, I figured the light charges I would be let go and that the serious charges were different. But I got a charge on armed robbery and they sent me to the Audy Home and I got out of the Audy Home in two weeks for that. And then I got charged on strong-armed robbery and they sent me to Audy Home and I stayed there and I got charged on a little robbery and got sent to the Audy Home and I got DOC. I don't know what they're doing because they let me go on a strong-armed robbery and they DOCed me on a robbery.

As this youth is yet to learn, consequences depend not only on a single crime, but the criminal history. Kids feel that the juvenile justice system is not totally rational.

3. The criminal record and frequency of crimes affects the consequences. The outcome of a crime is partially determined by the length of criminal history and frequency of crimes, as 20% of the youths indicated. The past record is very important in determining what will happen:

> The police keep track of all your points. If you get arrested, well that's three points and if it goes to court and you get a petition out of it, that is three more points. And then depending on what crime you commit, you get so many points. Like burglary that is 15 points and murder, well that's 80 points. And they just keep track of that and I just don't have enough points to be even near going to St. Charles. You have to have somewhere between 150 and 200 before they can send you to St.

> Charles and I just don't have that many. See you only get 1/2 point for disorderly conduct. And the judge knew it. He knew he couldn't send me to St. Charles, not for just what I had been doing, petty stuff.

The frequency of crimes is also a factor in determining outcomes. Kids who were picked up several times in a brief period felt they were more likely to be detained or committed to a correctional facility. Peers warn youths to "cool out" for a while, so they don't have too many things on their record in a brief time. Judges and probation officers teach this technique by making deals that if the youth stays out of trouble for a set period of time, his or her charges will be dropped:

> At this last court hearing as soon as I was put in detention, I was out so they said, "We will only let you go home if you promise not to mess up for 65 days." I didn't have no trouble with the police, I went to school, I didn't have no fights, not that anyone knew about.

As we will later see, frequent crimes also make it much more difficult to control a reputation. The seriousness with which kids accept these rules is evidenced by their discussion of mistakes. When they commit one too many crimes, or are in the wrong place at the wrong time, they explain that they made a mistake. Mistakes include continuing to commit crimes after a warning, violating probation by being with a friend, or getting caught for something done earlier. Each of these events foils the youth's plans and predictions.

Things don't always follow the rules. When a kid is unexpectedly detained or caught, he or she defines the event as simply luck. Kids

still do not define themselves as controlling the consequences of their crimes. One youth explained that since he couldn't control what was going to happen, the least he could do was recognize the limits and accept them:

> I didn't care whether I went to DOC or not. I didn't want to go to DOC but if the judge says DOC...A lot of people stand there and they cry and they say, "Oh, I don't want to go, I don't want to go." Well you can cry and you can say you don't want to go, and you can cry a thousand times and you are still going to go. So I figure if I'm going to go, I'm going to go proud. And I'll go to DOC and it wont make no difference, but if you are going to go, you're going to go. It doesn't matter what I want to happen, it is just what the judge says.

Socialization to a Criminal Career

Once kids begin repeatedly committing crimes and reflecting on them, they can learn more about how their career may unfold. Parents, social control agents and friends all tell kids what will happen to them. That socialization provides kids with a vocabulary of motives which can be used to explain their behavior.

Kids learn that people assume young kids don't commit crimes. Five reported that their parents didn't realize what they were doing because they were too young. Others explained that nothing happens if you commit crimes when you are really young:

> See, I figured they couldn't send me to DOC until I was 13. And that's why I kept messing up. The only thing they would do was to send me to the Audy home. And the Audy Home, they got to keep you, they have to go to court every two weeks.

In many neighborhoods, adults feel rowdy kids are a big problem. They immediately call the police rather than giving the youth a chance to respond. They prefer to get the troublemakers out of their neighborhood, and have little interest in helping kids. Finally, they feel that once a kid has started committing crimes, he or she will continue committing crimes. Sixty percent said neighbors had those attitudes.

In a similar vein, 56% said that others had warned them that they would go on to more and bigger crimes if they didn't watch out. Seven (28%) were warned that sooner or later, something more serious, such as commitment to DOC, would happen to them. Even if they believe the warning, kids believe that it won't happen to them:

> I knew I wasn't going to let it go any further than it already had. See I was sniffing the stuff and they guy said that I was going to end up doing a lot of pills and getting hooked just like he was. And I knew that I wasn't going to do that. So I knew he was wrong but at least he took an interest.

Friends may also warn about the consequences of actions. Friends teach kids what sort of outcomes to expect from different crimes. They talk about possible outcomes, what DOC is like, and what UDIS is like with friends: 40% talked with friends or partners about outcomes of their crimes. Friends also provide shelter for runaways (8%), take their friend's side in a fight (12%) and loan money or pay bail (8%).

Kids rate the veracity of the warnings by the individual's past experience with the justice system. Kids who have been in DOC are

taken most seriously, followed by other friends, outsiders, neighbors and parents.

Police provide the best information for constructing timetables. Their warnings frequently are accurate depictions of court processes. The police explained timetables to 24% of the kids I interviewed. The police explained that after three station adjustments the youth should expect to go to the detention center, that three relatively serious charges placed the youth in danger of commitment, and warned about committing too many crimes in a brief period of time.

Manipulating Outcomes

Once youths understand a criminal timetable and can predict outcomes, they try to manipulate those outcomes. Kids learn to use the juvenile court system to their advantage. One youth used the midnight curfew to get a ride home from work:

> I used to have this job downtown, I worked from 2:30 to 12 midnight and then I would leave the job to come home and I would get picked up for curfew. Sometimes I wouldn't have enough money to get home on, so I would just flag down the first policeman I could find, and then he would pick me up for violating curfew. They would either take me home or at least take me to the police station and my father would come and pick me up there.

Others learn that acting dependent, as adults expect them to, allows them more latitude than they otherwise might have. By acting "nice," and young, some think they are more likely to get out of detention:

> They liked me. I'm nice to everyone. And I don't use profanity or anything. I look kind of young. Don't you think I look young? They gave me more dignity, more pride, I think.

> They let me get away with more than some of the other ones. They could have called my probation officer, but they wouldn't do that...

Six youths (24%) claimed to be younger than they were when apprehended by the police. That technique is frequently combined with a fake name so there is no record:

> The fake names? Well you see you're going out and you make sure you don't have a wallet or anything with you and then you get stopped and first they stop you and then they frisk you real quick to make sure you don't have anything on you. And then they say, "Well, where's your wallet?" I say, "Well, if I had any money, I'd have a wallet." "Well, you don't have any identification with you." I'd say, "No, no I don't have any identification." Then they take you down to the station and they are filling out the forms and they say, "How old are you?" and I say I'm 15. I look 15 don't I? See, I'm 17, they don't know it. I look young, so I tell them I'm 15, then I give them my sad face and wipe away a couple of fake tears, and I look real sad and I say, "Gee, this is the first time this has happened to me, I'm so scared." Then they ask for your name. I don't know, I just make up something like Bobby Benson, who knows. And then they say, "Well, Bobby Benson, is this the first time you have been here?" And you say, "Oh, yes sir, this is the first time I have been here, I don't know, I have never done anything like this before." And they check under that name and there's nothing there so they just let you go. See they don't really care. They don't really want to keep you there unless they really have to. If you have done something big then they'll keep you there. But they don't care--they're making their money...they will let you go.

A few used the reverse tactic by claiming to be an adult. They did not risk an additional six months probation and simply spent a few

days in adult jail. However, the complexities of the adult court system and bail can make this tactic backfire:

> Once I was on probation, before I came here, and I did a crime and got caught...and I said, hey I don't need to tell him my real name and I would really be in trouble then and I didn't tell him my real name. So I told him I was 18 and I lived in another city, something like that. So he really put me in real jail and I went to court the next morning which I requested a bond. Really, my mind just went blank at the time in front of the judge, the judge asked if I could pay a $100 bond. I knew I couldn't pay it, I wondered why I'd said that, so I really got sent to Cook County Jail. I stayed there for a while until my father, well, three or four days later he paid for my bond and I got out. And I went back on the streets, made the money back selling narcotics and then I paid my father back.

Committing crimes outside the neighborhood also manipulates outcomes. It is harder to trace a crime outside the neighborhood. Three also preferred that their neighborhood not know about their criminal activities:

> I didn't do things in the neighborhood where I lived. It was in this other neighborhood, but not in the neighborhood where I lived. It wasn't the place where I lived, see I was going away...It was just I didn't want to get caught doing things in the vicinity of where I lived in, cause then they probably wold have made it harder on me or on my family and I didn't want that, I didn't want to do it in that place, I just wanted to go out and do it somewhere.

This illustrates several techniques kids use to manipulate outcomes. Appearing older or younger, or doing crimes outside the neighborhood permits the youth to control his presentation of self, which in turn

affects the way police or neighbors react to the offenses. This image control permits youths to continue playing while minimizing risks.

Reputation

Most of the tactics to manage a career work only as long as the police do not recognize the youth. One youth explained how his friend could claim it was his first offense, while he couldn't:

> They'd set up a court date for him and he would go that Monday, and he'd go in front of the judge and the judge would say, "We ought to make you pay, but we are going to let you go this time, but next time you are going to pay." The next time he would go to court again, the judge says, "Haven't I seen you here before?" He says, "No, this is my first time." And he let him go. I couldn't do that because they knew me too well, see they don't know him...All the cops out in my town know me. All of the cops, even the new rookies. And they barely even know him, even the detective, the head juvenile officer there, he didn't know him.

Developing a reputation limits managing a career. Developing a reputation is a process by which a normative definition is attached to a youth's behavior by others who have more power. The reputation suggests that the others expect certain behaviors.

Developing a reputation is the first suggestion that many are progressing into secondary deviance. A reputation indicates that stigmatization is becoming more public. That public knowledge of the youth's degraded status may extend through all or part of the youth's social network. If the youth has an open social network, he or she is more likely to have affiliations not affected by the reputation.

The first step in developing a reputation is becoming known to the police. Fifty-six percent said they eventually developed a reputation with the police. Once a kid is known by the police, the police assume that he is responsible for crimes in the neighborhood:

> The police kept coming to my house every time something would happen. I'd be in the house asleep or something or be at school or somewhere or be at this other school going swimming and they just kept coming to my house everyday...Every time someone gets stuck up or gets their car broke into, or stolen, they come to my house.

Kids may also develop a reputation in their neighborhood. Twenty-four percent either had a reputation in the neighborhood or committed crimes outside he neighborhood in order to avoid a reputation. When a youth has a neighborhood reputation, others know him when he doesn't know them. Sometimes the neighbors tell the boy's parents about things he didn't do.

Kids can develop a reputation in school. This type of reputation is slightly different because it frequently involves imputation of knowledge about older siblings. One boy angrily described his teacher's assumptions that he was just like his brother:

> My older brother, he is 19 and he used to go to the same school. I'm going through the same thing he is, most people in Joliet say I'm following in his footsteps. Anyway the teacher, I mean I wasn't getting all that bad grades, but the teachers, you know, they would just think of me as my brother and every time I would mess up, they would come down on me real hard.

The discussion of reputations pertains primarily to males. The females I interviewed did not develop reputations with the police or neighbors. One explained that the police did not know her, but recognized that others did have reputations:

> Mostly that depends on what kind of trouble they get in. People like Tom, every police person in Champaign-Urbana probably knows him. By name and by looks. (Do they know you?) No. There was one of the juvenile cops that used to know me, he lived down the street and his daughter and my sister were best friends, but he's not juvenile any more and I'm so glad because I couldn't stand that. But they don't know me.

Another female clarified the process when she explained that no one in her neighborhood ever knew she was in trouble:

> They never knew. The only way they'd know is if I told them and I never told anyone.

Thus, a reputation does not occur simply by becoming known to a juvenile court judge, but when there is a widespread public definition of a youth as a delinquent. Females do not develop reputations as a general rule because they do not commit crimes that are visible or public. Females shoplift or steal at school, whereas males commit burglaries, robberies, auto thefts and just hang around.

Downstate males have particular problems with reputations. Their behavior is even more visible because it occurs in a small, cohesive town. The size of the town also limits the youth's ability to commit crimes elsewhere. The downstate delinquent feels as if he were under a microscope.

Having a reputation imposes several limitations on the youth's criminal career. The police watch youths with reputations and go to their homes any time something happens. Twenty percent reported that the police watched them more closely:

> They'd know me cause I was getting into trouble a lot. So they'd try and search me and stuff to see what I've got. But I usually don't have nothing. This wasn't around the house, I'd never be around the house. I'd be downtown or at Longroves eating a soft cone. That's where I would get in trouble...They'd stop me, search me, tell me to leave the area, tell me to go back to my neighborhood.

Having a reputation gives more control to the police. The police may want to keep this youth in his neighborhood for a couple of reasons. The youth may be less likely to commit crimes in his own neighborhood, where sanctions and the threat of a reputation are greater. Also, this may be an example of the way police and youths negotiate the use and control of territory (Werthman & Piliavin, 1967).

Techniques for managing a reputation also fail after a reputation has formed (Werthman & Piliavin, 1967). It is difficult to use fake names or claim it is your first offense when you are recognized. Four youths (16%) described how it was difficult to manage their career in the same way. One continued by simply committing crimes in neighborhoods where he did not yet have a reputation:

> As soon as you're in a different district office, see like if I'm in the first district office they don't know me down there, so I can use a fake name. You can do it a few times until they start to recognize you. You just have to know when you can get away with using a fake name and when you can't.

Once a youth has a reputation, the police also assume he knows other kids committing crimes. When they come to the house, they ask the boy to tell them who did the crime if he didn't. Many times, the kid said he made up a name just to satisfy the police.

One youth reported an interesting variant on the fake name technique. The police came to his door for several crimes he said he did not commit. Witnesses reported the perpetrator had the same name, but did not look the same. Someone was apparently using his name when committing crimes. I witnessed a similar event while at a DOC institution. The mother of an incarcerated youth called to confirm that her son was there: the police had come to arrest him for a crime just committed. Kids with either common names or a reputation may be more likely to have their name used by someone else.

Reputations make it more difficult to get along on the street, as 40% found. Two felt it was harder to get a job when they were known in the neighborhood. The other four found it difficult to interact with neighbors. Frequently, people want to get even or harass the youth because they assume he still has money from a recent theft. Daily life is more complex with a reputation.

Reputations also affect family life. Twenty-four percent felt that their reputation was a family embarrassment, a sign of failure. The families also get tired of the intrusions caused by the boy's reputation:

> My family wanted me to go to DOC. I was getting into fights all the time and they were

> just tired of it. This woman would come by and she had, she said that I had been in a fight with her son and I had broken his collar bone or his jaw. Then this other woman comes over with her son and tells my parents that I broke his nose. I didn't, I wasn't even in a fight with the kid. They were just tired of it. People coming by all the time and telling them what trouble I'd gotten into. They were just tired of it.

Having a reputation makes a kid's behavior predictable or understandable to a social control agent. It provides a set of categories or definitions which the professionals can cite when a decision must be made. The reputation focuses or solidifies the problem, who the appropriate actors are, and what kind of disposition is needed, as Emerson has described (1969). One youth with severe family problems had been convicted of several crimes committed while supporting himself as a runaway. Because of those crimes, he was in danger of being committed while he felt his only problems were family problems. The irony was that his criminal reputation prevented him from being accepted by the agency which handles family problems:

> If I wasn't on probation, if I went to court for runaways, I just came back and back and back, he would probably [make me a] ward of the state--DCFS and I would be placed in a foster home or a group home...It hasn't been done too many times, getting off probation as a ward of the State...that criminal act is still there.

In this situation, the boy's reputation has generated a more refined label which affects the organizational processing of the youth. A reputation can contribute to a label, but differs because the reputation is less formal and does not affect the self concept.

Reputations are not permanent. They fade away if a youth is out of the neighborhood for a while or if he makes a serious attempt to stay out of trouble. Others learn that the individual has changed and may respect that change.

Kids frequently experience an escalation in their criminal apprehension and are in danger of incarceration as they develop reputations. Murray et al. (1978) indicates an exponential increase just prior to incarceration. However, given the police behavior described, it may be that the escalation of criminal offenses is a result of developing a reputation (Dinitz & Conrad, 1980). The police are more likely to catch the youth's crimes. Others may nominate him for crimes and past crimes may be pinned on him once he is known. In this sense, a reputation would be a precursor to a more formal label and intervention.

Summary

As kids begin to move into more crime, they become more sophisticated in their interactions with others. They realize the utility of crime and begin more purposeful behavior than they previously had exhibited. As they begin to see the value of crime, they restructure their behavior so that they can control outcomes.

They begin to realize that there are outcomes to their crimes, but do not feel they are in control of the outcome. They develop strategies to control the outcome which are temporarily effective but doomed to failure if the youth persists in crime. Nevertheless, the youths are learning to manipulate social institutions by managing

reputations. Although they are gaining bureaucratic competence, kids still feel that the ultimate outcome of official encounters is beyond the their control.

Kids begin to admit that they have problems, but they define them as money problems. With this definition, they recognize that there are problems, but still fail to accept personal responsibility for them. In turn, they develop strategies which allow them to continue crime as long as possible without accepting responsibility for the consequences of crime.

This chapter suggests that many youths continue committing crimes as primary deviance for a considerable time. They finally become involved with secondary deviance when they develop a reputation. Secondary deviance and the reputation make social interactions more difficult. Nevertheless, it appears that the transition to secondary deviance is incomplete since those not in gangs show no change in self concept, they can neutralize most of the stigmatization, and refuse to reflect on their behavior. Further reflection occurs as the kids get older.

CHAPTER VII

GETTING OLDER AND DECIDING TO STOP

When kids reach the age of 16 or 17, they realize they are on the brink of adulthood; their perspectives on time, their criminal career, and their future change. They discover that their actions have consequences and that they can control their own destiny. They slowly have come to this perspective through their criminal experiences, emerging from a belief that their actions had no consequences.

So far I have described two timetables: one for adult careers; the other for criminal careers. The timetable for adulthood tells kids that they can't do anything about their adult life until they are older, so they fill time with crime and other sorts of play. That timetable suggests that older teens can prepare for their adult life. The second timetable outlines their criminal career. As their criminal careers progress, they will receive more severe and frequent punishment for offenses. That timetable suggests they should start slowing down their criminal activities.

This chapter describes how kids recognize milestones in the two time tables and develop the strategies to make transitions into adulthood and out of crime. For these youths, thinking about their criminal timetables and their timetables for adulthood occurs at the same time. Kids who stop crime earlier or later do not experience the

junction of these timetables and may go through a different decision process. However, those interviewed in this study experienced intervention by UDIS or DOC occurred at roughly the same age.

It is not surprising that kids who see crime as a way to fill time or to play decide to stop doing crime as they get older and have the ability to do other things with their life. Most expect to grow out of crime; they express surprise that their criminal career went as far as it did. As one explained, "After a while, I knew I was going to end up in jail, but I never really figured on it going this far." As they get older, they expect to move on to other roles and behaviors.

Few delinquency theories address the impact of maturation on juvenile delinquency. Matza notes that 60-85% of delinquents do not become adult violators (1964). Matza's concept of drift explains how kids can commit crimes without using the constructs of commitment to a subculture, adjustment problems, or a psychological mechanism. Matza nevertheless does not explain how maturation changes the youth's sense of injustice or other neutralization techniques which permit drift. Three basic processes described in this chapter--developing commitment to adult social roles, recognizing the increased costs of continued crime, and accepting responsibility for their own actions--can begin to show how youths move out of crime as they get older.

Thinking of the Future

Making Commitments

When youths are 16 or 17, they are old enough to start thinking about the future. Not only does the youth think of impending

adulthood, but others begin to expect adult behavior from the youth. Several milestones mark the transition to adulthood. Age is the most common milestone announcing impending adulthood. The birth of a child is another milestone suggesting it is time to act as an adult. Once they had a child, they thought about their future and providing for the child:

> So I came here, then after about a month at St. Charles and...about three or four days after I came here my baby was born, you know, like I have a kid. And I said, "Wow, I'm a father now, dig that." You know, so when my kid was born, you know I thought, "Wow, I want to get my future together for her, cause I have a little girl and, I was thinking I'm gonna be somebody so she can be somebody. You know, I'm gonna go to school so if she wants something, "Dad, I want this," I can say "Sure, you've got it." You know, no problem, you know I wanted to be able to help like that. So I started thinking about my career again, you know...It wasn't until after my baby was born that I started thinking of my future in work-related ways.

Kids develop more roles and responsibilities by the time they become older adolescents. The process of developing commitment not only affects their self concept, but also provides new purpose or meaning for their life. Commitment also involves a future orientation (Bazemore, 1982). Having a child provides a sense of commitment and encourages the youth to think of the future. As Becker notes (1964), commitment constrains one to "follow a consistent pattern of behavior in many areas of life." Developing commitments are the "side bets" which make youths realize there is too much to lose:

> I've got a big future ahead of me. About time I thought about it. You have to think about your future when you've got kids, you know. When you're young, you haven't thought about that before you go and get in a piece of trouble and you can't get out of it.

Developing commitment often occurs when an individual assumes responsibility for his or her behavior. One-quarter not only recognized that their behavior has consequences, but realized that they were responsible for the things that have happened:

> Just now, I'm realizing that most all that stuff was my fault. If I ever get out, I'm not going to do it again. I want to have a better life for myself. (What made you realize that?) Just a slow song or something. I'd just be standing up and everything just come to me.

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> Well you have to realize that you have a problem first, then you have to do something about it. I just stay away from the friends that were getting me in trouble. And partly it was my decision too. I could say no, but I didn't. I just stayed away from my friends.

Kids are able to assume more responsibility for their behavior only when parents and other adults permit. The timetables of others also must allow the youth greater latitude in behaviors and more independence. One youth noted that he got along better with his parents than previously because they no longer got angry about his girl friends. When he was younger, they would tell him he was too young for such things. Another youth told of a policeman who kept warning him that he was too old to look sad, that he should start acting like a man.

Juggling Commitments

Kids learn to make commitments and juggle responsibilities from some programs. As kids were drawn into advocacy programs, a few found it difficult to manage the role of the client and their role as family member or friend. The advocate was hired to spend time with the youth. Four youths explained that they didn't expect to spend so much time with the advocate:

> I didn't understand why I had to meet this lady. When I first got in the program it wasn't like I thought it would be. I thought it would be just like she would see me once a week or you know once a day or something like that, but I had to meet her five days a week and, oh, that got too much for me.

Another preferred to do other things with his time:

> Well, [the bad thing was] just having to be there for three hours. There are other things I'd rather be doing. I'd rather be with my friends and people I know. I just didn't like having to go there all the time.

Thus, advocates took up time; they kept the kids busy. For some of these youths, program attendance may have been the first time their responsibilities forced them to make choices with consequences:

> Sometimes I got tired of meeting her, I wanted to be with my sisters sometimes but I had to be with her. It wasn't her, she thought it was her, she thought I didn't like her, and they were going to give me a different advocate and everything. I told her no cause I liked her, its just the days we had to meet and the times we had to meet. Like Saturdays, I would go skating and the skating was from 12 to 3 in the morning and when I get home, you know, I'd sleep till at least 12 and I had to get up at 11 and I was all drowsy sometimes I was late getting dressed and different things like that.

> She didn't like it. Neither did I...when I didn't meet her...she would call my case manager and let him know...I got in trouble sometimes and I had to stay in the program a little longer.
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> After a while it would start dragging out, you know, I just would stay away from home and that when they would come. You know, and the states attorney told me and my lawyer told me that I got to start seeing them or they are going to commit me.

One said that she began to learn that she had responsibilities:

> When [the advocate and I] first met, I had to take on responsibilities. I didn't realize that I had to do this at a certain time, cause I usually didn't have responsibilities. But then I had to start meeting her every day at certain times and keep remembering that. So I learned that, to take on responsibilities.

In addition to making a commitment, this youth learned a new meaning of time, one where she was obligated to do certain things at certain times. She learned that time can be a scarce resource which can be converted into monetary and social terms (Zerubavel, 1976). That requirement also contributes to the potential conflict of different role demands.

That conflict became clear when one youth described how he got along better with his family after he was out of the advocacy program. His family life improved not because he learned from the advocate, but he no longer had to balance the advocate's demands with the family's:

> I think my family is better than it was. Well it has always been, well we are just much closer. Since I'm out of UDIS--we're much closer cause I didn't have much time with my

> family cause of meeting with her, you know, and sometimes all of them would come over to the house and I'd have a meeting with her. Everyone would have to leave the room and I'd have to be in the room all alone by myself.

Advocacy, a program assumed to be the least intrusive form of intervention, may have had more serious consequences. One explained he preferred incarceration over advocacy because he didn't have to deal with the program and his family at the same time.

Developing Goals

As youths accept responsibility for their actions, they decide that they have control over their lives, and develop goals for the future. Those goals include legitimately achieving things they already enjoy, broadening their horizons, accumulating possessions, and beginning a career. These goals are not very different from the aspirations they expressed at an earlier age, but they are now old enough to act on them.

Achieving Things Legitimately

Twenty percent plan to become a "legitimate" success. Even though they have had a delinquent adolescence, they want to lead a socially acceptable adulthood:

> I was thinking about becoming a heavy equipment engineer. You know, something more, something that the world can agree with, besides running around acting crazy.

Kids try to find legitimate ways to achieve things they already enjoy. One youth explained that he really liked going to court and has decided to go as a policeman rather than the defendant:

> ...everyone laughs, but I want to be a policeman....See I really like going to court...Well, I don't like being sent there but I like being in court. I like to listen to them talk and I think its real interesting and all. It used to be that I got a kick out of being there and listening to the public defender and states attorney. But then I figured out, I mean I was tired of going as the client and I can go as a policeman too. And it would be even more fun then.

Broadening Horizons

Kids hope to expand their horizons by moving to a new neighborhood or a new town. Forty-eight percent do not want to stay in their neighborhood. Five explained that their neighborhood contributed to their crimes; if they were to achieve a better life, they had to do it somewhere else:

> I don't want to stay [in my neighborhood]. I'm trying to get out as fast as I can. I'm trying to get into the Job Corps and go to Joliet and then after that I want to go to the service. Then either I want to go to the south side or maybe up here, I'm looking for something better. See there on the west side it's just awful. People just sit on the corner and ask for money. It's just a terrible, terrible thing.

Others felt they must experience new things to continue to grow; moving was a way to do that:

> If I do leave I'll come back cause I like it but I just been here so long I just want to leave. I have to leave...This place is so small it can stop you from growing not physically but mentally cause there is not too much to get off and do unless you have a big job you know working here.

Two planned to join the military so they could experience new things. Their desire was not so much to move geographically, but to give themselves new physical and mental challenges. One felt the need to experience things for herself:

> I've heard so many different things...its [the army] bad, you shouldn't go because there is going to be a war and its this and that and you have to eat bugs off the ground. And I say, "Well I don't know, but I'm going to make my own decisions, so I think I'm going to go to experience it for myself."

Another felt the Army would help him control his emotions:

> It makes you mad and builds you up. When you come out you are better prepared. You have learned more about yourself. You are ready to handle stuff.

Accumulating Possessions

Kids also hope to accumulate more possessions. They want an apartment, furnishings and maybe a car. Five want their own car; three plan to get their own apartment as soon as possible. Once they had those things, they could think about independence:

> Right now I got my eyes on my mom's Monte Carlo. She's got a 1975 Monte Carlo. She says she'll sell it to me if I help her buy a new car. I plan on getting that, I'm getting me an apartment. I already got half the furnishings for it. I got a water bed, two sofas for it, a kitchen set. I got a full bedroom set for it you know. I got to get a television. I need quite a bit of stuff, I got to be out there really to notice everything that I need. Cause I don't plan on staying, right a soon as I get off parole, you know cause I should be on for about a year, two years and right as soon as I get off of that I'm just moving out of state.

Getting a Job

Getting a job is a way to achieve independence: 68% hoped to get a job. They envisioned a life where they work at a good, interesting job which provided the security to pursue other interests in their spare time:

> ...I'd be working, I'd have time for myself. I'd have time to do other things besides work. Your know besides working all day, working your whole life away, I don't want to do that. And I'd really like to be a model, so I think I'm really going to get off into that. And if that doesn't go right, I'll have to go for something else.

The youths also aspired to a lifestyle where they can have enough money to save some of it:

> I'll probably get a city job then, find a job, get a bank account, save my money. I'll get a job and put money in the bank...when it gets cold and winter and all, I'll take half of the money out and when its winter, I'll buy summer clothes and see they'll be on sale and all that. And then I'll put them up and then summer will be coming and I won't have to buy any.

This youth shows sophistication in planning for his future; at the same time, his planning revolves around getting the clothes he wants.

Forty-eight percent planned specific careers such as being an electrician, working for the city, or graphic arts. Four plan improbable careers, such as modeling or playing ball professionally. Nevertheless, they recognized the difficulty of their choice and chances for success. They felt they should try it and fall back on something else if necessary:

> Me and my father talked a little bit. Usually suggestions about what I should be or what I want to do, suggestions about me being a basketball player. I want to be a basketball player, I can't really go back to school to play ball, I'm already 18, I really can't go back to school cause I been out for a while. The only thing I can do when I get out is get a job, wait till I get a couple of years older, practice on my jump shots a little, I'm thinking about going to the pros then. Really, what my goal is to be a basketball player...(isn't that a long shot?) Yes, it is a long shot. I was thinking about, well I have this little trade. A friend of mine has a print shop using machine tools, he got a trade in that. I might give that a shot and try that if my other career don't work out.
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> Well I looked in the TV guide and it had a little card for modeling and I sent off for it last year and they just called me this year so I go to the Holiday Inn this Sunday for an interview. I went to Walgreens to get an application right downtown. And I'm going to summer school. Then I'm going to regular school. So that is really all. In the next few years I plan on graduating, if I don't go to college I think I'll go to the Marines or the Air Force. One of the two of them. So I'm going to graduate, I might go to college. If I don't I'm going to the Marines or the Air Force.

Careers, Not Just Jobs

Getting a job is important, but the type of job is more important. Forty percent reported having some sort of job, but said they weren't "real jobs." They worked at jobs delivering papers, in fast food restaurants or at laundries. Twenty-four percent didn't want these jobs because they didn't require special skills or were too dumb:

> I used to have this job. They gave me this job, this paper route. I didn't call that a job. I needed a job, they asked me what I liked doing, I said delivering papers. They said that was a pretty good way to make money. They gave me a job, I worked for them for about two months and I quit because this dude tried to rob me...(why wasn't it a real job?) Anybody can take papers around.
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> ***
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> [I had a job] at a warehouse. Shipping and receiving or delivering packages downtown for them. Nothing special really. It was a dummy little job but it gave me some money. It kept me off the streets.
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> A kid can work if he wants to. You know he can work in a Burger King or a McDonalds if he's really that desperate for money. You know, that's what I call being desperate, working at McDonalds.

These kids want money, but they also aspire to a job which require some skill, as well as a job offering a chance for advancement, job security, and increasing wages. Most aspire to a more prestigious job than unskilled work. These kids differ from the lads Willis studied in Britain: they grew up expecting nothing more than a factory job (1977).

Thinking about the Future

The police, courts, and UDIS encourage kids to think of their future. Thirty-two percent said their parole officer or case manager talked about their future:

> They arrested me for having a dime bag of reefer--$10 worth of reefer--and they sent me home. My mother came to pick me up. I was

> sixteen and that's a minor thing. I was being sent home and the next thing you know about a week later a counselor from the police station came out to my house, you know, it surprised me. So this guy comes over and says, "What are your plans for the future?" He asked me the question. And I said, "I don't know." I hadn't given it any thought, I didn't know. And so I started giving it some thought and he'd come talk to me about it every once in a while, once a week or once every two weeks, you know just to find out what's happening, seeing if I was getting into trouble, or maybe the police station was keeping an eye out, I don't know. So I started to think about it.

The court teaches the value of attending school or having a job by making it a condition of probation. That action impresses the importance of school on kids:

> I stayed in school cause I know the judge didn't look very highly on people who didn't go to school. He used to send people who didn't go to school, he used to put them in DOC. He is going to do it again, the law is coming back now. I can do the work, it is just that I am lazy and I don't want to. I only want to do it when I want to. But I can do the work if I want to.

Kids also learn that the court equates good school attendance with good behavior. The school record sometimes enters in the judges decisions:

> I used to go to school good some of the time. But when I had started going to jail they just looked back at my old school days and they'd say he was going to school some of the time and he wasn't going to school and they just sent me to DOC.

If a kid doesn't attend school, he or she is expected to have a job. Twenty-four percent got jobs while in the UDIS program. The jobs

were frequently not what the kids define as a "real" job--they were often short-term, had low pay and occasionally were menial, such as washing dishes or working in parks. But those jobs satisfied the conditions of probation. Two youths explained that jobs could be a reward for good behavior. One got a job picking up the elderly in a van because he had done well at his class work. Another youth bitterly described how a program refused to let the kids have jobs because they didn't deserve them:

> Well, you know, the one UDIS place I was in--they called the other and they said they had a bunch of jobs and they wanted to give a job to each one of us in the program but then the person there said that we couldn't have the jobs...so we didn't get the jobs even though the one UDIS [program] had wanted to give them to us.

Two others described situations where their programs provided "good jobs" as rewards and "bad jobs" as punishment:

> Well, they get better jobs, like the jobs I was telling you about, they get the better jobs...Like the pantry or kitchen, whatever, they got all kinds of stuff up there. They can cook and they can eat it. They can make Saturday stews and stuff like that.

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> You mop, you sweep, usually more than one, cause we, at our cottage usually eat breakfast in the cottage. They serve some kind of food, so we start getting down early in the morning. On Saturdays our cottage is the only cottage that eats in the cottage, the cottage manager cooks meals for us there, he cooks meals and you help out with him doing the cooking while the rest of the group is at the movies or the chapel or listening to a program, see you get a lot of choices...The best jobs are outside the

> cottage...welding, working with that gentleman who came, making small cardboard little tables they send to some company. They pay good money at the things. You can get a teachers aide job, $20 a course. You can work on the farm.

While few others related similar incidents, they explained that school attendance or work were needed to convince the court that they were attempting to "turn their lives around;" school or work became signs of moral worth.

One sign of the social control exerted by the court is the way in which otherwise normal activities are defined as abnormal. Failing to attend school, being unemployed, spending time with the wrong kinds of kids, or hanging out in other neighborhoods might be perfectly normal for some youths, but are signs of pathology for others. The school system also exerts considerable control over youths. Although the court may require kids either to attend school or work, the schools can refuse to readmit expelled youths. One did menial jobs while trying to get back in school:

> I was in school for most of the time. Before I got in UDIS, I was in school and I was working too, I was going to school and I got kicked out. I think it was for too much days absent or something. It was really some off the wall shit. They told me that I got to get a job or I'm really going to get messed up. Either get a job or get back in school. My lawyer told me that and the states attorney told me that. So I got me a job real quick and I started painting. And I was painting and that and I kept on fighting with the school system to let me back in and they said no. And I told them I was going to call my lawyer and have him get me in and then they let me back in.

On occasion the youth can attend an alternative school or a different school. Kids living in smaller communities may not have this option and are then forced to find a job:

> When I first got out [of DOC], I was going to school. See in our town, I'm known and I'm not liked, so I couldn't handle school and I ended up dropping out of school. And my parole officer found out and he kept talking to me and told me he could get me into UDIS that way I couldn't get my parole revoked. And he got me in UDIS so I could get a job.

Kids learn that their case worker is supposed to help them get into school or to stay in school. Two expressed anger over workers who didn't do what the kid thought they should. One wanted to stay in an alternative school even though the case worker felt he could handle regular school:

> I tried to talk with him, I went down a few times but he didn't listen to me, so I started hating him...Like when I told him I wasn't going back to school. I told him before he even registered me in and I told him I wouldn't go, he said, you'll do all right. The first day I went, the first class I was in, I got in a fight.

Another felt his case manager should have forced him to go to school:

> Well he was supposed to be making sure I was in school or if I was looking for a job, make sure I was putting in applications or not hanging around with the wrong people or stuff like that. He wasn't really doing it...I didn't go to school, like I say, I haven't been in school for a long time, I mean last year when I was out, I went to school for one day and that was it. He didn't even really do nothing about it, he didn't take me to court or come to my house or nothing.

While kids may now have a new attitude towards school and begin to see its value, they have always wanted to work. However, they aspire to real jobs--jobs with good pay, opportunities for advancement, jobs which pose a challenge--in short, a career. It is difficult to break into many of those careers and the delinquency programs rarely are able to make that sort of job placement. When the court requires school attendance or a job, kids are grateful for any kind of a job. They may not like the job, such as dishwashing in the middle of summer or having to bicycle across town to get to work, but they recognize that its main function is to keep them out of court. Menial jobs demonstrate moral worth to the court.

Residential programs also teach the moral meaning of work. Workers reward good behavior with the "good jobs," while bad behavior results in others:

> Well the one that was like maybe got written up for something, they give them the worst jobs, you know, the hardest jobs. Maybe like the stairs, you had to take a brush cause it had rugs on it and go down three stories with a brush.

Doing difficult or undesirable jobs often absolved kids of other misbehavior:

> I always did the messy jobs to get more hours off. Like going up and cleaning the stables, I'd get that. I'd work one hour and they would take five or six hours off for that just cause it was a sloppy job. On Saturdays and Sundays my mom would come up and [since I cleaned the stables] I would take my little nephews out there pulling them around on the horses, they have a ring and I would pull them around and stuff.

Programs also taught kids that they must work if they want to enjoy other privileges:

> [You use tokens for] a lot of things, pool, foos-ball, every hall has some games, a pool table, foos-ball table. (You can't use them unless you've got tokens?) Right. (What if you don't have tokens?) You have to work. Some don't like it. You've got to work to get your tokens.

They must be satisfied with short-term jobs they ideally would not want. In an attempt to emphasize the value of honest labor, the court encourages youths to settle for less and may contribute to a continual stratification process by teaching lower-class youths to appreciate lower-class jobs as Willis (1977) and the Schwendingers (1976) have described.

Achieving Goals

Once kids set goals and realize they are old enough to begin acting on them, they rate things in terms of helping them achieve their goals or hindering them. Many of their resources prove their moral worth and reflect the court's emphasis on school and work. These resources do not directly help achieve the kid's future goals, but achieve an intermediate step--proving worthiness to law enforcement and preventing more serious criminal outcomes. Table 6 summarizes resources which kids perceive.

As kids get older, they begin to see things with little prior value, such as school, as tools to help them achieve their goals. Forty-four percent saw school as a resource. Schools kept them out of

TABLE 6

RESOURCES FOR ACHIEVING GOALS

Resource	Function	% Reporting
Attending school	skills/credentials	44
	fill time	4
	satisfy court	4
CETA	skills	4
Job Corps	skills	4
Army	skills	12
	connections	18
Friends	connections	4
Relatives	connections	4
Neighborhood	job opportunity	20
Program/UDIS	job opportunity	20
	skills	8

trouble with the court and also provided the needed credentials for a real job.

Attending school also fills time. One youth decided he wanted to be a heavy equipment engineer, but he needed to be 18 and have a high school diploma:

> I liked that idea of working with heavy equipment, you know there's big monstrous cranes and stuff like that and I saw they make $10-15 an hour and I liked that a lot...It's not that I became disinterested in it, I was too young. I was sixteen, you have to be eighteen in the state of Illinois to work with heavy equipment, that's a state law. And another thing, I didn't have my GED, my high school diploma, you needed a high school diploma to get into the training, so...I knew the only way I could get this job making $15.00 an hour hopefully was to get my high school diploma or GED. I could really pull off a GED, I was 16 and you can't take it until you're 17, but I was going to try and take it anyway so I could pass it, but then the problem was that I'd have my diploma, I had all my other qualifications...but I wouldn't be 18. And I didn't know how to go about getting a phony birth certificate, so I decided to go back to school.

Age is a limit to achieving goals, just as it has been before. However, this time, this youth used school to fill his time rather than crime. This may be because school now has meaning as a tool; when kids were younger, they was little reason for school.

Kids realize they need either to get more training, make connections, or move some place with better job opportunity. Forty-four percent said they needed to go back to school to gain skills needed for a job:

> Without an education you can't get a job, you can't have a good life. You can just hang with gangs and hanging with gangs, that's not a good life.

Half planned to finish high school while the other half aspired to college:

> I figure with a high school degree that is only giving you...well you can get a job and things, but in college I can learn a trade and that is kind of important...where I can get a job making some kind of good money. You know—so I can make a living.

An additional 32% felt they needed work experience to get a job. Six planned to join the army to learn a trade. Two hoped that other federal programs such as CETA and the Job Corps would provide them with the needed skills.

Three spoke of the connections needed to get a real job. Two felt the veteran's preference earned after leaving the military would help them get a job, while another hoped friends would help him find a job. One youth vividly explained why learning some trades will not help unless he can get into a union:

> You can have training, you can have the skills, the hard thing about it is breaking into the union and most of the people, like, jobs are tight right now all over the United States, right, and people who are lucky enough to get into the union have friends in the union. This is what I heard from talking to people who have had the job or who are planning on getting jobs or who work or who were going to try and get jobs.

These kids recognize that having skills is not enough; they must also have connections. A few--three--speak of friends or relatives who may be able to help them get into a trade:

> If I don't make it in writing or drawing I would like to make it in sports and if I can't do it in that I already have a musician thing with my uncle. He lives in Tennessee. I used to play in his band and we have a band down there now. And so when I go back there if I don't get into anything else, I'll try and be a musician and make some money like that.

Unfortunately, most have not found that kind of resource and must rely on their own initiative.

Twenty percent felt they will need to move places where jobs are more plentiful. Two planned to move to sunbelt states, while one felt it was important to get out of her small home town, at least to launch her career:

> Its small. The restaurants around here, they don't pay enough. They pay enough, but not more than I like. I like bigger and better things than what I already have. So once I get settled and older, get a job and graduate and I have everything like I wanted, not like I wanted cause everything's not going to be like I want, but good enough for me, I'll settle for it, I'll come back here cause its small. Its's a nice little place to lay out and cool out in. But it's kind of small to get off into something big cause there is nothing big to get off into.

Kids have little assistance in achieving their goals of a real job, finding an apartment, or moving. Most goals depend on finding a real job; an apartment, nice clothes, possessions require money. Although housing and possessions can be borrowed through friendship networks,

kids prefer to obtain these independently. Most of the resources kids identify can help them achieve their short-term goals of staying out of trouble, but are less useful for the transition to adulthood.

Programs such as those provided by UDIS can be seen as resources. Programs could make connections, teach skills, or find jobs:

> UDIS? They could get you jobs. They occupy your time. They give you other counselors to be with. She helped out anyway she could as far as recreation, anything she would help you out. And UDIS gave you a lot of ideas and something to think about. Mainly the future they would always bring up the future. "What are you going to do five years from now?" They would just ask you what do I want to do, and I would tell them and they would tell me what I would have to do, if I want to do that. They would bring up other ideas that I could do. Things like that.

For the most part, programs provide immediate, short-term resources rather than career preparation. While all kids who got jobs appreciated them, none felt that the job would develop into their eventual career. Programs help kids get out of home, give them pocket money, and teach skills. Few expected anything more. The path to a career and independence still seemed unclear.

Barriers

Kids also identify barriers which could keep them from achieving their goals. Many of the barriers which they identify—reputation, friends, family, neighborhoods—involve the social relationships and images built during play, as shown in Table 7. Reputations hinder the youths' ability to maintain normal relationships in their lives. When

TABLE 7

BARRIERS TO ACHIEVING GOALS

Barriers	Function	% Reporting
Reputations	stigma	20
	harder to get job	8
Friends/associates	get into more trouble	56
Parents/siblings	get into more trouble	16
	make other demands	4
Criminal record	danger of commitment	32
	danger of adult trial	24
Official label	limits services available	4

kids can no longer control their reputation, their deviance becomes public:

> The police come around here any time there is a burglary in the neighborhood, they just come here. This one time they came and it was a time everyone was outside, it was in summertime, kids were out in the front skipping rope. And my girlfriend was here, she was sitting on the porch and the police came up and said there has been a burglary over here and so they started asking me all about it.
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> ***
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> I live in a real small town right now and if there is something stolen they drive right to my front door and check me out first. They will try and blame it on you because you are the only one in that part of town that is getting in trouble. Then if I didn't admit to it or I didn't do it he would go and check the other fellow that had been in a little bit of trouble...It hurts pretty much when he comes walking up to your door asking you, "Did you do this?" because he knows you have done something like that before. Makes you feel bad. Doesn't make your parents feel too proud of you neither or your friends, they keep looking at you.

Reputations can cause embarrassment and make it difficult to get along with family. Reputations force the youth to be on the defensive with neighbors who assume he's been committing crimes:

> I robbed this old man...and then one night this old man was drunk and I wasn't going to rob him, but he must have thought that I was going to rob him and he ran and jumped in his car. He just started driving and I wasn't really after him and he tried to run me over.

Youths who want to move see their neighborhood as contributing to crime, limiting job opportunities or limiting their life experiences.

Reputations limit activities at home and the neighborhood. The visibility created by a reputation means that the youth is constantly watched, which seriously limits the independence so important to the youth:

> It is sort of like I am in prison here. They are watching me constantly and it really makes me mad when they do it...my mother [watches me] and my probation officer encourages her to do it. He says there is still a chance that I am going to do some stuff wrong. It is just like being in prison. I really don't feel like I fit in here anymore.

Reputations can also limit the ability to get a job. Two felt that it would be hard to get a good job if they had a bad reputation. One intentionally stopped attending school in a Department of Corrections institution because he didn't want his diploma to have that name. Having a reputation simply limits how far the youth can control his presentation of self. A reputation also means that the youth has no time out--he must always be on guard against exposure of his deviant self.

Friends and associates can become barriers. Friends and associates hassle kids they think have money or property. Kids also find their associates aren't the kind of people with whom they want to spend much time:

> Everyone I associated with were fuck-ups. That's the only way of putting it. I wouldn't want to do anything everybody else was doing. Then I'd start getting in trouble, getting arrested, shit, they couldn't hold a steady job. When they did get a job, they'd last maybe a week. People couldn't trust them for anything. I wouldn't want that...I wouldn't

> trust any of my friends for the time of day. I really wouldn't because I know they'd rip me off, cause I've seen them rip other people off. I didn't want them to rip off me, so I won't trust them. "Here, you can use my car," shit, I'd never see it again.

Friends or associates can provide the evidence to convict a youth of crimes. A few felt their associates could cause them a lot of trouble by testifying against them. In anticipation of similar trouble, four youths made few attempts to make friends with other kids in programs. They felt these kids weren't the type of people they would like to have as friends, they couldn't be trusted and might try to get them in further trouble:

> It wouldn't have bothered me none if I wouldn't have made friends with any of them. It wouldn't have bothered me at all cause when I got out I had the phone numbers of everybody and addresses and I just got home, took the sheet out, ripped it up and threw it away. I said I ain't going to bother calling up any of these people...Cause half of them was all rowdy people, you know. They just tried to get in trouble all the time. I said I don't need that.

Many youths always made distinctions between their friends and their associates, as noted earlier. As they got older, they no longer needed their associates. Youths with open social networks may change social groups more easily than youths with only one set of friends.

A few describe how their families were barriers. Four said their siblings encouraged them to continue committing crimes. One explained that he sometimes got into trouble in his program because his mother made other demands:

> They were going to give me a demerit because I was supposed to do this...I know I'm supposed to go Tuesdays, they were going to give me a demerit, but my mother made me stay home and watch the kids. I didn't go to the meeting.

Managing the conflicting demands of friends and family challenges the youth in a community program, while kids in residential placements may have less difficulty managing these conflicts.

Most of the identified barriers result from criminal careers. Consequences of crimes are a non-social impediment to achieving goals. The consequences of their crimes may finally create a hindrance:

> After I started getting picked up and kept down, that's what I thought they were just trying to get rid of me. They were just waiting for it all to add up and then one day they would get rid of me. That's what I always thought. It seems like that's what happens.

Kids commonly speak of how records add up. The youth is in danger of either commitment to DOC or being tried as an adult. One quarter said that when a person's record becomes sufficiently long, he or she is more likely to receive more severe dispositions.

Crimes can limit the types of services available to the youth. One downstate male had serious family problems and ran away frequently. He also committed burglaries to support himself on the run. He would have preferred to be put in a foster home, but felt that those agencies would reject him, because of his crimes:

> If I had a chance to relive my life I would change the criminal acts. And I wouldn't be sitting here [in detention]. Runaway is just a status offense. You can't get in trouble, or they can't send you away, they can just take you out of the home...if I wasn't on probation,

> if I went to court for runaways and I just came back and back and back, he would probably ward me of the state--DCFS--and I would be placed in a foster home or a group home...they could do it now, but it hasn't been done too many times, they get off probation as wards of the state. But still you have made a criminal act in there, DCFS doesn't want that.

Another youth was in a group home, spent eight months in a psychiatric hospital and returned to the same group home. He felt the group home was like a different place after he got out of the hospital:

> The attitude toward me, my attitude towards them, see I had more limitations on me then after I got back...They'd let me walk around and say well, you know, "We've got to get to know you." and stuff like that, but, hell, after two or three months, I was still going through the same things that most people go through the first week or two. I'd lost all my privileges except walking around and I was always getting the minimum privileges because they were afraid of me.

This youth was subsequently committed to DOC for violation of probation. The court didn't want to commit him, but couldn't find another placement:

> Well, I went to the Audy Home first and then from there I came to here cause there was no other place for me. See the court wanted to stick me in another group home, but DCFS didn't want to do that...They also were trying to put me into Tinley Park. (And that didn't work?) No, cause I was too old or something. (So what did they do instead?) DOC...they wrote out an agreement where I'd see a psychiatrist out here.

"Hard-to-place kids" may be relegated to the places that will take them, regardless of the appropriateness of the placement (Emerson,

1967). The juvenile court is most likely to use a DOC institution since they are required to accept court referrals.

In sum, kids finally begin to realize that committing crimes no longer makes sense. They are now close to adulthood. They have better-defined social responsibilities to their own children, girl friends, and family; they have made commitments. The costs of crime are too high: 40% now feel they have something to lose, whether it is bail money, risking their future, or just making life harder. Crime simply isn't worth it any more:

> For a while [my life] seemed more fun. It was challenging, that is what it was. Maybe I can do this and not get busted. So I would do it. For the thrill. But I found out that the thrill really wasn't worth it. In the later years, it wasn't worth it.
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> ***
>
> I used to get a kick out of going to court and I mean that used to be a lot of fun. Now I'm just getting tired of it. I'm just getting too old.
>
> ***
>
> It used to be that I would go downtown everyday. Now I go down maybe once or twice a month. See what's changed. See what's down there. But I don't do the things I used to. See it used to be like I would sneak into a movie, but now you know I'll stand in line and I will pay $1.75—that's nothing. Everything is real cheap compared to what you have to lose if you get caught. I mean you know I stand in line and that way I don't have to worry about the police picking me up or getting kicked out in the middle of the movie. It's just not worth it any more.

This perspective marks a sharp change. The meaning of crime has changed. Crime is no longer a fun or exciting way to fill time. It now threatens the youth's independence, rather than providing independence.

Crime becomes a threat as the sanctions are more certain and severe; the threat of doing adult time puts a damper on youth crime. But sanctions alone are insufficient. The youth must realize that not only do his or her actions have consequences, but that the consequences are within control. A youth must realize that life has a pattern, be aware of the timetables of life and of crime, and decide that it is time for a transition.

Deciding to Stop Crime

The decision to stop crime is a culmination of a number of processes. Youths' adult timetables tell them it is time to move on to other things, and crime is a barrier to the adult goals. Commitments mean that the youths now have something to lose by apprehension. The criminal time table warns that more severe actions will soon be taken.

Milestones

While kids gradually change perspectives, they identify milestones warning that it is time to stop crime. The most common milestone is an intervention which got their attention: 68% decided either they didn't like being locked up or being placed in UDIS. Some missed family members or didn't like losing their freedom:

> I was locked up in a few places. Like after I got out I stopped stealing for so long, then I didn't think twice you know afterwards I'd see

> something and I could steal it real easy and I just didn't think twice. I just stole it and once I stole that I had money in my pocket and then it would run out and then I would start back out. I think the Department of Corrections, I got a job and stuff, it changed my mind a lot...missing a lot of people changed my mind too.

Others felt a stigma attached to their incarceration:

> When I first got in county jail I happened to look at myself. I started thinking that here I am 13 years old and I could go home and tell my oldest brother about county jail and he can't tell me nothing about it. I was just looking at myself and comparing myself to the rest of my family and it was embarrassing to myself. Right now talking to you, its embarrassing.

But some kids do not see incarceration as punishment. One youth told how some of his friends hope to be locked up:

> Some of them would rather be in DOC...they would rather be in DOC than here in this community. Well, I was talking to this one guy who was going to break in these windows and I said, "Man, they will lock you up for sure if you do that." And he just said, "Well, I would rather be locked up. At least I eat better and I sleep better than I do at home." I don't know, I thought that was funny.

That youth might change his mind when incarceration was a real possibility. But what is a warning milestone for most may have positive aspects for a few.

Being placed in a program is a milestone warning kids that further crime would be costly:

> Everyone there [in the program] had enough sense to stay out of trouble. By the time they get to UDIS they realize they better start staying out of trouble. Better start slowing

> down a little bit. Or they just can't go on much longer.

Two realized they had to stop committing crimes when they were almost killed in the act of committing a crime:

> I went into this cleaners down the street. The door was open and it was unlocked and so I was in there and I hadn't done anything yet but this woman started coming in and I guess she saw me or knew that something was wrong so she ran upstairs and got this guy who lives upstairs and he came down and he had a gun. I was hiding under this table and he reached under the table and started shooting. "Woa, wait man, here I am, don't do anything." He hit me in the head with the gun. I fell down, I wasn't hurt, but I wasn't going to let him know that. I didn't want him to shoot me...after that I just saw where I was going. I realized that I was going to get myself killed doing all this stuff.

Age is another milestone in criminal timetables. While the younger kids realize nothing much will happen, older kids know they are risking an adult trial. Forty-four percent worried about being tried as an adult:

> Now I have to get my own act together. See no one else is going to do time for you. If you get caught and jailed no one else is going to do time. So you just have to get your act together yourself....Each station has its own jail where they hold you until you go to court. And that's the adult. And you can go up there and you may be spending the night right next to a murderer. You know there are people there who are doing some pretty serious things. And being 17 it's not going to be too much longer before they're going to start sending me upstairs with the adults.

Kids realize they can receive harsher treatment for any crimes when they are 17. One youth explained that his luck is running out and that the judge was making warnings:

> The judge said that he had been too lazy and that I had been lucky for a long time but my luck was running out. I'm 17 now and once you're 17 even for disorderly conduct they can send you to the House of Corrections if they want to. At least for a couple of days. When you're 17 you really have to start to watch your step. That's why it's time, I really have to get my act together.

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> When you get locked up in the Department of Corrections or somewhere, and you realize what it was for, its not really worth it. I mean I'm not in here for stealing something. I'm in here for trying to steal something. And it wasn't worth it. I didn't get nothing out of it but about nine months locked up.

While kids feel that the quantity of crimes they commit is highly related to the outcome, they also realize that the seriousness of crime has an impact. Twenty-four percent explained that a record with violence is more likely to result in being tried as an adult. One youth charged with a gang-related murder faced the threat of being tried as an adult:

> First I was in the Audy Home, that was in September and they were talking about 702ing me, you know, charging me as an adult. You know the first night they cracked me, like I was sixteen, and I didn't know a thing. I was saying I don't know a thing. I was saying I'll go to St. Charles, but a lot of people were against me. I didn't want to worry about that and then the next morning the public defender came in and they were talking abut 702 and twenty years...that really frightened me...I

> had a small record, ten disorderlies, I didn't have anything with violence. They would have hung me if I'd had anything like that, anything with violence, they'd take me to Cook County jail cause I would have turned seventeen within two months. They would have shipped me to County Jail right away.

While most feared being tried as an adult, two tried as juveniles wished they had been in adult court. If tried as an adult, they would have received the protections of the adult court and would have served less time:

> If I was tried as an adult they would have given me set time, its a felony. I would have had an adult record, but I would have done 21 months and walked. That's adult time. I've done more than adult time. Now the reason they have the juvenile offender act is for two reasons, so that, one, juvenile offenders wouldn't have as severe as punishment as adults, you know, less time, and so they wouldn't have an adult record to carry with them later on in life. So far, the record is the thing that has helped me. But I don't think that will matter because I'm not going to go for some government job where my background would be checked. And I have done, I should have done less time than an adult since I was tried as a juvenile. So far, now, I haven't done as much, but more.

Some decisions to stop crime are based on both the timetable for criminal careers and the timetable for adulthood. For three, the responsibilities of parenthood showed them that it was time to stop:

> I try to be a nice, intelligent person, I got responsibilities to take care of and I had kids to take care of myself, and it was time to start dealing with the police and to start to get myself together.

> Most of them [my friends] have got apartments and most have got wives and kids now, you know, it just tripped me out cause I'm a father too. The next thing I know, Mark's got a kid, Michael's got a kid, John's got a kid, I've got a kid, you know, everybody's having kids all over the place. They're settling down too, which I like, and getting out of gangs and getting a perspective on life and that's cool.

Still others saw stopping as a personal decision, which did not depend on external intervention. One youth who was placed on Ritalin in the Department of Corrections did not think the Ritalin made any difference; he simply didn't want to do crime any more:

> I can tell the difference from my attitude, that's what I think it really is, my attitude. The way I see it, nothing ain't going to stop me from doing what I want to do. I just don't want to do it no more. That's all. They think that's what's stopping me from doing it, but I don't. I think I don't want to do it anymore.

Another thought his decision to stop crime was just like his decision to stop smoking:

> I just know I ain't gonna do it, if someone asks me, I'm gonna say no. A week ago I quit smoking and I said I know I ain't gonna smoke no more and ain't smoked no more cause I just know I don't want to do it. I don't care who asks me, I just know I ain't gonna do it.

For others, the decision to stop committing crimes came when someone special talked to the youths:

> This guy stopped me, he was just sitting there and he said, "I see you getting into trouble and making noise on the bus and I know it's all just little petty stuff but after a while it just all adds up on your record. And it doesn't make no sense. I mean this is no game. Sooner or later you are going to end up in

> jail." And the guy said, "I just got out of Pontiac and I have been in Stateville and it ain't no game being in those kinds of places. You have got to think of what it's like to be there. Just think what its like when you're hungry and you get in the food line and then someone steals your food away from you. And there is nothing you can do about it." It just made me stop and think and this guy talked to me like that. I mean to find someone who really cared. He was really honest with me. I knew he was telling the truth, here was this guy who knew what was going on and you know he didn't know me from anybody. And he took the trouble to talk to me about what I was doing and that just really impressed me.

Failing Neutralization Techniques

Kids also decide to stop crime when they can no longer ignore the impact of their crimes and must accept responsibility for their actions. Older kids reflect on the meaning of their actions and begin to incorporate those meanings into a self concept. Four said they had more time to think about what was happening rather than merely reacting emotionally. As one explained, there are stages when they have difficulty controlling impulses and later they learn to manage those impulses.

> I thought about [my future] earlier but when you're in a stage, you know, with alcoholic beverages or narcotics or other drugs...once my mind thinks about something I do it, say "hey I'm going to go rob someone, stick up a store or something," and I would say, "Hey, I'm not going to do it," but somehow my mind would still tell me to do it. But when my mind really thinks about something I don't want to do, it makes a second stage of trying to do something and I just don't do it. When I started really getting in trouble, I wasn't thinking about these situations and how I think about it...you be growing, you be around these

> stages, sometimes you have too many responsibilities to take care of, you have got your mind wrung out thinking about things.

Others explained that as they got older, they had more time to think and that they were calmer. The kids are, for the first time, thinking about their actions. It is through this process that they connect their actions with consequences. As kids take the role of the other, they recognize that their crimes have victims. Twenty percent decided to stop doing crimes when they imagined about how they would feel if it happened to them:

> When someone said how would I feel if I had stuff and someone took it, I thought about it and I wouldn't like it at all. I would feel terrible. It was then that I realized that doing that stuff was just making the world a lot harder on me and there just wasn't any reason to do it any more.

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> Like a kid who's committing an armed robbery...he's not in a house starving and he's got a roof over his head, his mother gives him food. He can go to school, he can work if he wants...you can find something, even if it's a little bullshit job...But they're out committing armed robberies anyway. They say this man got money, I'm going to take his money. They don't realize that this man got money, but he worked for his money and he didn't work for his money unless he needed it...you know to pay his rent. Why take this man's rent away...Kids don't have a healthy attitude, their attitude is just give me, give me. That's what I did, being selfish.

Two youths explained that they always knew what they were doing was wrong, but they never fully realized it until they were older. Similarly, five others explained that they stopped doing crimes when

they started thinking about what they were doing. Kids reported that when they were younger, they never thought about what they were doing. As they got older, they began to think about what was going on. In this way, their crimes gain a new meaning--kids can no longer ignore the consequences of the crimes.

Kids also begin to realize that their criminal behavior is connected to the rest of their life. Crime is no longer a random event which has little consequence. Crime now affects their life. As one youth explained, being locked up wasn't about stealing, it was about his whole life:

> When I got out of UDIS, I quit stealing for a while, I didn't steal the things I used to....But it wasn't really about stealing, it changed my mind about life. You can get a lot out of life if you really want. But if you are going to be locked up all the time, I don't know how to explain it. I really did get something out of it...I don't think I'll ever be locked up after this.

Another youth, a female, discovered that she had options in her life besides crime:

> It shows you another way to go. That you should get an education and if you get an education then you can get a job. And they got me a job and now I'm working and I'm back in school. That is the best. They show you another way to go.

Readiness

Kids decide to stop doing crimes when they are ready to make that decision. While incarceration is a common factor in the decision to stop, most have been incarcerated before and did not make the decision

to stop. It appears that the youth must be ready to stop. Twenty-eight percent referred to the concept of readiness. Some said that programs or intervention had warned them, but they just weren't ready to listen. One described how useless it can be to lecture kids who aren't ready:

> In the beginning, you couldn't stick me with a counselor and say, "Well, yeah, I'm going to rundown the facts of life for you." I'd say "fine." I might be polite enough to listen, but maybe I don't want to listen to anybody or maybe I think I'm doing things right. Maybe I think I'm doing things cool, so I'm not going to listen to you right now. Maybe you can come to me later on...maybe I'll give it some thought then.

In addition, three who said they weren't ready to stop added that they were slowing down. Slowing down means that the crimes are less frequent, but they still do some things:

> They just started trying to do everything they could [to get me to stop crime]. My mother, there was some man at school, she had him help me out for a little while. He took me to basketball games and got me involved in things. He helped me get back in school. They just did the best they could...it slowed me down, but it was too late. Maybe I wasn't just all the way ready to stop yet. What they was showing me was getting to me, but it was just slow in coming.

As this youth indicated, a youth must be ready to stop crime. In addition, some youth said they were getting ready to stop when they were incarcerated. The final decisions may be made while incarcerated, but incarceration is neither necessary or sufficient for making the decision to stop.

The concept of readiness suggests that early, severe interventions in the lives of these juveniles may not have the same effect. Younger kids do not perceive the connections between their actions; even if severe intervention happened at that age, the youth might not recognize its meaning. As they get older, they are better equipped to comprehend the consequences of their actions.

Others recognize that they will never completely stop getting in trouble. They will, however, continue only with things that don't have serious consequences, such as getting rowdy and partying:

> As far as doing the things I have been doing, like getting on dope, that's sort of dumb, my main thing now is just to get out, get a job, go to school, get settled down and live the rest of my life good. You know, I'll still party, I'll still have a good time and get a little rowdy, but there ain't gonna be no more violence, burglary, things like that.

One downstate youth thought it was unlikely that he would stay out of trouble for the rest of his life:

> I know the next time I get picked up it's gonna be, it will probably be for attempted murder or attempted arson or something like that. It will be like assault charges. If I went back out and I was selling dope I would go to Vandelia or Vienna, one of the two. But anything else, if they pick me up on burglary or robbery or anything like that, it's automatically Stateville, Pontiac, Menard or Joliet. You know, one or the other cause that's all assault charges mainly. They are all mainly bad charges, drug charges they crack down, they give you time for them but they don't expect you to do time in a Federal penitentiary, you know. I know next time I do get picked up it will be federal, I know that. But I'm hoping to stay away from that. I'm trying.

Most kids are more optimistic about their chances of stopping crime, but this quote indicates that the kids have considered their probability of reform.

Staying Out of Trouble

Once kids make the decision to stop doing crime, they think of strategies to help them stay out of trouble. While kids develop many different strategies, there are a few common dimensions. Kids try to keep themselves busy with other things; lack of time can keep them out of trouble. They try to change their social networks so they don't spend as much time with troublemakers. Kids also try to prove their moral worth to the court and its agents by attending school or working.

Keeping busy is a general strategy for staying out of trouble. Thirty-eight percent reported that even if they didn't get a job, there were other things they could do to keep busy:

> I try to tell my cousins that this is not the place to be. Its more to life than being in jail. The more things you can do to take up your time instead of going and doing something criminal. Find something else to do--get a hobby and work with that. Something else besides running around stealing.

Four explained that their experience in UDIS taught them that staying busy could keep them out of trouble. They learned that they didn't have enough time to do crime and the other things required of them:

> My woman, she is expecting a baby. Either I'll be at work or at home, I won't go nowhere with nobody. I don't want to be with nobody. What they do out there is their business, they get caught for it. What I do is my business.

UDIS also provided several ways to keep busy:

> I'd get up in the morning, get dressed, come outside, sit on the porch for a while, take a walk over to my friend's house, we would go to the park. It was just like an everyday thing. Then afterwards I was in UDIS, I had more places to go, new environment besides where I was. I went to the park and job hunting, different places, we went out of town, to the mall, we'd go shopping, she [advocate] bought me things. It was fine, you know, I enjoyed it a lot. Before I was in, it it was sort of like boring for me cause it was like there wasn't many things around here to get into except for CETA down here.

The court teaches two strategies: going to school and getting a job. Twenty percent felt going to school would help them stay out of trouble:

> Well, I'm going back to school, I'm going to get a job. I'm going to stay away from a few certain people I used to hang around with, they used to steal. I'm going to try to meet some different people.

Going to school also shows the court that the youth is trying to make something out of his life. Forty percent mentioned that going to school was a condition of parole; parole officers frequently checked on school attendance and progress. The court's emphasis on school attendance is so strong that four reported that their poor school attendance contributed to the decision to commit them to the Department of Corrections.

Getting a job is a more popular strategy for staying out of trouble; 76% reported that getting a job will help keep them out of trouble:

> [I'll stay out of trouble] by going to work, if I don't get a job, I can get a job somewhere going and working with my auntie cleaning out her back yard or something and going to school. It's just gotta work one way or another. There's a lot of things where I could avoid it.

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> I was making good money from it [stealing], but I don't think it was the most honest way to do it....I ain't going back out there stealing from houses anymore. I'm making good money right now where I don't have to steal for it.

Thirty-six percent explained that having a good job will eliminate the need to commit crimes—they'd have all the money they needed.

Four others felt jobs keep them out of trouble by keeping them busy—there is no time for anything else:

> Once I got to UDIS I had a job and that took up eight hours of my time. And I wanted to be with my girlfriend a lot, so that took up time. And if I wanted to go to a party, that took up time.

Five didn't speak of getting a good job, but explained that having money would keep them out of trouble. If they had more money, there would have been no need to do crime. Kids believe so strongly in jobs replacing the need for crime that they can't understand how someone could do crime if they had a good job:

> Cause, like some of these people they have good jobs and they steal. Now that is not the way to be.

Kids also plan to stay out of trouble by getting away from their old friends. Forty percent either stay away from old friends or associated with old friends who no longer get in trouble:

> No, we weren't getting in no trouble. I didn't go with the same ones who were getting in trouble. I stayed away from them.

This strategy may be easier for the kids who have open social networks. They can go back to a different set of friends who aren't involved in crimes. The distinction between friends and associates also becomes important and may allow youths to return to a normal lifestyle.

Twenty percent didn't change friends. Three reported that their friends still get in trouble. One said he didn't accompany them when they did crimes. Two others were considering changing friends fearing that they might get in trouble by association. The remaining 32% had the same friends, but they didn't do the same things any more. Their friends no longer did crime, so there was no reason to change friends.

Staying away from old friends is a strategy encouraged by family and the court. Three said that their mothers had told them they ought to stay away from those people. Two explained that staying away from their old friends was a condition of either parole or UDIS.

Two planned to stay out of trouble by moving to an area where they could get a job and make new friends:

> When I get older, I want to move to Colorado or Texas...I really like it, Texas is a different place...the people are different. I got a job down there the first day I went. I went out and looked for a job and I got a job. I don't know, like some people in Joliet you look at them wrong and they just turn their head and ignore you. You say hi to them and they just keep walking. Down there you know people seem to be happy, I don't know. They talk to you, if you're in trouble or need some help or something they try to help you out in any way they can.

Five could not move to a new area, but planned on staying out of trouble by isolating themselves from their neighborhood or associates (Werthman & Piliavin, 1967). One female stayed at home. Another stayed in the apartment and had friends over. As he explained, "I can't get picked up for something if I'm not on the streets."

One quarter realize that these simple strategies are not enough to keep them out of trouble. They realize that they must also change their attitudes and develop other activities to replace crime. One youth who had been involved with gangs explained:

> I quit the club when I was in here. When I went out there on my furlough, its like you've got a big void. You're empty, there's a void inside of you and you miss it. This is what you've been about for like three or four years, you know, or maybe not what you've been about but you've known about it. You've got involved with it. You get things that are interesting to you and I'd cut out a lot of my interests, you know, and so I was saying, like, wow, you know, where are my buddies now and what is my identity? (So what do you think you'll fill it with?) Oh, my career, my profession, whatever, my goals in life. I'll fill it with more, I don't know--gang's not reality--more better objectives than what I had before.

Learning how to substitute other activities is more than learning a trade. The same youth explained how he originally planned to use the earnings from his anticipated career:

> You know, I was thinking when I get this money I'm going to buy guns and have everybody in the club, you know, everybody's gonna have two or three guns each. That's what I was gonna do....I'll be like twenty something years old, but that's what I thought I would do with my money...Kids come and learn all this stuff, how to be welders and they could turn around and do

> something negative like I was planning to do...unless they get their head together, they'll go right out and get involved with what they were trying to avoid.

Thus, while many plan to stay out of trouble, they may have difficulties redirecting their lives. They realize they may get back with old friends or they may have trouble in school.

Perspectives on Problems

As kids think of strategies for staying out of trouble, they recognize that they are in control of their own life. UDIS required kids to be responsible for their behavior. One female explained how she had not realized that she would not only be required to do certain things, but that those things had to be done at a certain time:

> Well, when we first met, see I had to take on responsibilities, I didn't realize that I had to do this at a certain time, cause I usually didn't have responsibilities. But then I had to start meeting her every day, just about, at certain times and keep remembering that, cause you know, I'd get up at 7 and get dressed and start my day, before I knew it, it was 5 o'clock and I had to meet her, so I learned that to take on responsibilities, most of all.

Another female also felt responsibility for others who would follow her in the programs:

> I am one of the older ones now, so I'm supposed to be setting a good example. I know that [the program] went out and got me a job and later on they are going to want to get another kid a job where I am again. I know it is my responsibility to do well and to set a good example so the other kids in the program have the same chance I had. So I know that I have to set a good example and be on my best behavior.

A much larger number--68%--felt that they must deal with their problems themselves. If they are responsible for their actions, they must find a solution. As a result, 28% did not like talking with program workers about their problems:

> If I did have some sort of problem, I would rather talk to myself. I will open up to people, I don't discuss my own problems cause really I like to deal with them on my own. I don't think I could talk to too many people about them.

One other explained that he didn't talk to social workers about problems because it was just a job to them:

> I've dealt with a lot of social workers, but that's just a lot of BS. They're just there because its a job and they're collecting money and all they're worried about is getting their money and they want to dish out a lot of BS, too. We get along just fine, but I don't believe any of it. They probably don't believe me either. But all they want to do is collect their salary. They aren't really interested in trying to help anyone. I went to this community health center once, but I didn't like it. You just sit around and talk, well there is no use talking about things and that's all they do and there is no use talking.

In addition, kids who believe in individual responsibility do not expect that programs will do much for them. They resign themselves to the program doing all it can, even if that isn't much:

> If I get into any trouble again it won't be their fault, they have done everything they can, it is up to me now.

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> They try to keep you out of trouble. All I can say is they do the best they can for you. It really is up to the person.

> They do the best they can. It is really all up to the person, they do the best they can. If they can't help them, that is all she wrote. UDIS gets you into school, gets you a job. They take you places, on their time, they take you places. They are messing up their time to do something with you. If you mess up, you mess up their time. If I see someone who ain't enjoying the program, I tell them it is their own fault.

While kids assume responsibility for their problems, they appreciate help, as the above quotes indicate. Kids who assumed responsibility also felt that they had no reason to complain about programs or workers. One youth was angry when a worker failed to meet her as promised, but felt she must just accept any efforts as favors:

> I was ready, but she didn't know I was ready. I didn't explain to her and my tone, I called her the next day and the tone of my voice, she knew I was mad, I was upset with her. She was just helping me. She didn't have to come and pick me up. So I had to understand that too.

This attitude is in sharp contrast to the younger youth who was angry when the teacher didn't enforce discipline, or the youth who felt his case manager should have made him go back to school. Those kids were younger and felt they weren't in control of their lives. As they get older, they learn they have control and responsibility.

The police and the programs convince kids that they are responsible for their own actions. The police tell them they are too old to be getting away with these things and that they should start acting like men. The programs may provide clues about how to behave as an adult. Programs sometimes define behavior. Four youths explained

that one of the main rules in their program was that cussing was prohibited:

> They do whatever they feel like doing, smoke a cigarette, or talk or play games. You can play games, play the piano, you can bring a radio, whatever, talk. You can do whatever, you know, you can't cuss...They take your money. You get nine dollars every monday. Say something out of place, they take two or three dollars.
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> ***
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> Most of my trouble there, it was like cussing, cause after you cuss six or seven times, you get an hour for it. You know I would cuss once and have to do fifty pushups or stuff like that. Every time we would cuss we would have to do fifty push ups or if you said something real bad, you would get an hour. I was mostly doing pushups. I ended up doing more pushups than I had ever done, I was doing at least two or three hundred a day.

The meaning of the emphasis on cussing is unclear and its occurrence too infrequent to permit careful examination. However, restricting cussing may reinforce childhood, just as kids must negotiate appropriate behavior with the schools. Learning not to cuss may also signal others that the youth is beginning to act as an adult.

Programs also stress responsibility:

> We would all get together and we would talk about what we were doing and they would say that we didn't have to spend the rest of our life in jail. That if we wanted to do something with our life, we could do it and it was up to us to make something out of our life. Yea, they make me recognize what I had been doing.

The programs also helped two kids with apparent psychological/family problems learn why they were committing crimes:

> When I was in Chicago, I had family sessions with my parents. My parents would come up there...Me and my therapist and another therapist, we would have sessions together. We got some things worked out. See they felt that me and my mother needed to work on a whole bunch of things. There were a lot of things I couldn't deal with.

Two kids also reported that they learned how to control their anger and two others learned what their problems were by being away from home for a while.

Whatever the process, the kids feel their future is within their control. They have the responsibility for their life. If they only try hard enough, they can achieve whatever they want. Nevertheless they don't know exactly how to go about achieving their goals:

> They've got to take it upon themselves. That's what I did, cause no one's helped me do anything. You know, we're talking about feeling better or respect, just being more cool. I've done it mostly myself. And I know there are a lot of kids out there that just don't know how to go about doing it themselves. They just don't know. It's something they just don't want to go about changing. You can have someone want to do it, but they won't go about doing it, they won't know how to go about doing it.

Kids' perspectives on time and causation change greatly as they mature. They accept responsibility for their own behavior. They look forward to the future with optimism. Some of that optimism may be naive since they have no clear ways to achieve their future plans. They just plan to do whatever it takes to get a good job and have a good future.

These chapters have shown how criminal careers are intertwined with growing up. Crime is a way to fill time for young teens. It fills many of their needs and also provides a mechanism for increasing socialization. Throughout the criminal career, kids' perspectives on causality and control over perceived problems change from a feeling that they are experiencing random events to a feeling that there are problems they can't control to an ultimate feeling that they are responsible for their actions. Kids embark on adulthood convinced that if they merely try hard enough, they can become a legitimate success. They have learned to construct models of cause and effect, to think about consequences of behavior and to see how those ideas enable them to make plans for the future, engage in self-discipline and defer gratification.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

This case study presents data from twenty-five Illinois youths who either have been in a community-based program for serious offenders or incarcerated in a juvenile institution. Most kids tell the story of growing from an aimless teen playing with crime, to managing the juvenile justice system to gain money from crime, to realizing that they are in control of their own destiny and making the decision to stop crime.

The kids describe several transitions as they mature into young adults. Young teens are dependent on parents for money, entertainment, and shelter. As kids enter high school, they want money for socializing with friends. But many find it difficult to find a job; youth unemployment rates are frequently double adult unemployment rates. Most attend school infrequently, leaving them with a lot of time to fill. Kids negotiate with adults about permissible behavior, trying to achieve adult status through behaviors such as dating, drinking or driving. Many describe problems with schools or parents for inappropriate behaviors. When kids reach 16 or 17, police, courts and schools encourage them to start thinking of their future. They realize that they should prepare themselves to take an adult role through turning points such as the birth of a child, increasing age or

meeting someone special. Working-class kids must make a rapid transition to adulthood, but there are no clearly prescribed routes for their transition to adulthood--college or graduate school provides a direction for many middle class kids and gives them time to make decisions, but lower-class kids don't have this luxury. Few have role models to help them make this transition.

The meaning of crime emerges through interactions. Kids initially play around with their new friends. This play may involve being rowdy, telling tall tales, or doing relatively minor crimes like disorderly conduct. Crime is simply fun. It is a way to fill time and to socialize with new friends. After a while, the meaning of crime changes. Kids realize that they can make money or get things they want through crime. At the same time, court officials, parents, peers and police teach kids about the timetables of a criminal career. They learn how to manipulate the criminal justice system by using false names or doing crimes outside their neighborhood.

Crimes can also vent frustration or hostility. Kids don't feel school is relevant and are frustrated by the disorder and lack of teaching. One kid in the study exemplified those who have a difficult time in school and with peers. Most of his crimes involved destruction of school property or retaliating against someone he felt had betrayed him. Downstate youths who committed crimes expressed these feelings of frustration more frequently, perhaps because they experienced fewer monetary pressures for crime. The greater availability of seasonal farm work may explain why money may be less of a factor in downstate

crime. Although kids became better manipulators of crime, they did not seem to adopt the norms of a delinquent subculture or repudiate the norms of their community. As the kids reach the age of 16 or 17, crime gains new meaning—it begins to limit independence rather than promote it. It simply isn't fun any more; the costs of crime are becoming too high. In addition, the kids are finding other ways to achieve the things they want.

Kids' perspectives on problems and responsibility change over time. Young kids don't feel that their behavior has any consequence. They interpret apprehension by the police or parental talks as random events, and feel they have no control over events. As they get further into crime, their perceptions change. They recognize problems but define them as money problems beyond their control. If they merely had more money, they wouldn't have to steal. As they get older, the court and programs instill the notions that kids can control their own lives and that they are responsible for the things that happen to them. Kids finally accept responsibility for the things that have been happening to them--it is their fault. Once they recognize and accept responsibility, they set about to achieve their goals. They are finally old enough to think about things they ought to do and to make the transition to adulthood.

Crime serves many functions for lower class kids besides providing money. It serves as a way of broadening experiences and exploring new horizons. It allows them to master challenges--it is an achievement. Crime and manipulations allow kids to practice social

interactions and thereby develop their self concept. Their court experiences teach them that school and work can indicate the moral worth of an individual. They learn the subtle meanings of adult responsibilities.

As kids get older, they become more skilled social actors. They learn to manage the expectations of their friends family, program workers and children. They struggle to keep their delinquent image separate from the rest of their life. This effort fails when kids develop reputations. Having a reputation makes it more difficult to get along in the neighborhood and stay out of trouble. Developing a reputation may increase the velocity of arrests.

Implications for Juvenile Justice Policy

The research raises policy issues about the treatment of chronic offenders. Policy recommendations are rarely based on information provided by clients. Yet policy questions posed by researchers and professionals are different than the key issues for the client, as the quantitative research reported here indicates. I initially began the study to describe variations in community-based programs, a subject of considerable discussion by policy makers (Moos, 1975; Altschuler, 1982). But the kids were barely able to distinguish between a program and UDIS; the fine distinctions between programs so important to policy makers and professionals were meaningless to the kids. Bush and Gordon note that dependent and neglected youths rarely knew the name of their case worker (1978). They interpreted this as evidence of the lack of client involvement in professional decisions. It may also

indicate that knowing who the social worker's name was less important to the child than to the researcher. If policies are to have a greater impact on clients, more attention should be paid to the client perspective.

The findings that kids realize nothing much will happen to them when they commit crimes may prompt some to call for earlier, harsher interventions. But earlier intervention ignores the context of these crimes. Early intervention would simply be regarded as a chance happening. Earlier interventions would not take advantage of the readiness which seems to occur in later adolescence. Similarly, lowering the age of transfer to adult court would have little deterrent effect. These policies ignore the kids' meanings of crime. As Sullivan noted, reducing court leniency won't do much to deter crimes which have an economic motivation (1983).

This is not to argue against intervention. Chronic offenders need intervention and each successive intervention should be predictably harsher. That intervention must recognize the meaning of crime for the youth and his or her concept of responsibility. The intervention should attempt to instill a stake in legitimate activities by encouraging commitment to something—a family, a job, a career. The intervention should provide some access to a career or job. It should provide role models who can help them make the transition to adulthood. Unfortunately, few programs have the resources to place many kids in the career of their dreams or really help kids grow up.

Interventions should not focus on only the delinquent. Efforts to increase community cohesion and instill a feeling that even play is not acceptable should be encouraged. As Sullivan noted, cohesive communities who imposed swift informal sanctions curtailed the careers of many delinquents (1983). Good working relationships with the police also facilitated the sanctions. The youth quickly learned that his neighbors would not tolerate crime and would work with the police to stop it. The community and police must learn that delinquency does not need to be a normal part of growing up.

At the same time, opportunities for employment and other more legitimate adult behaviors must be developed. Improved opportunity structures are necessary to limit the economic motivation of crime. These recommendations about greater employment opportunities assume that industrialized societies can provide full employment.

Implications for Delinquency Theory

This data illuminates the process of constructing meanings and definitions through interactions. It shows how the youths develop a sense of causation, responsibility, and different meanings for crime as they grow up. It challenges several aspects of most delinquency theories, while providing limited support for these theories. Most of the offenders I interviewed live in disorganized communities, many in the same communities studied by Shaw and McKay (1942). Many of the kids expressed frustration with school, supporting Cohen's explanation of the formation of subcultures to gain self esteem (1955). In addition, kids do a lot of their crime with peers, supporting a

subcultural theory. As kids progress in crime, labeling plays a role through the development of reputations and new meanings for crime. In the middle of their career, kids appear to use neutralization techniques when committing crimes, while still accepting the prevailing norms. Many changes in the kids' perception of problems could be explained by moral development theories.

At the same time, this story of growing up also challenges several aspects of these same delinquency theories. First, this research suggests that it is possible to engage in delinquent behavior without viewing that behavior as a violation of norms. Kids are able to do crime because their definition of reality does not include a sense of causation or any meaning for play. Kids engage in behavior without thinking. The behaviors do not have any meaning to the youths—they do not reflect on their actions. While most deviance theories would define unpremeditated acts of violence as a violation of norms, they would not classify these acts as indications of anomie or subcultural deviance since the meaning or intent of the behavior is absent. These kids' delinquent behavior has no more meaning or intent than unpremeditated acts. Elaborate theoretical mechanisms explaining commitment to subcultures or broken normative bonds may be unnecessary. These kids give every appearance of accepting traditional values while committing crimes, while not assigning any meaning to their behavior. This pattern is not surprising when we recognize that, in their experience, few of the kids' actions are treated seriously; why should delinquent acts be different? At the early state in their career, they

were not making a moral statement by committing crimes; they were simply playing, filling time and horsing around.

Crime does not have a solitary meaning for these kids. Crime means one thing early in a career, but the meaning changes as the kid gets older. Meanings evolve through interactions with others and through career development. Explaining delinquency as a weakened normative bond cannot account for these changes. A subcultural theory might be able to explain these changes, but few researchers have acknowledged the variable meaning of crime. Delinquency theory must be flexible enough to accept the development of new meanings for crime.

Labeling theory has been the main theory of deviance to anticipate the changing meaning of crime. Labeling theory is appropriate in discussions of managing criminal careers and reputations where the organizational aspect of labeling is clear (Bazemore, 1982; Davis, 1972). Once a kid is identified as a delinquent by police, neighbors, or peers, he or she has a more difficult time avoiding those delinquent stereotypes. This labeling results in an increased velocity of offenses and difficulty in remaining at home. Nonetheless, there is no clear evidence that the reputation resulted in a delinquent identity. It may be that the concept of labeling is better able to explain the organizational processing of a deviant than it is to explain how a deviant self concept arises.

Delinquency should be examined in the context of adolescence. Limitations on appropriate adolescent behavior create an awkward situation where kids are increasingly expected to behave like adults

without receiving the appropriate perquisites. The kids perceive the ambiguity of adolescent status. The juvenile justice system was founded on the premise that a child was not as responsible for his or her behavior as an adult. At the same time, the court tries to instill a work ethic and a sense of responsibility. The message to youths is that their actions have consequences, but society won't really hold them responsible until they are adults.

The court's benevolence can be a mixed blessing. Incarcerated youths are at the mercy of program workers who decide when youths have "improved" enough to return home. Ironically, the system established to protect youths may incarcerate them for a longer period of time than they would serve if they were an adult:

> What the juvenile system does is put somebody away indefinitely until the facility feels they're ready for release. That's really a bit silly when you think about it--its not up to the judge or court...and if the facility has any real reason to hold you, they'll hold you. And you can be held here for some dumb reasons. I get in arguments with my dad, sometimes, which is natural. Especially at my age. And they don't want to send me [home], they don't want to release me per the psychiatric evaluation, and for the fact, "Well, you don't have anywhere to go, we can't send you home, you don't like your dad." What kind of sense does that make? If it was as bad as they claim it to be, I wouldn't be asking to go home. So some of the reasons like that are why you get held here...I've more than served the time I would have served as an adult.

Finally, delinquency theory must realize that committing crimes helps kids grow up and prepares them for their future. Delinquency results from age-class inequities in industrialized countries where

kids are denied opportunities to work or to develop a sense of self worth (Greenberg, 1982; Sullivan, 1983). This research refines the economic theory of crime by demonstrating that the economic motivation for crime was not immediately apparent, but was learned through socialization by peers. At the beginning, crime was simply a very normal part of life for these kids. It was a common way to spend time and be sociable with new friends. Further, this research shows that explaining all crime as an effort to obtain money or express hostility ignores other meanings crime can have. Crime serves as a substitute for other activities not readily available to the lower-class youths. It is a way to learn things for themselves. It is a way to elicit reactions from others. Crime can serve as a substitute for other socially acceptable activities--college, travel, fraternity parties--which are not available to lower class kids.

Crime and the money it provides are important to the self-concept of these kids. Like all kids, they are concerned with appearance. For many, their possessions or clothes are their only source of status. Brown describes Harlem kids' insatiable need for possessions:

> They appear driven by, or almost obsessed with, a desperate need for pocket money that they cannot possibly obtain legally. They possess an uncompromising need to be able to "rock" [wear] a different pair of designer jeans at least twice a week or even a different pair of ordinary pants twice a week. As one 16-year-old Harlem teen-ager said: "Man, it's a bring-down to have to wear the same pants, the same shirt, to school three or four times a week when everybody else is showin' fly [coming to school dressed to the nines]. This is somethin' Moms can't understand. You don't

> have to have a pair of Nikes, a pair of Poneys, a pair of Pumas and a pair of Adidas, but it's embarassin' not to have a pair of one of them." Nobody is more cruel or more ruthless in his relationships with his peers than the poor child. He has so few possessions of any material value that he cannot afford the additional insult that being deprived of these very commonplace symbols of "being somebody" inflicts upon him.

In sum, crime serves many purposes for the adolescent, only one of which is economic.

If crime is a response to the age structure, why don't all kids commit crimes? Based on some self-report studies of juvenile crime, perhaps they all do. The combination of the dependent status of adolescence, lack of strong immediate sanctions, the meaning of crime and lack of a future perspective permit such behavior. Community sanctions and the youths' "life chances" temper the value of crime. Life chances are a social attribute determined both by the opportunities and social integration (Dahrendorf, 1980). Those bonds give meaning to the way in which a youth pursues available options. College-bound youths may not engage in criminal behavior for money because they have access either to money from parents or from part-time jobs. They also have a greater future orientation with a fear that their behavior might jeopardize their future chances. College-bound youths might engage in crime to express frustration, but such activity may be more covert or less frequent than the crimes described here. College-bound youths may not commit crimes because they have other

outlets to express their feelings or because they feel the costs of crime are too high.

Similarly, downstate kids reported more employment opportunities and greater sanctions against crime by court and community than did Chicago kids. Nevertheless, even the downstate jobs were not career-oriented jobs; they simply provided some pocket money. Some downstate kids were willing to accept these jobs often because they planned other things like college to help them begin careers. They simply substituted a limited job for crime as their way of filling time. Other downstate kids continued to use crime as an income supplement or expressed frustration or poor family situations in crime. Thus, the extent to which crime persists is a result of both perceived opportunities and immediate sanctions.

Although kids express strong desires to quit crime and begin a better life, we do not know whether they can make the transition to a career and a life without crime. McCord and Sanchez found that social barriers may prohibit such an achievement even though correctional interventions may slow down the criminal career (1983). Delinquency, school failures, and strained neighborhood relationships may actually prepare kids for lives as unskilled surplus labor. Willis (1977) explains how social institutions, such as the school, neighborhood, and family interact with the informal culture of working-class "lads" to prepare them for working-class jobs. The lad's fatalism, opposition to authority, rudeness and sexism were attitudes necessary to survive in the factory:

> The "transition" from school to work, for instance, of working-class kids who had absorbed the rubric of self-development, satisfaction and interest in work, would be a terrifying battle. Armies of kids equipped with "self-concepts" would be fighting to enter the few meaningful jobs available and masses of employers would be struggling to press them into meaningless work (Willis, 1977).

Similarly, Schwendinger and Schwendinger (1976) showed how the school and family create a marginal group of youths equipped only to act as surplus labor.

The kids I interviewed will probably become the working-class kids Willis and the Schwendingers describe. They aspire to good-paying jobs with a career path, but have begun to learn the value of less meaningful jobs to prove moral worth to the juvenile court. As these kids grow older, they may continue to accept meaningless jobs, with the assumption that life is hard, but they can survive. They may continue to accept responsibility for their future and define failures as personal failures.

On the other hand, these kids became convinced that they were master of their future. They thought they could achieve all they wanted through hard work. With minimal education, few connections, and few skills, they may face long bouts of unemployment. They may become disillusioned and decide that they have no chance for success. They may renounce the value of work and school and return to crime. Crime may regain its economic utility. The research of Dinitz and Conrad (1980), Hamparian (1978), and Wolfgang (1972) suggests that many serious delinquents continue to commit crimes into adulthood. The kids

may progress on to other, more serious crimes. As Brown notes, the 1984 Harlem manchild commits many violent crimes (1984). The kids I interviewed did not express that type of violent attitude, but they may become violent, alienated criminals.

These kids may also combine lower-class life with crime, alternating between bouts of crime, unemployment and unskilled work. At a minimum, the skills they have learned will help them minimize the effect of their criminal acts. They have learned the values of unskilled labor and may become satisfied with that life. At best, their experiences in programs may help them make the transition to adulthood and a secure career. The life chances of these youths, both in terms of opportunities and social integration, help to shape the adult life they will face.

The story of growing up is unfinished. We have seen how the meaning of crime develops and changes through experience. We have seen how the concept of causation emerges. We have not yet seen, however, how the transition to adulthood occurs and what factors influence the trajectory of their adult lives. Some may grow up to engage in factory work. Others will continue doing crime. Further research should follow-up on these kids to examine how their perspectives on adulthood continue to change. In addition, research should determine whether these concepts of growing out of crime apply to more violent, alienated youths such as those Brown described (1984) and to youths who committed only a few crimes before stopping.

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