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RESEARCH REPORTS

GANG MEMBER DELINQUENCY: ITS EXTENT, SEQUENCE AND TYPOLOGY*

GERALD D. ROBIN†

In the voluminous literature on juvenile crime, and particularly in the current theories of delinquency, there is hardly any reference to the developmental involvement of gang members with law enforcement agencies. Little is known about the kinds, sequence, and extent of delinquency in which gang members engage prior to their identification with a particular gang, while a gang member, or during their entire history of delinquency. Even in such monumental works as *The Gang*¹ and *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas*,² there is no systematic consideration of the profile of delinquent gang member activity. An intensive analysis of contemporary delinquents and their delinquency is thus long overdue. In this connection, an important area of empirical data collection, which has not been adequately utilized previously, is available in the form of police records. Such utilization may provide objective confirmation of some of the current hypotheses about adolescent violation of legal norms, encourage the

emergence of new and meaningful operational hypotheses, and lead to fresh knowledge concerning teen-age crime.

APPROACH

As do several other departments in large urban areas, the Juvenile Aid Division of the Philadelphia Police Department has a Gang Control Unit,³ which maintains for administrative and control purposes a file of identified gangs and gang members in the city. This file contains index cards for all known active delinquent gangs. "Active delinquent gangs" are those which are a current and continuing source of difficulty to the community and to the police. Each member of an active gang has a police delinquency record or is considered a potential source of concern to the authorities. In dealing with offenders, the Juvenile Aid Division employs two types of case dispositions: arrest and remedial. A "remedial" disposition does not result in bringing the youth to court; it is an informal adjustment of the case at the district level in which the boy is immediately released into the free community by the police.

The writer selected, for an analysis of their police delinquency histories, all active gang members as of January 7, 1962. On this date there were in Philadelphia 27 actively delinquent Negro male

* A paper concerning a portion of the study described in this article was presented by the author before a meeting jointly sponsored by the American Sociological Association and the Society for the Study of Social Problems in Los Angeles, California, on August 25, 1963. A condensed paper dealing with this study was also presented by the author before a meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society in New York City, on April 6, 1963.

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The writer would like to express his gratitude to the Ford Foundation for its financial support for this study; to Albert N. Brown, former Commissioner of the Philadelphia Police Department, for making available for inspection the necessary records; and to Professor Marvin E. Wolfgang, of the University of Pennsylvania, for his sustained interest throughout the present study.

¹ THRASHER, *THE GANG* (2d rev. ed. 1960).

² SHAW & MCKAY, *JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND URBAN AREAS* (1942).

³ The Gang Control Squad is responsible for the observation and attempted control of identified delinquent groups in the city. The personnel of this squad are assigned on a divisional basis, but have considerable freedom to function in a preventive capacity in other parts of the city. Squad men ride in unmarked radio-equipped cars, patrolling areas where gang activities have been evident, and observing corner gangs and other identifiable groups congregating in known hang-outs in order to familiarize themselves with all of the delinquent groups, their locations, and their membership. By frequent visits to recreation centers, schools, and church affairs, and through contacts with area youth workers and conversations with gang members themselves, information on new membership, rival groups, and probable gang conflict can be obtained. The Gang Control Squad is active in confiscating weapons and in cooperating with other agencies and interested persons who are working towards the redirection of gang activities.

gangs, with a total membership of 918 persons.⁴ Obviously it was possible to include within the analysis only those youths for whom police records could be located: in this instance for 711 of the 918 Negro gang members.⁵ It would be incorrect, however, to infer that the portion of the gang sample that had no recorded police contacts—almost one-fourth—did not in fact participate in delinquent activity.

FINDINGS

PART I: POLICE DELINQUENCY RECORD ANALYSIS

The ages of the gang members ranged from 11 to 25 years, with a mean of 17.6 years. About 53 per cent of all delinquents were adults, i.e., past 18 years of age. These figures emphasize that data were collected not on a juvenile universe but rather on a universe of Negroes who belonged to gangs⁶ as juveniles. This longitudinal approach provides a more complete and dynamic presentation of the juvenile's delinquency involvement than could a cross sectional snapshot. The fact that half of the sample were adults but still considered members of active delinquent groups or of potential concern to the authorities suggests the persistence into adult life of anti-social tendencies

⁴ Actually, at the time the sample was selected, there was in addition a single white delinquent gang in Philadelphia, the Gray Boys. This solitary white gang was the smallest of all gangs, having only seven members. To maintain the racial homogeneity of the active groups utilized in the study, and because the number of cases lost was negligible, the seven-member white gang was discarded in the analysis.

With the exception of these seven boys, all of the active gang members as of January 7, 1962, were Negroes. Inasmuch as the writer had expected to find more white delinquent gang members than this, various persons were questioned for an explanation of this finding. The writer learned that while delinquent white groups are not unknown in the city, upon their identification by the police, organized community pressures are brought to bear upon them. The white boys, soon finding themselves without adult support and in its place active resistance, disaffiliate with the group. Apparently no equivalent forceful community profile is organized in the adult Negro neighborhood; hence, Negro delinquent groups multiply fairly rapidly in the absence of primary- and secondary-group opposition, and, once established, they tend to perpetuate themselves for long periods of time.

⁵ The index cards in the Gang Control Unit's file contained identifying information on each gang member which was then utilized in searching for their respective police delinquency records in the Master Record File of the Juvenile Aid Division. The J.A.D. has an excellent master file on all juveniles who have had contacts with the police since 1953 which resulted in a report. This file has cards containing the cumulative history of delinquency charges placed against each juvenile offender.

which were developed and expressed as juveniles. An additional one-fifth of the 918 Negroes were between 17 and 18 years old at the time of selection, so that approximately three-fourths of them had passed almost completely through their juvenile status.

Onset of Delinquency

The age at which a juvenile first comes into contact with a law enforcement agency has been thought to have important implications both for future criminality and as an indication of the years when youth is most sensitive to the strains and pressures of the social system. Ely reports that the threshold age of delinquency for American city boys is 12 years.⁶ In *Five Hundred Criminal Careers* the Gluecks write that open conflict with the social authorities of the school or police occurred at an early age in the great majority of the group: in 27 per cent of the cases it came at 14 years or less, the average age of conflict with constituted authority being 14.8 years.⁷ In *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* the same authors reveal that the average age of the 500 delinquents selected from two correctional schools in Boston was 12.4 years at the time of their first court appearance. However, they identified the "first clear signs of the delinquents' social maladaptation—stealing, truancy, destructive mischief, stubbornness, tantrums, disobedience, running away, stealing rides, junking, sex affairs, and the like—" as being in evidence before 8 years of age in nearly half of the group. The average age at the onset of misbehavior which was persistent was 8.4 years.⁸

The Gang Study's distribution for onset of delinquency is presented in Table I. It will be noted that 76.5 per cent of the gang members experienced their first police contact between 11 years and 15 years of age. The average onset of delinquency was 13.4 years, with 38.3 per cent having their initial police contact before 13 years of age. Of those who were arrested at least once (87.8 per cent of the gang members), the average age at first arrest was 14.3 years, while 41.7 per cent were arrested before 14 years of age. That The

⁶ Cited in Reckless, Dinitz & Murray, *The "Good" Boy in a High Delinquency Area*, 48 J. CRIM. L., C. & P.S. 19 (1957).

⁷ S. & E. GLUECK, *FIVE HUNDRED CRIMINAL CAREERS* 148 (1930).

⁸ S. & E. GLUECK, *UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY* 27-28 (1957).

Gang Study's average age at onset of delinquency is more similar to the Glueck's average age of first court appearance and of first conflict with constituted authority rather than with their average age of onset of misconduct is to be expected. This latter index, although useful as a predictive tool, describes behavior which largely occurs within the family and school situation; as such, it is unlikely to become a matter of official police attention.

It would have been hypothesized, *a priori*, that the age of first court appearance would be higher than that at first police contact, since court appearance usually follows prior delinquent activity. However, since the Gluecks' sample was selected because it consisted of persistent offenders, as evidenced by their institutionalization, they could have committed their previous delinquencies at an earlier age than The Gang Study members and consequently have "been ready" for their first court exposure at an earlier age than the gang members. In any event, what is needed for more valid comparisons between delinquent groups in order to determine the true threshold for delinquency is standardization of the criteria by which delinquency or misconduct is measured, relatively direct accessibility to such criteria, and constancy in the definition of the delinquent age period.

Extent of Delinquency

Although for certain purposes delinquency may be treated as an attribute, the criminologist has long recognized the inherent "variable" nature of the problem. Frequency of occurrence of an event permits a more accurate and realistic description of the phenomenon than observation of its presence or absence. In this regard it was found that the mean number of delinquency charges⁹ against gang members was 6.2. The number of accusations ranged from 1 to 25, with 20.0 per cent of the boys charged with 10 or more offenses. Furthermore, the number of charges varied with age: the average number of delinquencies committed by 12-year-olds was 3.0, compared with 6.7 for those who had completed their juvenile cycle. The average number of delinquencies for juveniles under 15 years of age was 3.8 compared with 6.4 for those 15 years or older. The mean frequency of arrests followed a pattern similar to that of all charges:

⁹ Delinquency "charges" and expressions of "commission" of delinquent acts are used interchangeably throughout the paper.

TABLE I
AGE AT FIRST POLICE CONTACT

Age (yrs)	No. of Cases	%
6	2	—
7	6	—
8	13	1.8
9	19	2.7
10	46	6.5
11	66	9.3
12	120	16.9
13	139	19.6
14	113	15.9
15	105	14.8
16	57	8.0
17	24	3.4
Total	710*	100.0

* Because bits of data were sometimes unknown, the total in the tables will not always add up to the total number of cases studied.

those under 15 years of age were arrested 1.9 times compared with 3.7 arrests for those 15 years or older.

It has often been suggested that the age at which a juvenile first comes into contact with a law enforcement agency has important implications for continued delinquency. To test this, a negative relationship between onset of delinquency and number of police contacts was hypothesized and received strong confirmation, as indicated in Table II. The data in this table show a consistent decrease in the average number of delinquencies with an increase in onset of delinquency. While the average number of charges for all ages was 6.2, it was 9.1 for those who committed their first delinquency at 6 and 7 years of age, compared with only 1.3 police contacts for those whose onset of delinquency was at 17 years of age. The significance of this finding is that early delinquent misconduct should not be too lightly dismissed as an isolated and non-recurring event, but rather should be interpreted as an indication of the beginning of persistent violation of the law.

Movement of Delinquency

The assertion of a progressive involvement in delinquency in terms of severity of offense is familiar to students of crime. Unfortunately, such statements rarely specify the exact nature of this progression or the method for its determination.

TABLE II
AVERAGE NUMBER OF DELINQUENCIES, BY ONSET OF DELINQUENCY

	Onset of Delinquency (years)									
	6-7	8-9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
No. of Delinquencies.....	73	277	427	516	880	906	633	469	204	35
No. of Cases.....	8	32	46	66	120	139	113	105	57	23
\bar{X}	9.1	8.7	9.3	7.8	7.3	6.5	5.6	4.5	3.6	1.5

In an effort to measure the movement of delinquency of the gang members, the researcher ranked each delinquent charge placed against them in terms of its seriousness: high ranks were assigned to the less serious charges, lower ranks to more serious ones. In this manner 24 types of delinquency charges and their corresponding ranks were established. The first delinquency of each offender was taken as the base line and the size and direction of movement between subsequent delinquencies were measured. For example, if a gang member's first police contact was for larceny (rank 6) and his second police contact was for robbery (rank 3), then his first movement of delinquency was a progression of 3. If this juvenile's third charge was that of assault and battery (rank 7), his second movement of delinquency was a retrogression of -4. After measuring all the movements of delinquency for an offender in this manner, the numerical values were added to yield a single value which was a general expression of whether a gang member progressed (a plus value), retrogressed (a minus value), or demonstrated no over-all movement of delinquency (a zero). The size of the value reflected the degree of progression or retrogression. This procedure was carried out for a sub-sample¹⁰ of gang members having at least two police contacts and resulted in 2939 movements of delinquency.

The inadequacies in this approach at measuring movement of delinquency are recognized. Such a technique necessarily loses an important dimension of movement within each pair of subsequent police contacts, the general index of movement obscuring any such refinement. With all its crudity, however, it is one possible way to proceed in an uncharted area. At the least, it should

¹⁰ Because of time limitations, it was not possible to include all gang members in the movement of delinquency calculation. Instead, a sub-sample of the 17 largest gangs consisting of 564 members was utilized in this measurement.

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF MOVEMENT OF DELINQUENCY

Direction of Movement	Degree of Movement	Index of Movement	No. of Cases	% of Cases
Retro.	marked	-21 to -15	22	4.5
	moderate	-14 to -8	67	13.7
	mild	-7 to -1	74	15.1
	none	0	64	13.1
Prog.	mild	1 to 7	101	20.7
	moderate	8 to 14	96	19.6
	marked	15 to 22	65	13.3

demonstrate the complexity of empirically testing the hypothesis of an increasingly serious participation in delinquent behavior and the need for research on this topic. With these remarks by way of qualification, the reader's attention is directed to Table III. Here we see that about 13 per cent of the gang members showed no over-all movement of delinquency, compared with 33 per cent of the offenders who retrogressed and 54 per cent who progressed in general severity of delinquent conduct. Thus, we have been able to provide some objective support for the hypothesis tested.

Intervals Between Delinquencies

An important dimension of delinquency which has not received sufficient attention is its sequential characteristics, i.e., the time lapse between each pair of subsequent police contacts. For example, upon committing his first offense, how much time will elapse before a juvenile again comes to police attention? And having committed a second delinquency, when will a third follow, and so on? In this regard, it was hypothesized that an increase in the number of police contacts would be accompanied by a decrease in the time period

TABLE IV
AVERAGE NUMBER OF MONTHS BETWEEN CONSECUTIVE
PAIRS OF DELINQUENCY

P.C. Interval*	No. of Months	No. of Cases	\bar{X} Interval (months)
1D-2D	8819	628	14.0
2D-3D	4433	558	7.9
3D-4D	2960	486	6.1
4D-5D	2068	400	5.2
5D-6D	1498	340	4.4
6D-7D	1185	284	4.2
7D-8D	851	227	3.7
8D-9D	644	173	3.7
9D-10D	506	141	3.6
10D-11D	447	111	4.0
11D-13D	542	155	3.5
13D-16D	469	131	3.6
16D-	239	65	3.7

* Police contact interval designation 1D-2D is the number of months between the first and second delinquencies, 2D-3D the number of months between the second and third delinquencies, etc.

between each subsequent pair of delinquencies; that is, the number of months between the second and third delinquencies would be smaller than that between the first and second, etc. As Table IV shows, this hypothesis was confirmed by a continuous reduction in the average number of months between consecutive delinquency accusations from the first to the tenth police contacts, after which a plateau was reached. The average time between the first and second police contacts was 14.0 months, whereas the average interval between the ninth and tenth police contacts was 3.6 months. This discovery—unreported in the literature to the writer's knowledge—has major implications for the prediction of delinquency: Negro gang members apprehended for illegal conduct are not only likely to engage in further delinquent behavior but, before reaching a plateau, allow less time to elapse between each successive pair of law violations. This means that the relationship between onset and extent of delinquency can not be completely explained by the fact that the youth who begins his delinquent career early in life has more time to continue such conduct than the juvenile whose delinquency occurs later in life. Regardless of the juvenile's age at onset of delinquency, there is a noticeable tendency for subsequent delinquencies *not* to occur at regular

intervals. Once delinquency begins, it is not randomly distributed in time, but instead resembles a chain reaction in which each delinquent act becomes a stimulus and signal for the commission of another delinquency within a briefer period than that immediately preceding; this phenomenon may be taken as an indication of the gang member's increasing acceptance of the norms of the delinquent subculture.

"Career" Analysis of Delinquency

Since the entire history of delinquency prior to January 1, 1962, had been collected for each offender, it was possible to perform a kind of "career" analysis of delinquency. With few exceptions, there was a strong tendency for each type of delinquency to rise gradually, reach a peak at 15 and 16 years of age, and decrease during the last year of juvenile status. Sixty per cent of all delinquency was committed at ages 14 through 16 years; only 6.4 per cent occurred before 12 years of age.

The writer hypothesized that the more serious offenses would be concentrated at the upper range of juvenile status, rather than the less serious offenses. This hypothesis was not confirmed: 54.7 per cent of the 775 Part I offenses were committed at ages 15 through 17 years, compared with 55.3 per cent of the 2991 Part II offenses committed during the same period. When categories of offenses were constructed in testing the hypothesis, similar results were obtained; for example, 68.2 per cent of General Disorderly Conduct offenses (disorderly conduct, liquor violations, gambling, trespassing, other sex offenses) were committed at 15 through 17 years of age, compared with 60.0 per cent of Other Offenses Against the Person (robbery, assault and battery, weapon violations) and 45.8 per cent of Non-Assaultive Property offenses (larceny, burglary, receiving stolen goods), the assumption being that the last two categories are more serious than the others. Even Distinctively Juvenile offenses (curfew, truancy, other child labor violations, malicious mischief) were only slightly less frequent (49.3 per cent) at 15 through 17 years than were Part I offenses. There was only one category of offenses, the most serious one, which supported the hypothesis of a concentration of the more serious delinquencies at the older ages: 74.7 per cent of Aggravated Offenses Against the Person (homicide, forcible

rape, aggravated assault) were committed at 15 through 17 years of age. This exception noted, we must conclude that the frequency of each and all forms of delinquency tends to increase with an increase in age until the final year of juvenile status.

Profile of Delinquency

Equally if not more important than the frequency of delinquency is its typology. In this connection, studies of delinquency have almost invariably contributed to destroying the popular image of juvenile crime which associates it with forcefully aggressive behavior.¹¹ The Gang Study, however, revealed that 13.4 per cent of all their charges may be described as violently person-oriented.¹² This suggests that the delinquent Negro gang member is more assaultive than the non-affiliated delinquent, possibly because such behavior receives positive sanctions from his peer group and is consequently a status-achieving device within the gang. Of the remaining typology of delinquencies, 25.4 per cent were property-oriented,¹³ 37.0 per cent general disorderly conduct,¹⁴ 17.5 per cent distinctively juvenile offenses,¹⁵ and 6.7 per cent all other offenses. Reflection on the contribution of offenses which are distinctively juvenile, i.e., which can not be committed by adults, suggests the criminal character of gang member delinquency.¹⁶ Moreover, with some misgivings, curfew violations were considered as delinquent charges. If curfew violations were originally defined or re-defined as non-delinquent, then the contribution of uniquely juvenile charges

would be markedly reduced, since almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of the 773 juvenile charges were on this account; at the same time, of course, it would increase the proportions of the remaining offense categories.

The preceding is one possible typology of delinquent offenses. In it violently person-oriented behavior was restricted to the actual commission of such acts. However, equally significant as the prevalence of completed acts of violence is the *tendency* to resort to force and violence in the solution of problems or as a normal pattern of response under specific conditions among certain social classes of the population. Accordingly, a second typology was constructed which trichotomized delinquent behavior into: (1) Offenses Against the Person, which included homicide, forcible rape, simple and aggravated assault, robbery, threats to do bodily harm, and weapon violations; (2) Offenses Against Property, including burglary, larceny, and receiving stolen goods; and (3) General Disorderly Conduct, which included all other offenses. On the basis of this typology it was found that about 23 per cent of all delinquencies were those against the person, 21 per cent against property, and 56 per cent for disorderly conduct. Table V presents the distribution of all charges against the offenders.

Because the participation of gang members in assaultive behavior is important in terms of treatment orientation, protection of society, and the subcultural approach to delinquency, the Negro gang members' violation against the person was explored further. Because we were interested in the tendency to behave violently, it was appropriate to ask what proportion of the 711 gang members were *ever* charged with offenses against the person.¹⁷ The data reveal that 67.3 per cent of the gang members had committed at least one assaultive act. This is a minimal figure since a certain proportion (32 per cent) of the offenders who had not committed any assaultive acts were still juveniles at the date of selection of the cases.

¹⁷ This question, of course, does not distinguish between members charged with several assaults and those accused of committing one assault throughout their period of juvenile status. However, although police records capture more of the universe of illegal behavior than other official sources of data, we know that even they can not encompass all of reality. It therefore seems reasonable to infer that the commission of one or two offenses against the person reflects a definite inclination—not adequately represented by but nonetheless revealed in the police record—toward the application of legally and morally proscribed force.

¹¹ EATON & POLK, MEASURING DELINQUENCY: A STUDY OF PROBATION DEPARTMENT REFERRALS 12-13 (1961).

¹² Violently person-oriented charges include: homicide, forcible rape, assault with intent to ravish, aggravated assault, other assaults, and indecent assault.

¹³ Property-oriented charges include: burglary, robbery, larceny, and receiving stolen goods.

¹⁴ General disorderly conduct charges include: disorderly conduct, malicious mischief, gambling, liquor violations and intoxication.

¹⁵ Distinctively juvenile charges include: truancy, incorrigibility, runaway, and curfew violations.

¹⁶ The manner of selecting the delinquency charges from the Master Record File served to reduce the number of distinctively juvenile offenses: when there were multiple charges of delinquency against an offender on the same date, only the most serious one was included in the analysis; and the distinctively juvenile charges were among the least serious according to the Philadelphia Classification of Part I and Part II Offenses. This fact in itself, though, demonstrates that the commission of a uniquely juvenile offense, e.g., truancy, may simply provide the occasion for the youth to engage in more serious, criminal acts.

TABLE V
DISTRIBUTION OF DELINQUENT CHARGES

Charge	No. of Cases	%
Homicide.....	15	.3
For. Rape.....	21	.5
AWIR.....	18	.4
Robbery.....	205	4.6
Agg. A.....	239	5.4
Burglary.....	301	6.8
Larceny.....	619	14.1
A & B.....	303	6.8
Weap. V.....	160	3.6
Sex Off.....	34	.8
Liq. V.....	116	2.6
Dis. Con.....	1117	25.2
Gambling.....	69	1.6
Trespass.....	114	2.6
CLV*.....	476	10.8
Curfew.....	484	10.9
Other.....	133	3.0
Total.....	4424	100.0

* Child labor violations.

For example, 69 per cent of the 16-year-olds had been charged with at least one assault; the remaining 31 per cent still had 18 months of juvenile status left in which they could commit delinquent acts against the person. Perhaps even more significant is the fact that 31.5 per cent of these gang members were charged at some time with direct, severe physical attacks upon the person, i.e., with homicide, aggravated assault, or forcible rape; for those who were adults the figure was 36 per cent. It appears, therefore, that these juveniles are not simply troubled youths engaged in annoying behavior but constitute a very real danger to the safety of the community.

The findings concerning delinquent typology can be interpreted as a measure of empirical confirmation of the existence of the conflict subculture discussed by Cloward and Ohlin,¹⁸ and by Cohen and Short. The gang members studied were remarkably similar to Cohen and Short's description of the "conflict-oriented subculture"¹⁹—they had names, social organization, recognized leaders, and territorial identification, among other important characteristics. Furthermore, the gang

members' resort to violence was too prevalent to be considered idiopathic; rather, its frequency and the fact of gang membership among a socially deprived minority suggests that it was a normatively prescribed response from a subculture devaluing human life and non-violent conduct.

All of the above is not to indicate the researcher's acceptance of one subcultural interpretation rather than another. The Gang Study, as presently designed, can make little contribution toward discovering the *reasons* for the emergence of a subculture. Nonetheless, it is gratifying to obtain some degree of empirical assurance that subcultures exist elsewhere than in the mind of the theorist.

Stabilities in Delinquency

The search for stabilities in juvenile delinquency is closely related to the preceding scrutiny of delinquent typology. Despite their similarity, however, the former has been given little consideration. A study of deviant stability is typology construction applied at the individual offender level. It attempts to ascertain the tendency of an offender to commit one pattern of offense rather than another. Two problems are involved in this effort: (1) the determination of the number of offense categories, and (2) the degree of deviation from pattern, if any, that one is willing to tolerate. The researcher divided all delinquent charges into offenses against the person, against property, and disorderly conduct charges.²⁰ Then, for each offender having at least five police contacts, a pattern of delinquency ratio was calculated which was the largest number of charges within a category divided by the total number of charges. For example, if a juvenile had committed 5 offenses against the person, 5 against property, and 10 disorderly conduct offenses, his pattern of delinquency ratio would be $10/20 \text{ DC} = .50$. It was also decided that unless at least three-fourths of an offender's police contacts fell into one of the three offense categories, no pattern of delinquency would be recognized for that offender. The results of this inquiry make it clear that, if stabilities in deviance exist at the adult level as some evidence

¹⁸ CLOWARD & OHLIN, *DELINQUENCY AND OPPORTUNITY: A THEORY OF DELINQUENT GANGS* (1960).

¹⁹ Cohen & Short, *Research in Delinquent Subcultures*, 14 J. SOCIAL ISSUES 25 (1958).

²⁰ The problem of considering robbery a property or person offense was negligible since there were only 4 cases in which placing it in one category rather than the other would have affected establishing patterns of delinquency.

suggests,²¹ they have not yet manifested themselves at the juvenile level. Even with the generous pattern ratio of only .75, just 20.5 per cent of the 395 offenders met this requirement. If at least .80, .90, or 1 (exclusive commission of one offense category) is requisite for establishing a pattern of delinquency commission, then only 15.4 per cent, 5.8 per cent, and 4.3 per cent of the offenders, respectively, could be said to have exhibited stability in their delinquency. This, of course, does not mean that The Gang Study delinquents are equally likely to commit acts found in all three categories; it does mean, however, that they can and do engage in all categories of delinquency relatively frequently.

Disposition of Offenders

As mentioned earlier, every police contact resulted in the juvenile's arrest or non-arrest (remedial) disposition. One could hypothesize that the proportion of offenders arrested for a particular offense provides a more objective and therefore superior measure of the seriousness of the act than the evaluation expressed in the FBI's *Uniform Crime Reports*. Behind such an assertion would be the conviction that the juvenile authorities, in deciding to arrest, are expressing the concern of the larger community with regard to the behavior in question. In any event, it will be informative to examine the disposition of each offender by charge, particularly with a view to determining what degree of correspondence exists between the Federal evaluation and police decision to arrest as measures of severity of delinquency. The reader is referred to Table VI in this connection. On a gross level the judgement of seriousness of offenses by the FBI is supported by the external criterion of arrests: 81.0 per cent of those charged with Part I offenses were arrested, compared with 41.7 per cent of those accused of Part II offenses. Behavior which does or threatens to disrupt property and economic interests or attack the integrity of the person usually results in the arrest of the accused. This is true for both Part I and Part II offenses, as witnessed by the high arrest figures for those charged with assault and battery, weapon violations, threats, and other sex offenses. Despite the fact that a much larger proportion of juveniles charged with Part I offenses were arrested than

TABLE VI
DISPOSITION OF GANG MEMBERS, BY CHARGE

Charge*	No. of Offenders	No. Arrested	% Arrested
Homicide.....	15	15	100.0
Robbery.....	205	190	92.7
Rape.....	39	36	92.3
Burglary.....	301	263	87.4
Agg. A.....	239	199	83.3
Larceny.....	619	446	72.1
Weap. V.....	160	135	84.4
Sex Off.....	34	30	88.2
Threats.....	39	25	64.1
A & B.....	302	161	53.3
Other Off.....	94	42	44.7
Liquor V.....	116	50	43.1
CLV.....	476	113	23.7
Dis. Con.....	1117	445	39.8
Gambling.....	69	20	29.0
Trespass.....	114	29	25.4
Total.....	3939	2199	55.8

* Curfew violations were excluded from this table because it was the policy of the JAD not to arrest on this charge.

charged with Part II offenses, the ranking of the seriousness of charges within Part I offenses differs from that in the *Uniform Crime Reports*. On the basis of arrest of offenders, the following order is observed, from most to least serious Part I charge: homicide, robbery, rape (includes forcible rape and assault with intent to ravish), burglary, aggravated assault, and larceny. The order established in the *Uniform Crime Reports* is: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and larceny.

At this point it was decided to compare the disposition of the gang members with that of non-gang member delinquents, with offense held constant. Information of all police charges placed against juveniles in 1960 was utilized as the non-affiliated delinquent comparison group.²² The distribution of Part I and Part II charges was fairly similar in both groups: 39.6 per cent of the gang member charges were Part I, compared with

²² This comparison is revealing, though not entirely valid, since the racial and sexual composition of the two groups differed: the Gang Study members were all Negroes and all males, while the comparison group was 63% Negro and 82% male. Part of the differential disposition of the two groups, therefore, may be a result of the race and sex of the offenders rather than whether they belonged to delinquent gangs or not.

²¹ Peterson, Pittman & O'Neal, *Stabilities in Deviance: A Study of Assaultive and Non-Assaultive Offenders*, 53 J. CRIM. L., C & P.S. 44 (1962).

36.0 per cent of the 17,571 non-gang member charges in 1960. However, there were some striking differences concerning the disposition of offenders. There was a conspicuous tendency to arrest a larger proportion of gang members charged with Part I offenses than of non-affiliated delinquents: 62.0 per cent of the 1960 comparison sample of offenders charged with Part I offenses were arrested, compared with 81.0 per cent of gang members. With respect to Part II charges, 28.4 per cent of the 1960 juvenile sample were arrested compared with 44.6 per cent of The Gang Study delinquents. Both of these differences are *significant*. (Hereinafter, when the word "significant" is italicized, it refers to statistically significant differences at the .05 level of confidence or better.) These figures might lead one to suspect discriminatory treatment of known gang members on the part of the police. However, the decision to arrest or not arrest a juvenile is a complex judgment. There is little doubt that in addition to considering the nature of the instant delinquency, the police officer will be influenced by the delinquent's previous record of offenses. That the gang member, other things equal, is a more persistent and serious offender than the non-gang member—as the writer suspects—could easily account for the more frequent arrest of the former. On the other hand, it could be argued that the larger number of recorded delinquencies of the affiliated juvenile is a function of police harassment of known and identified sources of trouble, though they may actually be no more troublesome than the harder-to-identify and less accessible non-gang member offender.

It has already been stressed that The Gang Study's sample of delinquents commit an unusually large proportion of serious offenses—particularly offenses against the person—in comparison with other delinquent samples. This despite the fact that The Gang Study is based upon police records, whereas most other studies of delinquency rely upon court data! Therefore, a more accurate delinquent typology for comparative purposes should be restricted to those offenses for which the gang members were arrested, thus providing a sample roughly equivalent to that of court appearance cases. When this refinement is made we find that of 2199 offenses, 34.6 per cent of the offenders were arrested for offenses against the person (of which 11.4 per cent were for homicide, forcible rape, and aggravated assault), 32.2 per

cent for non-assaultive property offenses, and 33.2 per cent for all other delinquencies. The figures reflecting serious delinquency, 34.6 per cent and 32.2 per cent, are far in excess of any reported in the literature.

FINDINGS

PART II: FOLLOW-UP

Upon completion of the Analysis of Police Delinquency Records, a follow-up study of those gang members who had "progressed" into adult crime was made. This study was not restricted to those with juvenile police records. Rather, identifying information on every gang member who was past 18 years of age as of October 15, 1962, was turned over to the Philadelphia Police Department, which in turn attempted to trace the criminal records of these individuals by means of a name check through the FBI. It was found that 40.5 per cent of the 580 gang members who were adults as of October 15, 1962, had acquired criminal records, and that the gang member who did not have a police delinquency record was just as likely to "progress" into crime as the member who did have a police record as a juvenile.

Analysis of Criminal Records

The average number of arrests of the follow-up group was 2.5, with a range of 1 to 15. In half of the cases less than 8 months had elapsed after their eighteenth birthday before they were arrested; the average age at first arrest as an adult was 18 years and 10 months, while 70.2 per cent of the group experienced their first adult contact with the law within one year after reaching adulthood.

Of the 595 crimes for which the follow-up Negroes were arrested, 17.7 per cent were aggravated crimes against the person, 22.2 per cent other crimes against the person, 17.1 per cent non-assaultive property crimes, 15.3 per cent liquor and intoxication violations, 18.8 per cent disorderly conduct and gambling, and 8.9 per cent other crimes. Approximately 40 per cent of all charges were for crimes against the person. Of the 151 Negroes arrested once or twice, 48.3 per cent had been charged with at least one crime against the person, 23.8 per cent with aggravated crimes against the person. Of those arrested more than twice, 85.7 per cent were accused of at least one crime against the person and 57.1 per cent with homicide, aggravated assault, or forcible rape.

For all follow-up members, 35.7 per cent had at some time been arrested for offenses against the person and 26.0 per cent for aggravated offenses against the person.

With respect to disposition of the adult offenders, about 65 per cent of all those whose dispositions were known were convicted. The proportion of convictions varied within a fairly narrow range by offense category: three-fourths of those arrested for aggravated crimes against the person were convicted compared with only 56 per cent of those arrested for liquor and intoxication violations. The high rate of conviction of 73.0 per cent for members arrested for "other offenses" is probably because this group of crimes consisted primarily of narcotic and secondary sex offenses. About 82 per cent of the offenders whose dispositions were known had been convicted at least once, while 54.3 per cent had been institutionalized at some time.

Delinquency and Crime

The Gang Study offered an unusual opportunity to examine the relationship between delinquency and crime prospectively. Studies typically have investigated this relationship retrospectively by observing the relationship between crime and delinquency.²³ That is, they have begun with a sample of adult offenders and determined what proportion had juvenile records. This approach, however, is likely to overestimate the relationship between delinquency and crime. For example, to find that 100% of a criminal sample were delinquents is not to say that delinquency invariably leads to crime.

As already indicated, we found that 40.5 per cent of the juveniles progressed into crime. This figure however is a minimal one and probably underestimates considerably the tendency for Negro gang members to become criminals. There are several reasons for this: (1) a name check, less accurate than a fingerprint check, was used in tracing criminal records; consequently some gang members who were arrested as adults may have given fictitious names and thus avoided inclusion in the follow-up study. (2) Some of the gang members who were adults as of October 15, 1962, may have been in institutions as a result of their delinquencies. These individuals should not have been included in calculating the proportion of

juveniles with criminal records.²⁴ (3) The follow-up period is very short for purposes of studying the relationship between delinquency and crime—the average period of adult status for those with criminal records was 3.1 years, with only 17.9 per cent 23 years or older. In comparison, the average length of adult status for the non-follow-up group was 1.7 years, with 2.0 per cent of them 23 years or older. These differences are *significant* and suggest that with an increase in the follow-up period (a) the follow-up group will commit more crime and (b) an unknown proportion of the non-follow-up group will acquire criminal records. In recent years the age group with maximum arrests is the young adult group, those 25–29 years of age;²⁵ only a small number of both the follow-up and non-follow-up groups were in this age classification.

Since it had been discovered that there was no greater tendency for gang members with juvenile police records to acquire criminal records than for those without police records, it was decided to investigate whether, among the adult Negroes who had juvenile records, there was an inclination for the follow-up group to have been *more* delinquent than the non-follow-up group. The writer found that the non-follow-up group had an average of 5.9 police contacts as juveniles, while 16.0 per cent had 10 or more charges. The follow-up group had an average of 7.4 police contacts, while 30.0 per cent of them had 10 or more charges. These differences are *significant* and demonstrate a recognizable predisposition for the more delinquent delinquents to become criminals. There is of course a certain inadequacy in restricting the concept of degree of delinquency ("more" or "less" delinquent) to number of police contacts. An index of degree of delinquency was needed that would also take into consideration the nature of the delinquent act itself. Accordingly, all the juvenile police contacts of the follow-up and non-follow-up groups were weighted on the basis of the differential institutional punishment provided in the Pennsylvania Penal Code. For example, the maximum penalty²⁶ for larceny in Pennsylvania is 5 years,

²⁴ The real question is: of those former delinquent and non-delinquent gang members who are now adults in the free community—and therefore capable of committing crimes for which they might be detected—how many do so?

²⁵ RECKLESS, *THE CRIME PROBLEM* 40 (1961).

²⁶ Offenses were weighted on the basis of maximum penalty because only upper limits of punishment are specified in the Pennsylvania Penal Code.

²³ As an example, see Frum, *Adult Criminal Offense Trends Following Juvenile Delinquency*, 49 J. CRIM. L., C. & P.S. 29 (1958).

for aggravated assault 3 years, for burglary 20 years, etc. These values of 5, 3, and 20 were then assigned to all larceny, aggravated assault, and burglary charges of the adults as juveniles. In a few instances it was necessary to assign arbitrary values to offenses;²⁷ also, all minor charges falling into a category described by the researcher as General Disorderly Conduct were given a value of 1. The individual offense values were then summed for each offender to yield a total index of degree of delinquency which reflected both the number and kind of police contacts. This procedure led to the finding that the median degree of delinquency for the follow-up group was 22, compared with 17.5 for the non-follow-up group, a *significant* difference. Thus, even when the method of determining degree of delinquency took into account more than the number of police contacts, there was a tendency for those who became criminals to have been more seriously delinquent as juveniles than those who did not become criminals.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The social problems created by the urban Negro delinquent gang member require the attention and resources of the entire community. We are dealing with a boy who early in life has his first official contact with the police and who, shortly afterwards, is bound for juvenile court. The Negro gang member commits several delinquencies before reaching adult status, and the earlier his onset of delinquency, the more frequent and more serious become his violations of the law. There is also evidence of increasingly serious delinquency involvement of a substantial proportion of the sample. Of major significance are the shorter periods of time lapse between each succeeding pair of youthful offenses and the empiric reality of the Negro delinquent's employment or threat to employ force and violence: of those who were adults, almost 4 out of every 10 had been involved in forcible rape, homicide, or near-murder as juvenile gang members. The implication for sub-cultural differentiation (especially for the study of a subculture of violence²⁸) has been alluded to briefly. Also, there is a consistent increase in the frequency of almost all types of delinquency up to

16 years of age, with a particularly heavy concentration of Aggravated Offenses Against the Person at the upper range of delinquent status. All of these findings testify to the urgent need for prevention and treatment to be directed at pre- and early adolescence and to be sensitive to the importance of the first signs of youthful disregard for society's legal norms.

A follow-up study revealed that 40 per cent of the gang members continued into adult crime. For several reasons, this is a minimal figure and probably underestimates considerably the relationship between delinquency and crime. It is reasonable to infer that, given more thorough follow-up techniques and a longer follow-up period, an appreciable number of those for whom no criminal records were located will acquire them. In any event, The Gang Study has revealed a strong linkage between delinquency and crime. Moreover, this linkage has been established by (1) following up a group of gang members into adulthood rather than by tracing back a group of adult offenders into delinquency, and (2) by utilizing a sample of juveniles dealt with by the police rather than those appearing before a juvenile court, in a child clinic, or the like. By using such a sample, we have been able to approach more closely criminal tendencies of the delinquent universe than would have been the case had a more restricted and biased sample of court, probation, or institutionalized cases been used.

Those gang members who continued into adult crime lost little time in activating the behavior they had learned as juveniles, 70.2 per cent being arrested within one year after their eighteenth birthday. In addition, their crimes as adults were more serious than their delinquencies as juveniles: almost 1 out of every 5 were arrested for homicide, forcible rape, or aggravated assault, 4 out of every 10 for Offenses Against the Person, and only 2 out of every 10 for what may be described as General Disorderly Conduct.

The analysis of police delinquencies of gang members, and inspection of the criminal records of those juveniles who became adult offenders, has made it clear that these individuals were persistent and dangerous adolescent offenders, has shown that a large proportion of them became even more serious adult offenders, and consequently has emphasized the need for social intervention no later than at the point immediately following the juvenile's initial involvement with a law enforcement agency.

²⁷ Homicide was given a value of 30, and resisting arrest, interfering with an officer, forcible entry, and weapon violations were given a value of 1.5.

²⁸ See Wolfgang, "Subculture of Violence: An Interpretive Analysis of Homicide," paper presented at the 1960 Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, New York, 29-31, August 1960.