

Preventing Crime: A comparative analysis of Juvenile Violence and delinquency in Urban and Suburban communities and the impact of media and mass communication

by

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ABSTRACT

Every day, crime shatters the peace in our Nation's neighborhoods. The impact of media on the American family continues to grow and intensify at a mind-boggling pace. The unregulated world of the Internet and cyberspace continue to pose very serious hazards. Violent crime and the fear it engenders cripple our society, threaten personal freedom, and fray the ties that are essential for healthy communities. No corner of America is safe from increasing levels of criminal violence, including violence committed by and against juveniles. Parents are afraid to let their children walk to school alone. Children hesitate to play in neighborhood playgrounds. The elderly lock themselves in their homes, and innocent Americans of all ages find their lives changed by the fear of crime. The image of rural America today still suggests that small towns, farming communities, and the open country are crime free. This perception is not accurate; yet, relative to the problems of some large urban communities, rural areas do look like havens of safety. Communities throughout the United States are struggling with rising levels of youth violence

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The future of juvenile violence underscores the need for strong, immediate, well-planned, and decisive action to intervene early with efforts to prevent younger children from following in the self-destructive footsteps of many of their older brothers and sisters. Removing serious and violent juvenile offenders from the street serves to protect the public. Long-term solutions lie primarily in taking aggressive steps to stop delinquency before it starts or becomes a pattern of behavior.

At the turn of the century, the juvenile justice system operated in a world very different from the one we live in today. Then, more Americans lived in rural areas and small communities, juvenile offenses were generally less severe, and victims would be more likely to know the consequences for individuals who had harmed them. Today, the juvenile justice system is unable to devote sufficient resources to dealing with status offenders and minor delinquency because of the growing number of serious and violent juvenile offenders. These offenders require a greatly enhanced response, and greater coordination among the system's components. Use of the balanced and restorative justice model of accountability, multidisciplinary assessment

teams, and a system of graduated sanctions can help to provide the response and coordination that are required to effectively address juvenile violence and delinquency.

Although the public is deeply concerned about juvenile violence and victimization, many Americans do not know how they can help. Because the effects of juvenile violence are felt by entire communities, the search for solutions must be a communitywide effort, and every citizen needs to be involved. A city is an urban area, differentiated from a town by size, population density, importance, or legal status. *City* can also be a synonym of *downtown*, the central business district. A city usually consists of residential, industrial and business areas together with administrative functions which may relate to a wider geographical area. A large share of a city's area is generally taken up by houses, roads, and streets. Lakes and rivers may be the only undeveloped areas within the city.

The difference between *towns* and *cities* is differently understood in different parts of the English speaking world. There is no one standard international definition of a city: the term may be used for a town possessing city status; for an urban locality exceeding an arbitrary population size; for a town dominating other towns with particular regional economic or administrative

significance. Although *city* can refer to an agglomeration including suburban and satellite areas, the term is not appropriate for a conurbation (cluster) of *distinct* urban places, or for a wider metropolitan area including more than one city, each acting as a focus for parts of the area.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this descriptive research study is to identify and examine the relationship of juvenile violence and delinquency in urban and suburban communities and to determine if the media and mass communication contributed to juvenile offenses both criminal and noncriminal. Research study will recommend solutions that will include effective prevention programs and intervention strategies.

There are only two major differences. The first is associated with scale. Informal social relationships - what sociologists refer to as primary group relationships - remain relatively more important for influencing the behavior of individuals who live in rural communities? This influence sometimes can serve as a buffer that reduces the impact of societal trends on problem behaviors, but it also can mask recognition that problems exist. The second major

difference is that the economic, social, and cultural forces associated with rising levels of crime, violence, delinquency, and gangs appear first in urban areas and then spread to the hinterlands. Rural communities often lag behind the cities on crime and other social problems. As a result, policymakers often have left rural communities out of resource allocation decisions, because when those decisions were being made, the problems were predominantly urban.

Problem Statement

The problem of violent crime committed by and against juveniles is a national crisis. Demographic experts predict that juvenile arrests for violent crimes will more than double by the year 2010, given the population growth projections and trends in juvenile arrests over the past decade. We can successfully intervene to reverse these trends based on identified positive and negative characteristics--protective and risk factors--that are present or lacking in communities, families, schools, peer groups, and individuals.

These factors either equip a child with the capacity to become a healthy, productive individual or expose that child to potential involvement in crime and violence. Of

equal importance, communities are learning that they can make dramatic changes in delinquency levels by taking steps that successfully reduce the risk factors and strengthen the protective factors in children's lives.

Research Questions

The problem in assessing rural crime is that different people look at the same facts and reach very different conclusions. According to a variety of national and state-level databases reviewed here, crime levels in rural areas in every region of the country are almost always well below the crime rates of cities. However, looking at rural crime rates over time offers a different view - suggesting that while rural areas today have less crime than their urban counterparts, they also have more crime than they did in the past, and their crime problems are serious. The following research questions supports thesis topic:

1. Can individuals and groups prevent or reduce juvenile violence in their urban community?
2. Can individuals and groups prevent or reduce juvenile violence in their suburban community?

3. Is female juvenile delinquency rising and is the increase greater proportionately than that of males?
4. Does the availability of drugs and firearms, and persistent poverty, make juveniles more prone to involvement in delinquent behavior?
5. Is the presumption that suburban schools have less disorder and juvenile delinquency than urban schools incorrect?
6. Does viewing violence on television correlate with the increased in acceptance of aggressive behavior?
7. The economic conditions of poverty found in many rural communities contribute to juvenile delinquency?
8. Are rural juvenile youth more at risk than urban youth?
9. Is media and mass communication violence a leading cause of youth violence?
10. Can TV violence affect violent behavior?
11. Does TV teach aggressive attitude and behavior that contribute to violent acts committed by juveniles?

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis:

1. There is no statistically significant difference in juvenile violence and delinquency in urban and suburban communities.

2. The media and mass communication does not have an impact on juvenile crime.

Research Hypothesis:

1. There is a statistically significant difference in juvenile violence and delinquency in urban and suburban communities.

2. The media does have an impact on juvenile crime.

For the purpose of this thesis the researcher will research four relevant cases that are classified into four categories of crime and measure the number of offense within the urban and suburban communities. The categories vary by ages 12 -17 and the indicators would be gender (males and females). The procedures will be reviewed according to Race (White, Black, Asian Pacific and American Indian (Race)).

Measure
Percent of
Serious Offense
(Juvenile arrests)

Delinquency Categories
Murder
Forcible rape
Robbery
Aggregated assault

Male and Female (gender)

Ages 12-17

Black and White

Urban and Suburban

Definition of Terms

Crimes of violence: Include rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. Crimes of theft include purse snatching, pocket picking, and personal larceny without direct contact (i.e., theft of personal items from any place other than the victim's home). Household crimes are defined as burglary (both at the permanent residence and while in hotels and other temporary living quarters), larceny at the place of residence, and motor vehicle theft.

Juvenile: Refers to a person under the age established by a State to determine when an individual is no longer subject to original juvenile court jurisdiction for (any) criminal misconduct. While this upper age is 17 in a majority of jurisdictions, it ranges from 15 to 17 years of age.

Serious juvenile offenders: Juveniles that are those adjudicated delinquent for committing any felony offense, including larceny or theft, burglary or breaking and entering, extortion, arson, and drug trafficking or other controlled dangerous substance violation.

The National Crime Victimization: An annual survey conducted by the Census Bureau and analyzed and published

by the Justice Department and is broadly considered to be the best measure of crime by criminologists.

Urban: The Bureau of the Census defines urban as comprising all territory, population, and housing units located in urbanized areas and in places of 2,500 or more inhabitants outside of the US. The term urban refers to both kinds of geographic entities. The terms urban, suburbanized urban and rural are the Census Bureau's definitions; other Federal agencies, State agencies, local officials, and private groups may use these same terms to identify areas based on different criteria.

Rural: A rural place is any incorporated place or CDP with fewer than 2,500 inhabitants that are located outside of a UA. A place is either entirely urban or entirely rural except for those designated as an extended city.

Media and Crime

The National Crime Victimization survey is an annual survey conducted by the Census Bureau and analyzed and published by the Justice Department and is broadly considered to be the best measure of crime by criminologists. In their most recent survey, youth crime was at its lowest since that survey began in 1973.

The mainstream media generally followed the rankings of many of these politicians. So, for example, between 1992 and 1996, despite the fact that there was a 20 percent decline in homicides in America, there was a 721 percent increase in coverage of murders on the ABC, CBS and NBC evening news. Since three-quarters of Americans form their opinions about crime from information they garner from the news media, it is not surprising that two-thirds of the public think juvenile crime is up, even though it is as low as it has been in a generation.

It is difficult to overstate how the highly publicized spate of school shootings affected public opinion and policy. The year of the tragedy at Columbine, there were 26 school-associated deaths in America's schools, which educate a population of 52 million school students. This means that there was less than a 1-in-2-million chance of being killed in one of America's schools that year, a decline of 40 percent from the previous year. Assaults and carrying weapons in schools had also all declined by double digits in the years leading up to Columbine. School violence and school shootings were and are on the decline, and schools continue to be one of the safest places for America's children to be.

Yet Americans are perhaps as afraid of their schools

as they've ever been. Seven in 10 respondents to a *Wall Street Journal* poll believe it is likely that there will be a shooting in their neighborhood school. Despite the 40 percent decline in school shootings, respondents to a *USA Today* poll were 49 percent more likely to believe such a shooting was likely in 1999 than in 1998. Although data consistently show that youths in rural schools are the least likely to be victimized by crime, rural parents are more fearful of crime in their schools than urban or suburban parents. All of this has resulted in 3.1 million suspensions and expulsions from America's schools, expulsions which occur at twice the rate they occurred when my more violent classmates and I attended school in the late 1970s.

National media coverage of crime has increased dramatically in recent years (*Media Monitor*, 1994), and violent and gang-related offenses have often been the subjects of this new media attention (Males, 1996). For example, a recent study by the Center for Media and Public Affairs revealed that while the homicide rate in the U.S. fell 20% between 1993 and 1996, media coverage of murders increased 721% (*Washington Post*, August 12, 1997: D1). While, as shall be noted, links between media trends and

public perceptions are generally complex, it is also the case that the number of Americans naming crime as the nation's "most important problem" increased six fold between June of 1993 and January of 1994--at a time when official crime statistics and victimization surveys showed little change (*Media Monitor*, 1994). Certainly, criminology must begin to take account of media coverage in more systematic ways than has previously been the case.

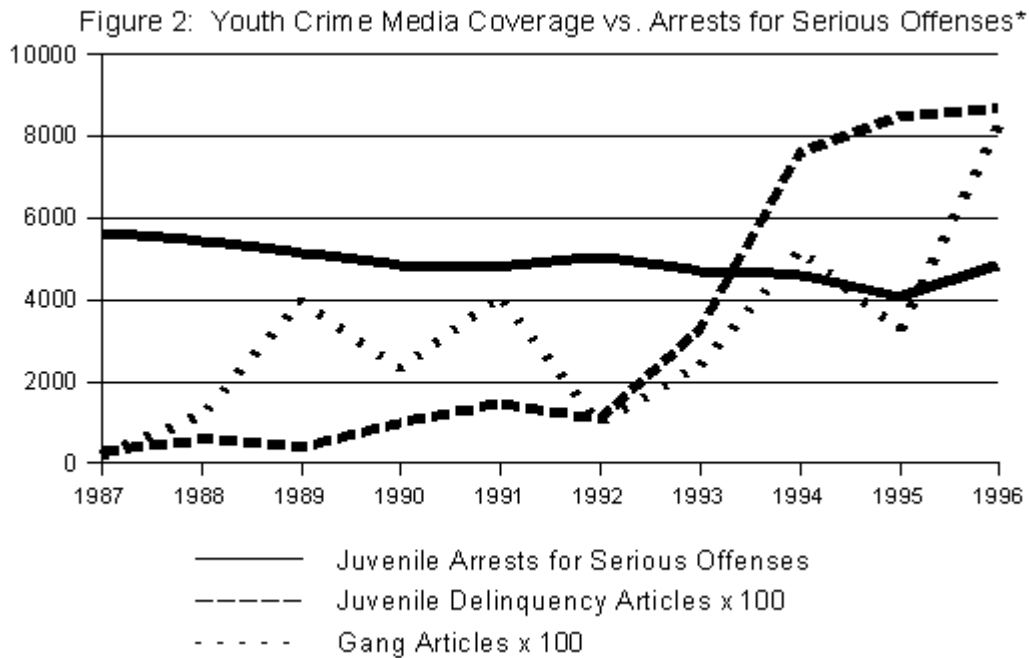
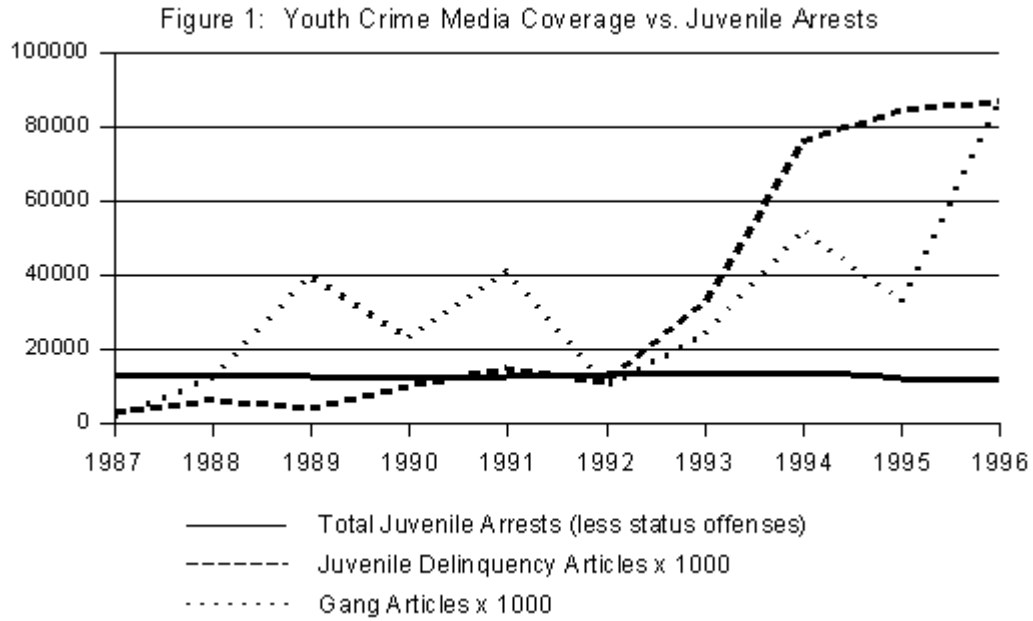
Extant national research suggests that the media often "over-report" crime-related news by "exaggerating the seriousness of events, the violence that occurred, and the damage caused" (Cohen, 1981), and by producing crime-related articles in patterns that bear little resemblance to actual crime trends (Garofolo, 1981; Sheley, 1981; Davis, 1952). Even stories that are specifically about official crime statistics may misrepresent these figures by downplaying, ignoring, or focusing excessively on certain statistics and extenuating circumstances (Smith, 1981). For example, the media may focus less on a ten-percent decrease in overall violent crime than they do on an embedded five-percent increase in aggravated assaults. Similarly, a ten-percent decrease in the crime rate may only be given

passing mention in the back pages of a newspaper, while a five-percent increase may be automatic headline news.

For example juvenile arrest trends in Hawaii have been stable or on the decline throughout the last decade, and have been less characterized by arrests for violent acts than has been the case in many other parts of the nation. Central to the present discussion is that there clearly has not been an "explosion" or "epidemic" of local juvenile crime. At the same time, national research indicates that the media tend to focus rather narrowly on violence and other "bad news" in their presentation of crime issues. The task at hand, then, is to assess the specific manner in which local news media have reported juvenile crime.

These trends demonstrate that the actual extent of juvenile crime in Hawaii has certainly not increased between several hundred and a few thousand percent, as has the output of newspaper articles about juvenile crime. The disparity between the media output of youth crime-related stories and total juvenile arrests (Figure 1) and juvenile arrests for serious offenses (Figure 2) becomes quite obvious when the patterns are graphically compared. Thus, the recent media focus on juvenile crime does not appear to have been based on any sort of increase in the actual

extent of juvenile crime--more juvenile crime did not simply give reporters more to write about.



One possible interpretation of the newspaper data is that the media grossly under-reported juvenile crime prior to 1993 or 1994, and is only now reporting at an appropriate level. Whether or not this is the most plausible explanation (the media output was quite sparse in Hawaii's comparatively higher juvenile crime era of the late 1980's, after all), the point remains largely irrelevant. A blame-oriented "early era/under-reporting" or "current era/over-reporting" explanation is not as useful as simply stating that longtime readers of the local newspapers have been presented with a dramatically accelerating output of juvenile crime articles, and that this media output has occurred during a period of mostly decreasing local juvenile crime.

Government involvement has made a modest impact. According to most experts, the Federal Communications Commission's requirement of three hours of children's television per week has been beneficial, although most parents would like to see the requirement increased to seven or more hours per week. In addition, the V-chip blocking technology officially came of age this summer, and is due to be installed in all new television sets by year's end. However, it is safe to assume that it will be another

decade before we see the V-chip working in most American homes. A public education blitz for the new technology is underway, but the value of the V-chip is ultimately in question given that it is based on an industry-driven rating system that is unreliable and is not being used by all networks.

Currently, rating systems exist for all forms of entertainment (TV, movies, music, video/computer games, and arcade games). Globally, annual video game revenues now exceed \$18 billion.¹⁰¹ In the United States alone they amount to \$10 billion. However, because these voluntary ratings are industry-developed and industry-assigned, their reliability is highly suspect. According to the National Institute on Media and the Family, the so-called "ratings creep" is ongoing for television and movies. Shows that the industry might have assigned an "R" or "TV-MA" rating a few years ago are today PG-13 or TV-14. And while ratings for computer/video games appear to be more accurate, they are largely unenforced by retail and rental outlets. This is also a problem for music, which uses its "voluntary" rating system most sporadically.

Research has found that among seventh- and eighth-graders, the most popular game category is fantasy

violence, with 32 percent of players preferring such games, followed by sports (29 percent), general entertainment (20 percent), human violence (17 percent) and educational games (2 percent). The study also found that boys who play violent video games tend to have a lower self-concept in the areas of academic ability, peer acceptance and behavior. This has raised concern about high risk game-playing behavior and its link to subsequent aggressive behavior. A legislative proposal has been introduced that would eliminate the sea of numbers and letters that make up the current ratings systems. Instead, one universal system would be used to rate all forms of media. Further, a recent poll showed that 84 percent of parents would like to see a rating system completely independent of industry input.

Summary

Chapter 1 introduced the investigation and was based on the initial section of the study. The problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the necessary definitions of technical terms, survey instrument and significance of the study were also set out.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature pertinent to juvenile violence and delinquency in urban and suburban communities and the impact of media and communication. According to Erikson's (1966) observation of crime (assault, arson, fighting and brawling, theft, pick pocketing, robbery, con and fraud, and even murder) began to increase as the rural community became an important international trade center. The population became more transient and the community began to urbanize and become a city. The lesson to be learned from this study is that these same processes - population mobility, urbanization, interdependence - identify the same social and economic trends that help researchers understand crime and violence in rural communities today.

The image of crime-free rural areas was born and grew as the centers of crime shifted to the cities located in the East, along the Great Lakes, and on the waterways of the Mississippi River system, which themselves were experiencing rapid population growth and population mobility as new waves of immigrants came to this country (Inciardi, 1978).

Bealer (1965) stated that popularized images of rural crime through the first half of the 20th century included such phenomena as gangsters (e.g., Bonnie and Clyde, John Dillinger), the lynch mobs and the Ku Klux Klan of the South, moonshiners and ridge runners hiding from the Feds, labor disputes (i.e., strikes by mine workers), and the violence of so-called "backward" and Southern people featured in the novels of William Faulkner, Erskine Caldwell, and others. Yet, these phenomena were seen as aberrations that were not representative of rural society. By this period, statistics from the UCR and research by various criminologists were stating with certainty that rural crime was minor compared to urban crime.

The Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act was passed in 1968, after President Johnson declared that massive funding programs were needed to strengthen local law enforcement and criminal justice in order to reverse the trend toward lawlessness in cities (Carter, 1982). Yet, it was somehow assumed that rural areas would remain immune to the problem and that rural areas experiencing rapidly growing and serious levels of crime could be understood by such nebulous but academic-sounding phrases as urban spillover, urban contamination, and urban export. Few

scholars suggested that rural crime could best be understood by factors endogenous to rural areas. Exceptions included the early research of Hartung (1965), Feldhusen et al. (1965), Polk (1969), Gibbons (1972), Phillips (1976a, 1976b), and Fisher (1980). Each emphasized that although rural offenders commit less serious crimes than urban offenders and rural crime rates are lower than urban crime rates, neither comparison justifies the conclusion that rural areas are crime-free or that problems of safety and security in rural communities should be ignored.

The first rural victimization studies was conducted by Phillips (1976a and 1976b), who found that vandalism was the most frequently occurring crime among rural residents. The frequency of vandalism was confirmed in early rural victim studies by Smith and Huff (1982) and Donnermeyer (1982) in Indiana.

Studies of indirect victimization experienced by rural residents are nearly nonexistent. Indirect victimization may be defined as knowledge of recent crimes occurring to friends, acquaintances, neighbors, relatives, and other family members. Indirect victimization should be distinguished from the impact of media stories on crime

incidents. Indirect victimization refers only to awareness of crimes experienced by people one knows.

A study by Donnermeyer and Kreps (1986) of one rural county in north central Ohio noted that 36 percent of the respondents were aware of incidents of vandalism occurring within the past year to people they knew. Thirty-two percent knew of burglary incidents, 31 percent knew of incidents of theft or larceny, and 18 percent were aware of violent crime incidents. Altogether, slightly more than 60 percent of the sample could recall crime incidents experienced by people they knew. Lee (1982) found that nearly two-thirds of his sample of rural and urban residents in the state of Washington knew of friends who had recently been the victims of crime. Residents of small towns exhibited the lowest amount of indirect victimization, while farm, open-country, and city (places of 100,000 and more) people showed the highest amount of indirect victimization.

In 1974, 7 percent of respondents 60 years of age and younger and 14 percent of those over 60 felt that it was not safe for a woman to be at home alone in Research conducted in the 1970s suggests that fear of crime was lower for rural versus urban residents. However, research

conducted during the 1980s notes a rural-urban convergence in fear levels (Weisheit et al., 1993). For example, annual public opinion polls about crime in South Carolina from 1980 to 1985 found that rural residents were slightly more concerned about their safety than respondents from suburban areas and cities (Stephens, 1985).

Two statewide studies conducted in 1974 by Phillips (1976a) and in 1980 by Donnermeyer et al. (1983) of open-country residents in Ohio illustrate how perceptions of crime among rural residents have changed. In 1974, 36 percent of respondents fewer than 60 years of age and 44 percent over 60 felt that it was not safe for a woman to walk alone at night in their neighborhood.

In 1980, 14 percent of respondents under age 60 and 22 percent of respondents over age 60 believed that their neighborhood was not safe for a woman alone in her own home. The reader should note that the elderly are the least victimized but the most fearful of all age groups, regardless of location. In this study, fear of crime among younger persons in 1980 matched almost exactly the proportion of elderly who were fearful in 1974. Hence, there is a lag in perceptions by age, much as there is a lag in rural crime rates relative to urban rates.

One phenomenon about rural crime that illustrates the relationship between population mobility, urbanism, and fear of crime was found in research by Donnermeyer and Phillips (1982 and 1984) on reactions by vandalism victims. Surprisingly, victims of vandalism demonstrated higher levels of fear than the victims of all other property crimes and many violent crimes (their survey did not include rape victimization and there were few reported cases of aggravated assault). It appears that vandalism represents a form of "perceived incivility" - that is, a random, capricious act of violence against property. Victims cannot make sense out of it and therefore have a more negative perception of vandalism.

Virtually no information is available on levels of spouse, child, and elder abuse in rural areas. The nature of abuse, which involves sexual, physical, and psychological abuse often between family members or in relationships of trust between the victim and the offender, makes abuse impossible to measure in victimization surveys. Furthermore, victims often are reluctant to report cases of abuse.

Nationally, child abuse cases are estimated at about 2.4 million annually. There are no rural-urban differences

in physical forms of child abuse, but urban areas display more reported cases of nonphysical abuse, according to the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (1988). Miller and Veltkamp (1989) studied a small rural county in Kentucky with nearly 300 reported cases of child abuse (many times greater than any type of national average).

The vast majority (95%) of spouse abuse victims are female. Estimates indicate that the number of wives who are beaten or in other ways injured by their spouses and ex-spouses number close to two million each year. Once again, the prevalence of spouse abuse may be many times larger than the reported number of incidents. One study by Gagne (1992) of rural Appalachia suggests that rates of domestic violence in some rural areas may be higher than city rates.

Rural offenders are arrested for various offenses in roughly the same proportion as persons arrested by suburban and urban law enforcement agencies. This pattern is confirmed by Laub (1983), who analyzed victims' knowledge of offenders for violence, theft, and household crimes in the NCS. Another similarity is that about four out of five rural persons arrested are male, which is only one or two percentage points above the proportion of males arrested in the suburbs and cities.

A recent report of the American Psychological Association (1993, pp. 32-33) concluded that: "There is absolutely no doubt that higher levels of viewing violence on television are correlated with increased acceptance of aggressive attitudes and increased aggressive behavior."

The family, school, and church become less influential in later adolescence, and the probability of engaging in illegal behaviors is determined largely by association with delinquent peer groups. Since World War II, peer influence has grown stronger while the influence of family and other societal institutions has grown weaker (Oetting & Beauvais, 1986). As rural youth gain access to a motor vehicle, the informal primary group relationships of small rural communities diminish in their influence.

According to Funk (1992) research has found that among seventh- and eighth-graders, the most popular game category is fantasy violence, with 32 percent of players preferring such games, followed by sports (29 percent), general entertainment (20 percent), human violence (17 percent) and educational games (2 percent). The study also found that boys who play violent video games tend to have a lower self-concept in the areas of academic ability, peer acceptance and behavior. This has raised concern about

"high risk" game-playing behavior and its link to subsequent aggressive behavior.

According to the three-year National Television Violence Study, which analyzed not only the amount of violence on television, but also the context in which it was presented, found:

- o fully 61 percent of programs contained violence—the same as the previous year, but up from 58 percent during 1994–1995.
- o in prime time, programs with violent content on the broadcast networks increased 14 percent (to 67 percent of all shows examined). Cable programs with violent content increased 10 percent (to 64 percent of those examined).
- o perpetrators of violence go unpunished in 73 percent of all violent scenes.
- o the negative consequences of violence are not often portrayed in violent programming.
- o one of four violent interactions on television involves the use of a handgun.
- o only 4 percent of violent programs emphasize an anti-violence theme.

- parental discretion advisories, PG-13 and R ratings made programs more attractive to boys.

According to a Gallup poll, 62 percent of adults say violence in popular entertainment is one of the major causes of violence among young people. Government involvement has made a modest impact. Research has associated exposure to media violence with a variety of physical and mental health problems for children and adolescents, including aggressive behavior, desensitization to violence, fear, depression, nightmares, and sleep disturbances. More than 3500 research studies have examined the association between media violence and violent behavior; all but 18 have shown a positive relationship.

Consistent and strong associations between media exposure and increases in aggression have been found in population-based epidemiologic investigations of violence in American society, cross-cultural studies, experimental and "natural" laboratory research, and longitudinal studies that show that aggressive behavior associated with media exposure persists for decades. The strength of the correlation between media violence and aggressive behavior found on meta-analysis is greater than that of calcium intake and bone mass, lead ingestion and lower IQ, condom

nonuse and sexually acquired human immunodeficiency virus infection, or environmental tobacco smoke and lung cancer— associations clinicians accept and on which preventive medicine is based without question.

The causes of the increase in crime in rural areas can be reduced to three sets of factors. The first can be termed opportunity factors. Transportation systems have made rural areas more accessible today. Many rural areas are urbanizing, and with urbanization come the inevitable increase in crime. Lifestyles also have changed. In the past, when most rural people lived on farms and ranches, the place of work was the same as the place of residence. Now, most rural people do not work in agriculture. They commute to work. Rural women have entered the workforce to the same extent as urban women. Children attend consolidated schools and often stay after school for sports and other extra-curricular activities. Rural families have shifted their shopping away from the stores on Main Street to the nearest shopping mall. Rural neighbors are less likely to know each other and therefore to provide surveillance of each other's property. Rural residents spend a greater amount of time in urban locations, such as

shopping malls and places of entertainment, where they are at greater risk of victimization.

The second set of factors represents more basic changes in the social fabric of both the rural and urban sectors of American society. An underlying cause of violence, delinquency, drug use, and the emergence of gangs in rural areas has been the weakened influence of the family, schools, and churches on values and behavior. Rural youth, along with their urban counterparts, are exposed to images on television and in the movies that desensitize them to the consequences of violence. A recent report of the American Psychological Association (1993, pp. 32-33) concluded that: There is absolutely no doubt that higher levels of viewing violence on television are correlated with increased acceptance of aggressive attitudes and increased aggressive behavior.

The family, school, and church become less influential in later adolescence, and the probability of engaging in illegal behaviors is determined largely by association with delinquent peer groups. Since World War II, peer influence has grown stronger while the influence of family and other societal institutions has grown weaker (Oetting & Beauvais, 1986). As rural youth gain access to a motor vehicle, the

informal primary group relationships of small rural communities diminish in their influence.

The third set of factors involves the economic conditions of poverty found in many rural communities and the impact of poverty on rural families and young people. In a report prepared for the Children's Defense Fund, Sherman (1992) indicated that rural children live in poor families in greater proportions than urban children. Dropout rates of students in rural schools are higher than in urban areas. Rural schools have fewer resources for handling students with special educational needs. Sherman (1992) also cites dozens of other ways that rural youth are more "at risk" than urban youth. These risk factors contribute to the volatile mix that includes the influence of the media, delinquency prone peer groups, the mobility of the population, and a growing network of gangs.

The National Crime Report trends in victimization by locality of occurrence, victim and offender characteristics, and types of victimization (personal or property crimes). Personal crimes include rape and sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, and personal theft; property crimes include household burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft. Data on murder by type of

locality of occurrence are also given. Murder data came from the Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) of the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR).

Highlights include the following:

- From 1993 to 1998 the trends in violent and property crime for urban and suburban areas were similar. For both urban and suburban areas, violent and property crime trends during this period decreased at a greater rate than in rural areas.
- The average annual 1993-98 violent crime rate in urban areas was about 74% higher than the rural rate and 37% higher than the suburban rate.
- Urban males experienced violent victimizations at rates 64% higher than the average combined suburban and rural male rate and 47% higher than urban females.
- Although most violent crimes in urban (60%), suburban (68%), and rural (70%) areas were committed without a weapon, firearm usage in the commission of a violent crime was higher in urban areas when compared to suburban or rural areas (12% urban versus 9% suburban and 8% rural).
- Between 1993 and 1998, 19 in 20 suburban and rural households owned motor vehicles; however, in suburban

households the theft of motor vehicles (13 per 1,000 households) was twice the rural rate (6 per 1,000 households) during this period.

- Property crimes were generally completed at higher rates against urban households than against suburban or rural households.
- Urban violent crime victims were more likely than suburban or rural crime victims to be victimized by a stranger (respectively, 53%, 47%, and 34% of violent crime victims).

In 1992 reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act of 1974 (the Act), Congress affirmed that it is more effective in human and fiscal terms to prevent delinquency than to attempt to control it after the fact. While treatment and rehabilitation programs are necessary to respond to youth already engaged in delinquent acts, treatment programs face an uphill battle. Research indicates that by the time most serious delinquents are identified by and receive treatment from the juvenile justice system, they are well into their delinquent careers (Thornberry, Huizinga, and Loeber, 1995). In addition, many chronic offenders, according to self-report data, are never arrested and treated. A sole focus

on treatment overlooks a large number of delinquent youth (Thornberry, Huizinga, and Loeber, 1995). To effectively reduce the number of youth engaging in delinquent behavior, these behaviors must be prevented in the first place.

A growing base of evidence indicates that prevention programs can reduce the number of youth engaging in juvenile crime and problem behaviors. In a congressionally mandated, rigorous review of more than 500 crime prevention programs, researchers found a number of successful and promising program models (Sherman et al., 1998). Among the effective programs identified were long-term, frequent home visitation programs combined with preschool; school-based programs that clarify and communicate norms about behaviors; and instructional programs that address social competency skills.

The effectiveness of risk-focused prevention approaches has been increasingly recognized over the past 10 years, and today, new research provides even greater insights. For example, risk factors are not static. Their predictive value changes depending on when they occur in a young person's development, in what social context, and under what circumstances (United States Office of the Surgeon General, 2001). As a result, much of the current

research on risk factors examines their links to problem behaviors across different groups of youth, under a variety of circumstances. For example, OJJDP's Study Group on Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders examined significant factors in predicting future violence or delinquency among groups of 6- to 11- and 12- to 14-year-old youth (Hawkins et al., 2000).

Interestingly, the researchers found that risk factors differed between the two age groups. For example, substance abuse was one of the highest ranking predictors of violence or serious delinquency for the 6- to 11-year-old group, but one of the lowest ranking predictors for the 12- to 14-year-old group. Conversely, having antisocial peers was one of the highest ranking predictors for the 12- to 14-year-old group, but one of the lowest for the 6- to 11-year-old group (Hawkins et al., 2000). This analysis indicates there may be a developmental component to risk factors and suggests that communities need to consider the age of youth when assessing local risk factors.

OJJDP's Program of Research on the Causes and Correlates of Delinquency (Thornberry, Huizinga, and Loeber, 1995) has been examining risk factors that may be predictive for violent, chronic juvenile offenders, a small

but particularly problematic group to address. Researchers found that the prevalence of certain risk factors is much higher for this group than for nonviolent offenders, including low attachment to parents, low commitment to school, high delinquent peer associations, and residence in a high-crime neighborhood. In addition, this research suggests that individual risk factors add to and interact with each other, placing youth with multiple risk factors at very high risk for delinquency (Thornberry, Huizinga, and Loeber, 1995).

Another recent study analyzed risk factors by racial and gender groups. The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) looked at the effect of demographic characteristics (including race, gender, family income, and family structure) and risk factors on various problem behaviors (Blum, Beuhring, and Rinehart, 2000). The study found that while some risk factors are more prevalent among certain demographic groups (such as minority males), demographic characteristics in and of themselves are not useful predictors of adolescents' future risky behavior. The study also showed that risk factors for delinquency and violence varied among demographic groups. For example, frequency of parental drinking was a risk factor for future

alcohol use for white and black females but not for Hispanic females or for males of any race.

The most consistent risk factors for alcohol use across all race and gender groups were the number of best friends who drink and frequent problems with schoolwork. These were also the most consistent risk factors for weapon-related violence. These findings underscore the fact that risk factors are not the same for every demographic group, and it is therefore important to know which risk factors exist in a community for which groups (Blum, Beuhring, and Rinehart, 2000).

While Hawkins and Catalano (1992) state that healthy bonding is a significant factor in children's resistance to crime and drugs. Children can bond positively with their parents, peers, and community. When people feel bonded to society, or to a social unit like the family or school, they want to live according to its standards or norms (Hawkins and Catalano, 1992). According to Hawkins and Catalano, three conditions are needed to create positive bonds. Youth need:

- Opportunities to contribute to social groups.
- Skills to be successful in their contributions.

- Recognition for their contributions.

Identifying which protective factors are present—and which can be enhanced—can help guide development of prevention strategies. Protective factors can be quite powerful in their ability to offset risk factors.

Thornberry, Huizinga, and Loeber (1995) found that certain protective factors have some effect even on the most high-risk youth (defined as having five or more family-based risk factors). These protective factors include:

- Doing well in school.
- Intending to continue one's education.
- Having high levels of attachment to one's parents.
- Associating with prosocial peers.

Although each protective factor alone had little effect, they found that 82 percent of the high risk youth who had nine or more protective factors did *not* engage in serious delinquent behavior (Thornberry, Huizinga, and Loeber, 1995). Protective factors, like risk factors, also appear to vary among subgroups. The recent Add Health study found that there was no single protective factor that was effective across all demographic groups (Blum, Beuhring, and Rinehart, 2000).

The protective factor that appeared most frequently across groups, however, was having positive parent/family relationships. This factor appeared to reduce the likelihood of alcohol use among black males and females but not among white or Hispanic males or females. It also was proven effective against weapon related violence for all groups except white females (Blum, Beuhring, and Rinehart, 2000). Based on these findings, it is clear that effective prevention efforts need to address both risk *and* protective factors. It is important to curtail the accumulation of risk factors that lead youth down the road to delinquent behavior. It is also important to build protective factors, so that youth can progress toward healthy development. Prevention efforts need to begin early and must be sustained to ensure that youth stay on the path of healthy development.

The research literature indicates that programs that reduce risk factors and promote protective factors are the most likely to prevent delinquency. Extensive reviews of prevention programs and their evaluations also identify other characteristics common among effective programs, including (Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 1999; Elliott, 1997; National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1997):

- Early initiation of prevention activities.
- Evidence-based practices.
- Comprehensive approaches that address multiple domains (e.g., family, school, community, peer group, and individual).
- Age-specific and developmentally appropriate interventions.
- Interagency partnerships and community linkages.
- Long-term orientations.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher used secondary data research method for Thesis. The secondary data contains the most detailed information available on juvenile youth involved in the juvenile justice system and on the activities of U.S. juvenile courts. The Juvenile Court Statistics relies on the secondary analysis of data originally compiled by the juvenile courts or juvenile justice agencies to meet reporting needs. As a consequence, incoming data files are not uniform across jurisdictions. However, these data files are likely to be more detailed and accurate than data files compiled by local jurisdictions merely to comply with a mandated national reporting program.

The diversity of the secondary data stored in the National Juvenile Court Data Archive enables the data to support a wider range of research efforts than would a uniform, and probably more general, data collection form. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program is limited by necessity to a small number of relatively broad offense codes.

Secondary analysis of available data is the best practical alternative for developing an understanding statistical data that relates to juvenile violence and delinquency in urban and suburban communities and in determining if the media and mass communication have an impact.

Survey Instrument

The victimization survey is a data collection procedure that the researcher used to estimate the extent of crime within particular geographic areas by means of a representative sample of the population from which information about crime-related experiences within a specified time frame are gathered. Beyond the fact that the victim survey can ascertain crimes not reported to police, a second advantage is that it can ask about crimes not

counted in the UCR's Crime Index. The Department of Justice administers the National Crime Survey (NCS) through the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Nearly 51,000 households are interviewed every six months, and each participating household is interviewed for a three-year period and then replaced.

The NCS has three major divisions of victimization experiences: (1) crimes of violence, for persons age 12 and older; (2) crimes of theft for One of the most important sources of national data on rural crime comes from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports. The advantage of victimization survey data is the ability of researcher to examine the reactions of victims (and nonvictims) to crime. As Gomme (1988) emphasizes, fear of crime is as important and may be even more important in determining quality of life than the actual occurrence of crime. Most fear of crime studies use as an indicator a question that asks the degree to which residents of an area are unwilling to walk alone at night in areas near their homes. Survey research may be the most frequently used mode of observation in the social sciences (Babbie, 1999). This popularity most likely is due to the survey's versatility, for it is a method appropriate for common research purposes – exploration, description, and explanation. Babbie(1999)

indicated that studies usually seek to explore, describe, and explain to varying degrees as does the present study.

Crime Survey

Please indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements by placing an X in the blank preceding the appropriate response.

strongly

disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

agree

___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5

The 5-point Likert-type scale will be used because it provides an efficient and effective means of quantifying the data and obtaining shades of perception.

1. Rural areas are crime-free and therefore problems of safety and security in rural communities should be ignored.

This statement is important to include in the survey because there is a concern that crime rates are increasing in rural and suburban America. Research will discuss the types of crime that are affecting rural communities and compare trends to suburban communities. Recommendations will be offered for reducing rural and suburban crime.

2. Although some small towns and urban neighborhoods have

high levels of crime, several locations are relatively crime free, and individuals are not afraid to take a casual night-time stroll around the block. This statement is important to include in the survey because the research will study the crime and violence trend to determine if the urban towns, crime rates are much higher than the rural ones. Research will determine if the reason is that have a higher population and they are not too worried about getting caught.

3. Rural residents, in particular juvenile males, commit more criminal offences than females. To determine why crime happens, you also have to look at the people's ages in the city. Some areas that have more people between the ages of 15-30 are usually higher in crime. Places that have more elderly people will be lower in crime. The places with more elderly people are places that are nice and peaceful. They are places that are not busy and do not have too many people. These places are also financially stable too.

4. Viewing violence on television increased acceptance of aggressive attitudes and increased aggressive behavior. The impact of media on the American family continues to grow and intensify at a mind-boggling pace. It is clear that despite ongoing efforts in all areas, our nation is

still grappling to get its arms around the vast expanse that is the mass media.

Teenagers and young adults who watch even as little as an hour of television a day are more likely to get into fights, commit assaults or engage in other types of violence later in life, according to a provocative new study. A study commissioned by the Casey Journalism Center (CJC), examined trends in child-related newspaper and television coverage in five areas: child abuse and neglect, child care, child health insurance, teen childbearing, and youth crime and violence.

5. Establishing neighborhood watches and citizen patrols and working with law enforcement and other agencies are our Nation's most effective long-term weapons against crime and violence.

This statement is important to include in the survey because the perception is that the neighborhood citizens want to reduce crime and violence. The rural and suburban challenges include enforcing crime violence laws in areas that are spread out and thinly populated. Also, people know everyone in the area so if they do commit a criminal act, then they will most likely be caught.

Trends in Juvenile Violence

To accurately assess the juvenile justice system and its role in delinquency prevention, it is imperative to take into account the nature and volume of cases coming before the juvenile court. According to FBI Uniform Crime Report in 1992, an estimated 1 million juveniles in the United States were charged with approximately 1.5 million delinquent acts, a 26-percent increase from the volume of cases reported in 1987. In addition, a disproportionate increase occurred in violent offenses (56 percent) and in weapons offenses (86 percent) among young people.

Statistics further indicated that violent juvenile female offending is rising and that the increase is greater proportionately than that of males. Between 1988 and 1992, the number of females under age 18 arrested for all violent crimes increased 63 percent, whereas the number of males under age 18 arrested for violent crimes increased 45 percent.

Most arrested juveniles, whether male or female, have not committed serious or violent crimes, but rather property crimes or status offenses. Even violent juvenile offenders rarely commit crimes exclusively against persons.

They are likely to also engage in significant property or drug-related crimes.

According to FBI crime report(1992) juveniles are responsible for a far greater share of all property crime arrests (33 percent) than either violent crime arrests (18 percent) or drug arrests (8 percent). In 1992, the highest percentage of juvenile arrests, compared to adults, was for arson (49 percent), vandalism (45 percent), and motor vehicle theft (44 percent). The juvenile property crime arrest rate in 1992 was five times greater than the juvenile violent crime arrest rate.

In addition to handling increased delinquency cases, juvenile courts have jurisdiction over status offenses-- acts that would not be considered crimes if committed by an adult. Compared to delinquency cases, the number of status offense cases is modest. In 1992, an estimated 97,000 status offense cases were formally adjudicated, an increase of 18 percent from 1988, with the largest increases in run-away (31 percent) and truancy (21 percent) cases.

The juvenile justice system must be equipped to address the full range of juvenile problem behaviors. Often the presenting offense is merely the tip of the iceberg,

and good case management and needs assessments can help to identify and address individual service needs.

However, the juvenile justice system is often so overwhelmed that juvenile offenders receive no meaningful interventions or consequences, even for relatively serious offenses. This neglect serves neither rehabilitation nor accountability goals, and young people need to know that if they break the law, they will be held accountable. Clearly, a revitalized juvenile justice system that ensures immediate and appropriate accountability and sanctions is a key to reversing trends in juvenile violence.

Causes of Delinquency

There is no single cause of delinquency and violence. Delinquents, especially chronic delinquents, exhibit a variety of social and psychological deficits in their backgrounds. These deficits, often referred to as risk factors, stem from breakdowns in five influential domains in juveniles' lives: neighborhood, family, school, peers, and individual characteristics.

Risk factors, such as community disorganization, availability of drugs and firearms, and persistent poverty, make children more prone to involvement in delinquent behavior than if those factors were not present.

Additionally, when a child's family life is filled with violence, problem behaviors, poor parental monitoring, and inconsistent disciplinary practices or maltreatment, a child's risk of delinquency increases. Youth exhibiting combinations of these deficits in multiple domains of their lives are at highest risk of delinquency.

According to (Nisbett, 1993) the underlying causes of crime do not change: (1) a weakening of society's institutions that define and reinforce appropriate or law-abiding behavior - in particular, the family, the school, and religion, and (2) a strengthening of groups that encourage and reinforce law-breaking behavior. Only the particulars change from one historical period to another.

Nisbett further stated that during the present historical period, the following six sets of factors help to understand why some rural communities already have high crime rates or are experiencing a rapid increase in crime:

1. **Culture.** Traditional rural areas, principally in the Southern and Western states, and rural areas dominated by mining and timbering historically have higher rates of violence, which are associated with the use of violence as an accepted means of resolving conflict.

2. **Poverty.** Like many urban neighborhoods, rural areas with persistent poverty over several generations can exhibit higher levels of crime.
3. **Urbanization.** Rural areas may have higher crime rates, especially property-related incidents, if they (a) are located near interstates or large cities and other urban developments, (b) are suburbanizing, (c) are the location for second or seasonal homes or other tourist developments, and (d) are the location for retired householders moving out of the city.
4. **Rapid change.** Some rural areas are subject to economic and population change that is very rapid, and regardless of whether the change represents an increase or decrease in population or an increase or decrease in jobs or per capita income, rapid change can weaken local community norms that reinforce lawful behavior.
5. **Organized crime.** Some rural areas are the location for organized crime activities, which may include activities ranging from farm equipment or garden tractor theft rings to drug production and drug trafficking gangs, and their presence can increase crime - especially violent crime.

6. **Urban export.** The movement of urban criminals to rural areas will increase crime, but this phenomenon is relatively rare, although it is a common explanation voiced by long-time members of rural communities. The vast majority of people arrested by rural law enforcement are residents of the area.

Presentation of Juvenile Crime Data

Serious violent crimes included are homicide, rape, robbery, and both simple and aggravated assault.

Violent Crime rates by age, 1973-2003

30 Year comparative Analysis

Violent crime rate per 1,000 persons in age group

Year	Violent crime by Age 1973-2003						
	12-15	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
1973	81.8	81.7	87.6	52.4	38.8	17.2	9.1
1974	77.5	90.6	83.5	58.6	37.5	15.5	9.5
1975	80.3	85.7	80.9	59.5	36.9	17.8	8.3
1976	76.4	88.8	79.7	61.5	35.9	16.1	8.1
1977	83.0	90.2	86.2	63.5	35.8	16.8	8.0
1978	83.7	91.7	91.1	60.5	35.8	15.0	8.4
1979	78.5	93.4	98.4	66.3	38.2	13.6	6.2
1980	72.5	91.3	94.1	60.0	37.4	15.6	7.2
1981	86.0	90.7	93.7	65.8	41.6	17.3	8.3
1982	75.6	94.4	93.8	69.6	38.6	13.8	6.1
1983	75.4	86.3	82.0	62.2	36.5	11.9	5.9
1984	78.2	90.0	87.5	56.6	37.9	13.2	5.2
1985	79.6	89.4	82.0	56.5	35.6	13.0	4.8
1986	77.1	80.8	80.1	52.0	36.0	10.8	4.8
1987	87.2	92.4	85.5	51.9	34.7	11.4	5.2
1988	83.7	95.9	80.2	53.2	39.1	13.4	4.4
1989	92.5	98.2	78.8	52.8	37.3	10.5	4.2
1990	101.1	99.1	86.1	55.2	34.4	9.9	3.7

1991	94.5	122.6	103.6	54.3	37.2	12.5	4.0
1992	111.0	103.7	95.2	56.8	38.1	13.2	5.2
1993	115.5	114.2	91.6	56.9	42.5	15.2	5.9
1994	118.6	123.9	100.4	59.1	41.3	17.6	4.6
1995	113.1	106.6	85.8	58.5	35.7	12.9	6.4
1996	95.0	102.8	74.5	51.2	32.9	15.7	4.9
1997	87.9	96.3	68.0	47.0	32.3	14.6	4.4
1998	82.5	91.3	67.5	41.6	29.9	15.4	2.8
1999	74.4	77.5	68.7	36.4	25.3	14.4	3.8
2000	60.1	64.4	49.5	34.9	21.9	13.7	3.7
2001	55.1	55.9	44.9	29.4	23.0	9.5	3.2
2002	44.4	58.3	47.6	26.4	18.2	10.7	3.4
2003	51.6	53.1	43.5	26.5	18.6	10.3	2.0

The FBI's Uniform Crime Statistics indicate that persons age 12 to 24 sustained violent victimization at rates higher than individuals of all other ages.

Serious violent Crime by Race, 1973-2003
30 Year Comparative Analysis

Serious violent crimes included are homicide, rape, robbery, and both simple and aggravated assault.

**Adjusted rate per 1,000
persons age 12+**

Year	White	Black
1973	20.0	37.3
1974	20.9	37.3
1975	19.1	36.7
1976	18.8	38.2
1977	19.4	34.4
1978	18.8	33.2
1979	19.6	33.2
1980	18.7	34.0
1981	19.7	40.4
1982	19.0	36.9
1983	16.3	33.1
1984	17.1	32.7
1985	15.6	28.9
1986	15.6	25.2
1987	15.0	33.8
1988	16.0	31.4
1989	16.1	29.5
1990	15.4	31.8
1991	16.2	31.3

1992	16.9	33.0
1993	17.8	34.3
1994	17.1	33.5
1995	13.5	26.4
1996	13.3	26.3
1997	12.9	20.7
1998	11.6	19.2
1999	10.2	19.5
2000	8.7	16.2
2001	8.4	12.7
2002	6.6	13.0
2003	6.5	12.8

Statistics show that serious violent crime rates declined in recent years for both blacks and whites. Blacks experience the highest rates of serious violent crime.

Violent Crime Rates by Gender, 1973-2003

30 Year Comparative Analysis

Violent crimes included are homicide, rape, robbery, and both simple and aggravated assault.

Violent crime rate per 1,000 persons age 12+

	Total population	Gender of victim	
		Males	Females
1973	48.5	68.0	31.4
1974	49.1	69.4	31.3
1975	48.9	66.8	33.1
1976	48.5	65.8	33.3
1977	50.5	71.1	32.4
1978	50.2	70.0	32.8
1979	51.5	69.7	35.3
1980	49.4	68.1	33.0
1981	52.6	70.9	36.5
1982	51.0	66.9	36.9
1983	46.2	61.7	32.4
1984	46.2	60.6	33.4
1985	44.7	59.5	31.6
1986	41.9	54.3	30.9
1987	43.7	56.8	32.0

1988	44.2	55.0	34.4
1989	43.4	56.8	31.4
1990	44.0	57.6	32.0
1991	48.0	64.5	33.4
1992	47.8	59.3	37.2
1993	49.9	59.8	40.7
1994	51.8	61.1	43.0
1995	46.6	55.7	38.1
1996	42.0	49.9	34.6
1997	39.2	45.8	33.0
1998	36.6	43.1	30.4
1999	32.8	37.0	28.8
2000	27.9	32.9	23.2
2001	25.1	27.3	23.0
2002	23.1	25.5	20.8
2003	22.6	26.3	19.0

Statistical analysis indicates that criminal crime rates for females have been lower than rates for males throughout the 30 year period. Until the early 1990's rates for females were stable. During the early 1990's they increased then began a downward trend in 1994.

Category of Crime

30 Year Comparative Analysis

National Crime Victimization Survey Violent Crime Trends,

1973-2003

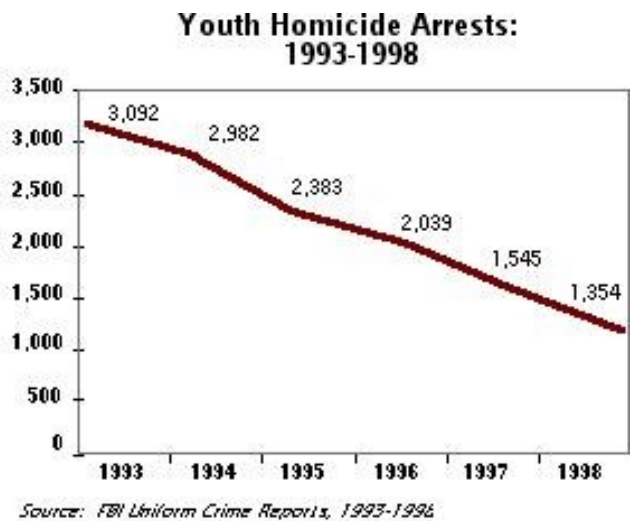
**Adjusted violent victimization rates
Number of victimizations per 1,000 population age 12 and over**

Year	Total violent crime	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated assault	Simple assault
1973	47.7	0.1	2.5	6.7	12.5	25.9
1974	48.0	0.1	2.6	7.2	12.9	25.3
1975	48.4	0.1	2.4	6.8	11.9	27.2
1976	48.0	0.1	2.2	6.5	12.2	27.0
1977	50.4	0.1	2.3	6.2	12.4	29.4

1978	50.6	0.1	2.6	5.9	12.0	30.0
1979	51.7	0.1	2.8	6.3	12.3	30.3
1980	49.4	0.1	2.5	6.6	11.4	28.8
1981	52.3	0.1	2.5	7.4	12.0	30.3
1982	50.7	0.1	2.1	7.1	11.5	29.8
1983	46.5	0.1	2.1	6.0	9.9	28.3
1984	46.4	0.1	2.5	5.8	10.8	27.2
1985	45.2	0.1	1.9	5.1	10.3	27.9
1986	42.0	0.1	1.7	5.1	9.8	25.3
1987	44.0	0.1	2.0	5.3	10.0	26.7
1988	44.1	0.1	1.7	5.3	10.8	26.3
1989	43.3	0.1	1.8	5.4	10.3	25.8
1990	44.1	0.1	1.7	5.7	9.8	26.9
1991	48.8	0.1	2.2	5.9	9.9	30.6
1992	47.9	0.1	1.8	6.1	11.1	28.9
1993	49.1	0.1	1.6	6.0	12.0	29.4
1994	51.2	0.1	1.4	6.3	11.9	31.5
1995	46.1	0.1	1.2	5.4	9.5	29.9
1996	41.6	0.1	0.9	5.2	8.8	26.6
1997	38.8	0.1	0.9	4.3	8.6	24.9
1998	36.0	0.1	0.9	4.0	7.5	23.5
1999	32.1	0.1	0.9	3.6	6.7	20.8
2000	27.4	0.1	0.6	3.2	5.7	17.8
2001	24.7	0.1	0.6	2.8	5.3	15.9
2002	22.8	0.1	0.7	2.2	4.3	15.5
2003	22.3	0.1	0.5	2.5	4.6	14.6

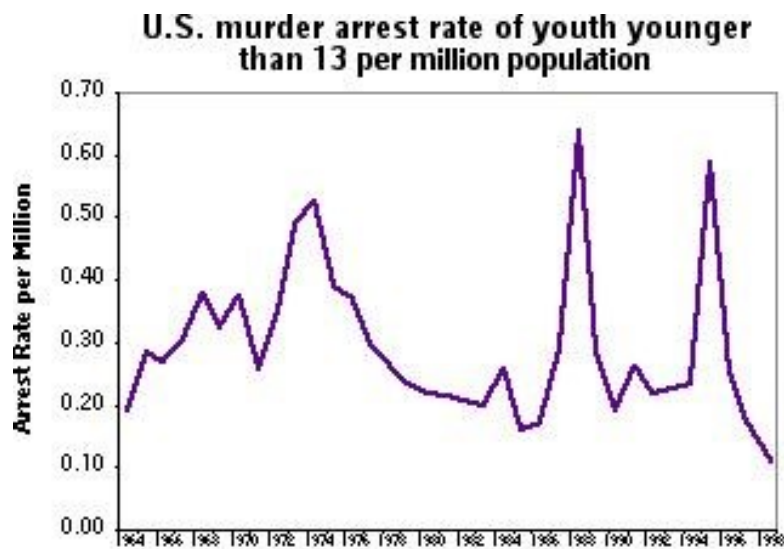
Since its historical peak in 1993-4, the only discernible juvenile crime trend has been the continuing decline in the rate and numbers of youth arrested for serious offenses. Despite the call to toughen laws to prevent further school shootings and teen killings, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's latest count of juvenile arrests shows that there was a 56% decline in juvenile homicide arrests between 1993 and 1998. The latest data (graph below) show that juvenile arrests for homicide by youths under 13 are at their lowest rate since 1964, when the FBI first began keeping this statistic. The number

of youths 12 and under arrested for homicide has dropped almost in half, from 41 in 1993 to 22 in 1998. During the same period, the number of youths under 18 arrested for rape declined by 29%, for robbery 47%, for aggravated assault 27% and the total juvenile crime rate has dropped 30%.



A 1999 report from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), an office within the U.S. Justice Department devoted to juvenile justice issues, notes that school killings continue to be a much smaller threat than killings of kids in other locations. They note authoritatively "school crime has not increased in recent years," and that in calendar year 1992-93 (which we know was one of the highest years for school associated violent deaths), there were 115 times as many young people murdered away from school than in a school (7,294 vs. 63).

OJJDP's juvenile crime reports find that 94% of all the counties in America experienced one or no juvenile homicide arrests in 1997. It is likely that even fewer counties had juvenile homicides in 1998, given the decline in juvenile homicides since then. According to OJJDP, eight cities that contain just 12% percent of the U.S. population accounted for more than a quarter of juvenile homicide arrests (graph below).



Source: *Analysis of FBI Uniform Crime Reports* by Mike Nales, PhD

According to FBI Uniform Crime Report (2000) serious violent crimes include rape and sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault, as measured by the NCVS, and homicide from data reported by law enforcement agencies to the FBI (appendix A).

**The Bureau of Justice Statistics (2003) Age Patterns of
Victims of Serious Violent Crime (spreadsheet below).**

Arrest rates for violent Index offenses per 100,000 population

Year	Total	Under age 18		Age 18 and Over		
		14 & under	15-17	18-20	21-24	25 & Over
1970	141.1	35.3	377.4	464.6	404.9	108.1
1971	156.7	40.4	418.9	494.6	442.3	118.3
1972	168.3	44.5	438.7	503.6	485.7	127.6
1973	181.4	47.8	478.1	544.3	502.0	137.0
1974	201.2	49.8	544.2	634.5	551.7	146.5
1975	209.5	54.0	585.2	650.8	543.9	151.6
1976	189.2	47.0	508.4	566.0	477.6	141.7
1977	198.3	47.2	518.3	591.6	513.2	148.1
1978	211.5	52.4	571.6	629.5	533.3	156.4
1979	208.3	47.3	550.9	637.3	545.1	152.5
1980	209.2	43.6	559.9	644.2	547.0	154.6
1981	213.9	46.0	563.0	639.9	552.8	163.0
1982	227.0	46.0	584.1	683.1	602.6	176.1
1983	213.4	45.5	549.9	640.6	553.6	169.0
1984	209.2	46.8	536.6	623.5	549.5	167.7
1985	208.4	46.9	535.7	620.4	552.0	169.0
1986	229.8	43.7	554.4	675.0	624.8	193.0
1987	224.4	44.8	544.1	642.9	612.4	191.7
1988	254.6	49.5	623.9	741.6	701.4	219.7
1989	276.1	59.8	748.3	837.6	760.1	233.3
1990	282.9	60.0	813.8	883.4	771.5	234.3
1991	285.1	65.2	876.1	941.0	775.1	231.8
1992	291.0	70.3	886.8	960.1	781.4	239.6
1993	292.5	74.4	938.2	972.7	763.0	240.4
1994	299.1	81.5	977.1	978.5	770.1	246.2
1995	303.0	77.2	947.1	982.7	773.1	255.7
1996	277.3	69.1	851.4	921.4	722.3	233.0
1997	268.1	65.7	733.2	862.8	720.8	230.0
1998	250.1	59.3	661.9	811.5	676.3	214.8
1999	233.0	57.7	589.0	737.6	637.8	200.9
2000	221.5	55.0	549.5	709.9	601.8	190.7
2001	220.2	52.9	533.0	694.6	612.8	189.8
2002	215.2	49.1	511.7	669.2	601.2	186.7
2003	205.3	50.1	504.6	645.9	564.4	175.4

According to U.S. Department of Justice the Office of
Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics and the

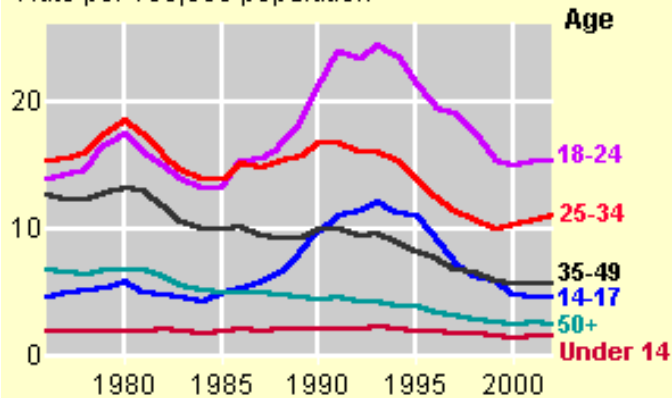
FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR) Homicide offending rates followed a similar pattern:

- Offending rates for teenagers and young adults increased dramatically in the late 1980's while rates for older age groups declined.
- Offending rates for children under age 14 increased in the late 1980's and early 1990's, but have recently fallen to the lowest levels recorded.
- Offending rates of 14-17 year-olds increased rapidly after 1985. Recently, the offending rates for 14-17 year-olds reached the lowest levels recorded and have fallen below those for 25-34 year-olds.

The following homicide Graphs illustrate juvenile homicide victimization by age, population, urban, suburban and rural areas.

Homicide victimization by age, 1976-2002

Rate per 100,000 population

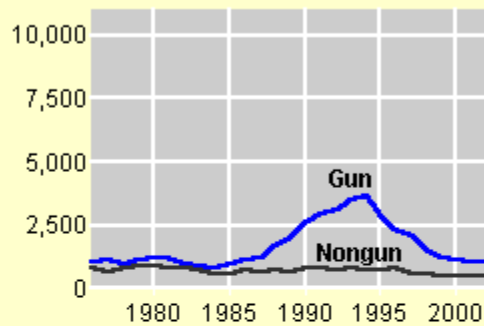


Homicides of teens and young adults are much more likely to be committed with a gun than homicides of persons of other ages

Homicide offending by age of offender and weapon use, 1976-2002

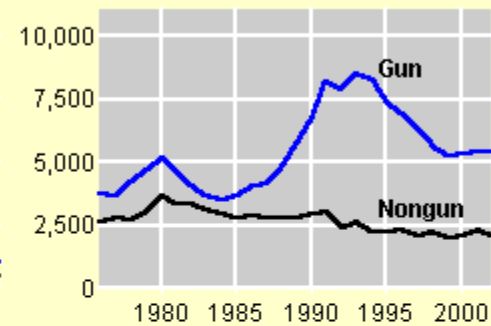
Ages 14-17

Number of homicide offenders



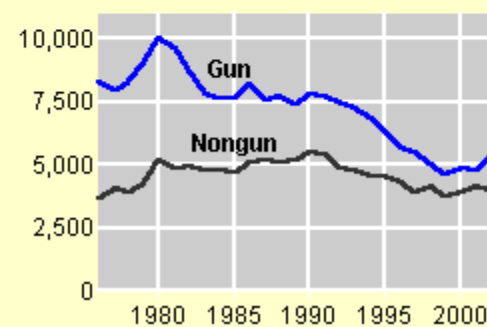
Ages 18-24

Number of homicide offenders



Ages 25+

Number of homicide offenders

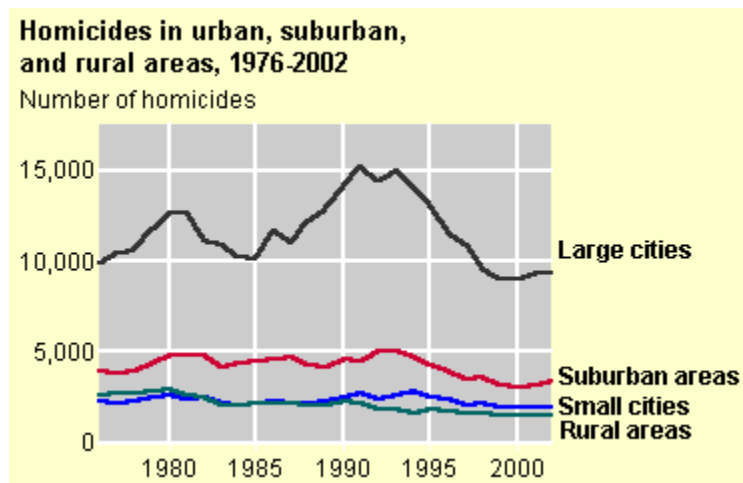


Changes in homicide trends have been driven by changes in the number of homicides in large American cities according to U.S. Department of Justice. For example:

From 1976-2002 --

- Over half of the homicides occurred in cities with a population of 100,000 or more.
- Almost one-quarter of the homicides occurred in cities with a population of over 1 million.

Juvenile homicides rate increase in urban, suburban and rural areas.



The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR)

Launched 70 years ago, the Uniform Crime Reporting Program collects and publishes criminal offense, arrest,

and law enforcement personnel statistics. Under the UCR program, law enforcement agencies submit information to the FBI monthly. Offense information is collected on the eight Index offenses of homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. The UCR program collects only those data which come to the attention of law enforcement through victim reports or observation. Of all the crimes included in the UCR, homicide is the most complete.

Homicide counts suffer from a minimal level of underreporting. In addition, the number of crimes where law enforcement makes an arrest or clears the offense is the highest for homicide compared to the other serious offenses collected by the UCR. Other offenses including forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault are currently available only in summary count form without details about the incident, victims, or offenders. Homicide information - - through the Supplementary Homicide Reports data -- is available in incident form.

SUMMARY

The consensus among practitioners and researchers however maintains that juvenile delinquency is a dynamic, multifaceted problem with numerous potentially causal factors. Subsequently, investigators and professionals suggest that treatment procedures must focus on not only the immediate issue of the offender's deviant behavior but on every element within the context of that behavior as well, including for example, family relations and social support services/networks.

Conventional practice has long associated early preventive measures with positive delinquency reduction results. In particular, timely recognition of at-risk youth and correction of ineffective or minimally effective parenting techniques are critical to the prevention of future delinquency (Lundman, 1993). Numerous risk factors have been identified as indicators or predictors of juvenile delinquency and those factors represent dysfunction at several levels, specifically within the structure of the offender's family. Some of these factors include conflict within the family, a lack of adequate supervision and/or rules, a distinct lack of parent-child attachment, instability, poor home life quality, parental

expectations, out-of-home placements and inconsistent discipline (Shumaker, 1997).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Each year between 1992 and 1994, U.S. residents age 12 or older experienced about 4.3 million serious violent victimizations on average. Persons age 12 to 14 are generally in junior high school. Youth age 15 to 17 is usually in high school. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports section on arrest data, 870,725 persons were arrested by law enforcement agencies covering rural jurisdictions. The FBI's Uniform Crime survey Report is used by the researcher to determine the extent of crime within the various delinquent categories. For example: murder, forcible rape, robbery and aggregated assault. The researcher analyzed the seriousness of juvenile arrests, gender and ethnic background.

Published annually since 1933, the UCR includes seven Index Crimes, which comprise the four violent offenses of murder and nonnegligent homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, and the three property offenses of burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. The Crime Index contains the numbers of crimes from the records of law

enforcement agencies for each of these seven crime types, divided by the population of the area. The urban categories are metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) and rural areas are defined as unincorporated areas of non-MSA counties.

Analysis of the Descriptive Statistics

The raw response data were tallied and then analyzed using the statistical package (SPSS). SPSS procedure allowed the researcher to examine the relationship between juvenile violence and delinquency in urban and suburban communities and the impact of media and mass communication.

While frequencies and descriptive are useful procedures for summarizing information about one variable, the cross tabs procedure generated information on urban and suburban trend analysis and crime-related similarities. Using the procedure cross tabs both variables were measured on a nominal or ordinal scale. The cross tabs procedure creates a table that contained a cell for each possible combination of the categories included in the two variables. Inside each cell was the number of cases that fit that particular combination of responses. Researcher instructed SPSS to report on the row, column, and total percentages for each cell of the table. Conclusions were drawn, implications

identified, and recommendations made on the basis of the findings.

The data analysis revealed that rural offenders are arrested for various offenses in roughly the same proportion as persons arrested by suburban and urban law enforcement agencies. This pattern is confirmed by Laub (1983), who analyzed victims' knowledge of offenders for violence, theft, and household crimes in the NCS. Another similarity is that about four out of five rural persons arrested are male, which is only one or two percentage points above the proportion of males arrested in the suburbs and cities.

Changes in homicide trends have been driven by changes in the number of homicides in large American cities according to U.S. Department of Justice. For example:

From 1976-2002 --

- Over half of the homicides occurred in cities with a population of 100,000 or more
- Almost one-quarter of the homicides occurred in cities with a population of over 1 million

The two differences involve the race and age of persons arrested. About four out of five rural offenders are white, and about one offender in eight is black. Three percent are Native Americans and one percent is Asian. In contrast, arrests in the suburbs and cities show a lower rate of white arrests - 21 percent (suburbs) and 32 percent (city), than black arrests - 78 percent (suburbs) and 66 percent (city). The second difference is that persons arrested in rural areas are older. For example, about 3 percent of rural arrestees are below the age of 15, and 10 percent are 18 years of age and younger

In suburban areas, about 4 percent are 15 years of age and younger, 13 percent are age 18 and younger, and 42 percent are 25 years old and younger. In cities, the ages of persons arrested become even younger. Slightly more than 6 percent of persons arrested in cities are 15 years old and younger

Summary

Arrest profiles hardly tell the full story of rural offenders. Studies show that rural youth are as prone to the commission of delinquent acts as urban youth (Donnermeyer & Phillips, 1982 and 1984; Edwards, 1992). The

only difference is that rural youth are slightly less likely to commit more serious offenses, a difference that was far greater in the early rural delinquency studies cited near the beginning of this paper

Research indicates that Institutions that reinforce law-abiding behavior (primarily family, church, and school) have become weaker, while peer and other groups that encourage law-breaking behavior have gained in influence. The rural sector of American society is no different from the urban sector. As time goes on, there are more single-parent families and more families in which both parents work. Schools are consolidated, bigger, and more impersonal. Although rural persons have consistently shown higher rates of membership in religious organizations and are slightly more likely to go to church, religion's relative influence has declined.

These trends create a cluster of risk factors that in turn increase the chances that adolescents will associate with peer groups that teach and reinforce attitudes and promote behavior that society considers inappropriate, such as using drugs, stealing, destroying property, resolving conflicts with violence, and so forth. The factors listed earlier create conditions in which some rural communities

are more likely to exhibit weaker institutions of social control and/or stronger influences from deviance-reinforcing peer and other groups.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

While rural crime may suggest the effects of urbanization, it would be incorrect to blame rural crime problems directly on the nearest large city. Rural society is changing. One of the consequences of these changes is that crime levels in rural areas are at historic highs and new problems, such as gangs, delinquency, and drug use by rural youth, have emerged.

Our country's climate of random violence continues to foster feelings of fear and uncertainty among citizens even in their safest havens—schools, places of work and houses of worship. Additionally there is concern about the long-term impact on children who are being socialized in a world where random violence is so prevalent. In short, violence continues to take a major toll on the American family.

Public awareness about violence continues to be high. However, more education is needed particularly in the areas of domestic violence, child abuse and rape, not only to reduce the social stigma felt by victims of these crimes,

but also to help Americans know how to react appropriately to violent situations they encounter.

The research-based literature reports that risk- and protective-factor focused prevention programs are successfully reducing risk factors and enhancing protective factors. Local communities must have sufficient resources to plan and implement effective delinquency prevention efforts. Title V program funds have been utilized to support nearly 1,100 local delinquency prevention efforts nationwide—a testimony to the Federal and State commitment to establishing prevention partnerships.

In accordance with the JJDP Act of 1974, as amended, and to assist communities to spend their prevention dollars effectively, OJJDP provides training and technical assistance on the development, implementation, and operation of new approaches, techniques, and methods related to juvenile justice and delinquency prevention. In conjunction with the Title V grant award structure and funding process, OJJDP continues to provide training and technical assistance to help States and communities build their capacity to plan and implement effective prevention strategies. Technical assistance and training is available up-front (pregrant award), to assist potential Title V

grantees to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully negotiate each key stage of the comprehensive, risk- and protection-focused planning process. Ongoing technical assistance and training also are available to ensure that Title V grantees have the skills necessary to successfully implement and monitor their delinquency prevention strategies. OJJDP supports a number of training and technical assistance vehicles, two that are specific to the Community Prevention Grants Program. These two vehicles are outlined in more detail in the sections that follow.

The Community Prevention Grants Program promotes collaboration among local government agencies by requiring broad stakeholder representation on the Prevention Policy Board and granting communities the flexibility to fund prevention efforts tailored to meet local needs. Collaboration is essential to achieving community-level changes in norms and expectations because it promotes widespread communication of consistent prosocial messages.

Recommendations for Action

The following recommendations are based primarily on the results of this study, but to some extent they are also influenced by insights gained through literature review.

Every effort was made during the course of this study to keep abreast of continuously changing events in juvenile delinquency. The problem of violent crime committed by and against juveniles is a national crisis. Research has shown that a key component in effective prevention programs is addressing risk factors—conditions, attitudes, or behaviors that frequently precede later engagement in delinquent behaviors. By assessing these risk factors, prevention efforts can be targeted before a young person has progressed too deeply into a pattern of problem behaviors (Károly et al., 1998).

Working together, individuals, groups, and communities can make real and sustained changes. Cooperative partnerships among justice, health, child welfare, education, and social service systems can lay the foundation for measurable successes. In partnership with State and Federal agencies, communities are beginning to mobilize to combat juvenile delinquency through prevention, early intervention, and community-building strategies that address local needs. They are reducing serious and violent juvenile delinquency by using multi-agency, coordinated approaches and innovative programs and services in the juvenile justice system.

Efforts to reduce juvenile violence can be as basic as parents setting clear expectations and standards for children's behavior or as far-reaching as a local government forming an anti-violence task force or implementing community oriented policing. Another effective strategy involves setting up local resource centers that offer positive educational, social, and cultural activities to provide youth with alternatives to crime. Also, funding must be made available for a broad spectrum of effective youth development and delinquency prevention programs, including after school programs, childcare for low-income working families, community policing efforts, summer recreation and job opportunities for low-income youth, and Head Start.

In addition to funding programs, there are many actions that States and local communities can take that build on their commitment to the safety, health, development, and well-being of children. By starting new initiatives, implementing the objectives, accessing the resources, and engaging in the activities of the Action Plan, leaders at the Federal, State, and local levels working together can make a difference. It is recommended that juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention programs be integrated with local police, social service, child

welfare, school, and family preservation programs and that these programs reflect communities' assessments of their most pressing problems and program priorities.

Researcher recommends Promoting delinquency prevention programs as the most cost-effective approach to dealing with juvenile delinquency. Initial intervention efforts, under an umbrella of system components (police, social worker, and probation), should be centered in the family and other core institutions.

Researcher further suggest that it is important that juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention programs be integrated with local police, social service, child welfare, school, and family preservation programs and that these programs reflect communities' assessments of their most pressing problems and program priorities.

Recommendations for Future Research

Educators, clinicians and other professionals who provide services for children should carefully evaluate reports from children regarding such things as parental fighting, abuse and/or neglect so that they may obviously address those immediate concerns but also assess the possible need for preventive intervention. Structure is very important in the life of a developing child. Most of

that necessary structure is provided by the parents/family. Rules or guidelines are inherently part of that structure and careful parental supervision is essential to the derivation and implementation of those rules. The quality of a child's home life can also positively or negatively affect behavioral outcomes. A home life of poor quality can involve low levels of affection, comfort, supervision and home security (Shumaker, 1997). Researcher recommends further study to determine if delinquent behavior is learned behavior and not genetically encoded.

Summary

Juvenile delinquency is a complex social problem that significantly impacts all members and processes of a social structure. Delinquency refers to a set of behaviors that are not in line with the collective practices and/or ethics of the dominant social group. Essentially, these behaviors deviate from societal norms and more specifically they violate established criminal codes and laws. Juvenile delinquency incorporates not only general criminal activity but conduct that is only unlawful for youths such as running away from home and skipping school. Current research into this difficult and pressing issue reflects a

vast range of theories about, and predictors of delinquency as well as a multitude of strategies to control and reduce overall delinquency.

The consensus among practitioners and researchers however maintains that juvenile delinquency is a dynamic, multifaceted problem with numerous potentially causal factors. Subsequently, investigators and professionals suggest that treatment procedures must focus on not only the immediate issue of the offender's deviant behavior but on every element within the context of that behavior as well, including for example, family relations and social support services and networks. Conventional practice has long associated early preventive measures with positive delinquency reduction results.

In particular, timely recognition of at-risk youth and correction of ineffective or minimally effective parenting techniques are critical to the prevention of future delinquency (Lundman, 1993). Numerous risk factors have been identified as indicators or predictors of juvenile delinquency and those factors represent dysfunction at several levels, specifically within the structure of the offender's family. Some of these factors include conflict within the family, a lack of adequate supervision and/or rules, a distinct lack of parent-child attachment,

instability, poor home life quality, parental expectations,
out-of-home placements and inconsistent discipline
(Shumaker, 1997).

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Age of Reported Murder Victims

Age of Reported Murder Victims in the United States

Victims	0 to 3	4 to 11	12 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 49	50 +	Unknown	Total
1980	508	281	1,023	5,146	11,730	3,957	395	23,040
1981	504	287	896	4,768	11,638	4,010	417	22,520
1982	568	289	829	4,438	10,815	3,739	332	21,010
1983	529	244	763	4,043	10,119	3,311	301	19,310
1984	510	248	705	3,842	9,844	3,112	429	18,690
1985	514	259	801	3,796	10,110	3,086	414	18,980
1986	635	238	847	4,335	10,964	3,105	486	20,610
1987	557	246	910	4,289	10,665	3,059	374	20,100
1988	611	291	1,036	4,438	11,038	2,933	333	20,680
1989	607	307	1,240	4,834	11,331	2,889	292	21,500
1990	632	245	1,418	5,650	12,301	2,829	365	23,440
1991	738	240	1,595	6,304	12,492	2,901	430	24,700
1992	643	249	1,671	6,054	12,075	2,741	327	23,760
1993	725	295	1,821	6,364	12,196	2,798	331	24,530
1994	703	256	1,705	6,099	11,591	2,570	406	23,330
1995	650	235	1,735	5,459	10,588	2,580	363	21,610
1996	718	239	1,448	4,885	9,726	2,351	283	19,650
1997	599	254	1,205	4,727	8,851	2,227	347	18,210
1998	608	257	1,054	4,316	8,301	2,017	357	16,910
1999	574	229	994	3,904	7,636	1,938	258	15,533
2000	562	185	827	3,933	7,744	1,949	317	15,517
Total	12,695	5,374	24,523	101,624	221,755	60,102	7,557	433,630

Appendix B Percentage of Reported Murder Victims

Age of Reported Murder Victims in the United States

Row Percents	0 to 3	4 to 11	12 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 49	50 +	Unknown	Total
1980	2.20%	1.22%	4.44%	22.34%	50.91%	17.17%	1.71%	100.00%
1981	2.24%	1.27%	3.98%	21.17%	51.68%	17.81%	1.85%	100.00%
1982	2.70%	1.38%	3.95%	21.12%	51.48%	17.80%	1.58%	100.00%
1983	2.74%	1.26%	3.95%	20.94%	52.40%	17.15%	1.56%	100.00%
1984	2.73%	1.33%	3.77%	20.56%	52.67%	16.65%	2.30%	100.00%
1985	2.71%	1.36%	4.22%	20.00%	53.27%	16.26%	2.18%	100.00%
1986	3.08%	1.15%	4.11%	21.03%	53.20%	15.07%	2.36%	100.00%
1987	2.77%	1.22%	4.53%	21.34%	53.06%	15.22%	1.86%	100.00%
1988	2.95%	1.41%	5.01%	21.46%	53.38%	14.18%	1.61%	100.00%
1989	2.82%	1.43%	5.77%	22.48%	52.70%	13.44%	1.36%	100.00%
1990	2.70%	1.05%	6.05%	24.10%	52.48%	12.07%	1.56%	100.00%
1991	2.99%	0.97%	6.46%	25.52%	50.57%	11.74%	1.74%	100.00%
1992	2.71%	1.05%	7.03%	25.48%	50.82%	11.54%	1.38%	100.00%
1993	2.96%	1.20%	7.42%	25.94%	49.72%	11.41%	1.35%	100.00%
1994	3.01%	1.10%	7.31%	26.14%	49.68%	11.02%	1.74%	100.00%
1995	3.01%	1.09%	8.03%	25.26%	49.00%	11.94%	1.68%	100.00%
1996	3.65%	1.22%	7.37%	24.86%	49.50%	11.96%	1.44%	100.00%
1997	3.29%	1.39%	6.62%	25.96%	48.61%	12.23%	1.91%	100.00%
1998	3.60%	1.52%	6.23%	25.52%	49.09%	11.93%	2.11%	100.00%
1999	3.70%	1.47%	6.40%	25.13%	49.16%	12.48%	1.66%	100.00%
2000	3.62%	1.19%	5.33%	25.35%	49.91%	12.56%	2.04%	100.00%
Total	2.93%	1.24%	5.66%	23.44%	51.14%	13.86%	1.74%	100.00%

