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Persistence and Desistence in Delinquent Careers: A Test of Braithwaite's Reintegrative Shaming Theory

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

**PERSISTENCE AND DESISTENCE IN DELINQUENT CAREERS:
A TEST OF BRAITHWAITE'S REINTEGRATIVE SHAMING THEORY**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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CHAPTER ONE

CRIME AND DELINQUENT CAREERS

Explanations of patterns of persistence and desistence in delinquent and criminal careers have not been directly addressed by theories of crime. In the few cases where theoretical explanations of these patterns have been developed, the explanations have been indirect readings of these theories. Persistence has often been claimed to be the result of a continuation of conditions, such as strain, criminal associations, or weak controls, which led to initial criminal behavior. Societal reaction, or labeling theory was specifically developed to address the cause of persistent deviant behavior, and has contended that such behavior is the result of social labeling which some, but not all, receive related to their criminal behavior. Although some theoretical attention has been indirectly given to the phenomenon of persistence in criminal behavior, very little theoretical attention has been given, even indirectly, to the phenomenon of desistence from criminal behavior.

Several prominent longitudinal studies of individual criminal behavior over time have clearly demonstrated that a very large majority of juvenile offenders desist from illegal behavior prior to, or during, their early twenties, and that nearly half of all first-time youthful offenders desist after just one offense. In spite of so much desistence from criminal behavior, the focus of most research and theory has been to account for the smaller percentage of offenders who persist in illegal behavior throughout adolescence and into adulthood. Though it is true that persistent offenders are responsible for most crime, especially serious property and personal injury crimes, the lack of attention paid to understanding why so many youthful offenders stop offending after just one or a few offenses leaves possibly important and useful knowledge unexplored. New and useful information could be generated from research and theory with focus upon explaining not why some behave criminally and others do not, but rather upon explaining why some delinquents fail to desist while most others successfully desist. Such knowledge could prove to be useful in attempts to increase the percentages of first-time offenders who desist after just this one offense, and in attempts to help persistent delinquents desist.

John Braithwaite's Reintegrative Shaming Theory (1989) provides the only direct explanation for desistence in criminal behavior. Braithwaite includes in his theory explanations for both desistent and persistent behavior. He contends that individuals whose illegal behavior becomes known to a social group will either be shamed in a predominantly stigmatizing manner or in a predominantly reintegrative manner, and that the type of shaming received will tend to result in persistent or desistent behavior respectively. Braithwaite's causal distinction between resulting persistent and desistent behavior is a breakthrough in criminological theory. It not only offers an explanation for why criminal behavior exists and why some begin to behave criminally while others do not, it also offers an explanation for why some who begin to behave criminally persist while others desist.

The research reported in this dissertation was conceived and conducted with the goals of exploring possible causes of desistent and persistent behavior and connections between causes of each, and of testing Braithwaite's proposed causes of persistent and desistent behavior. This study involved a retrospective analysis of life events and social supports and influences affecting the delinquent careers of a group of thirty youths. As is central to Braithwaite's theoretical explanations of persistent and

desistent criminal behavior, this study was principally interested in how subjects were shamed, stigmatized, and reintegrated, as well as with the conventional and delinquent natures of friends, family, and other influential social associates. The study was also conducted in such a manner as to gather descriptive data beyond these variables, data which might point out other important variables affecting persistence and/or desistence.

This first chapter will present the issues, concepts, and variables central to the questions addressed in this research. Chapter two will focus on a description of theoretical issues relevant to the questions addressed, as well as a detailed description of Braithwaite's theory and the hypotheses tested in this research. Chapter three provides information regarding the methods used in this research and this report, and chapter four provides specific information and descriptions on the individual subjects of this study and the communities in which they lived as teens. Chapter five describes how subjects tended to get involved in delinquent behavior. Chapter six focuses on subjects who desisted and trends in influences affecting desistence, while chapter seven focuses on persisters and trends in social forces influencing their persistent behavior. Chapter eight deals with describing shaming processes experienced by subjects and how such shaming resulted in

stigmatization or reintegration. Chapter nine summarizes the major findings of this research and discusses the impact these findings have upon existing theory and knowledge of variations in persistence and desistence in delinquent careers. Chapter nine also provides direction for future research on these questions and direction for policy makers and others interested in helping delinquent youths desist as early in delinquent careers as possible.

The Phenomenon of Desistence

Interest in studying patterns of offending over the life course of individuals began with the Glueck's 1930 book, Five Hundred Criminal Careers (Glueck and Glueck, 1930), and re-emerged in the 1970's with several longitudinal studies of juvenile delinquents. A specific focus within criminology has developed addressing a variety of issues related to criminal career studies. Developmental criminology is interested in studying and explaining issues of specialization, escalation, and persistence and desistence in criminal careers. Developmental criminology notes that some offenders specialize their criminal actions while others maintain variety in criminal behavior; some offenders escalate in seriousness of offenses while others reduce the seriousness of their offenses. Developmental

criminology is also interested in determining why most offenders desist criminal behavior while a small percentage persist in offending over a long period in their lives. One of the most striking findings of several of the most prominent longitudinal studies of criminal careers is the identification of the patterns of desistence among most offenders.

Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellen (1972) were the first to document the large percentages of juvenile offenders who desisted criminal behavior after one, two, or three offenses, and the high probability that most juvenile offenders would desist by their early twenties. In their famous birth cohort studies of Philadelphia youths, they used official records to follow the offense histories of all members of two birth cohorts. Regarding the frequency of offending among juveniles, they found that 46% of the juvenile offenders were one-time offenders, desisting after only one officially recorded offense, and that another 36% of juvenile offenders were each involved in four or fewer officially recorded offenses. Among the members of their 1945 cohort, 18% of juvenile offenders, or 6% of the total cohort population, had records of five or more juvenile offenses, and 23% of the juvenile offenders in their 1958 cohort were similarly chronic offenders. In a later follow up study (Wolfgang, et al., 1987), a 10% sample of the

original cohort was followed until age 30. This group was subdivided into a group of juvenile only offenders, adult only offenders, and a persistent group of juvenile and adult offenders. The persistent group was dominated by chronic juvenile offenders, representing 70% of the persistent group. This indicates that less than 9% of non-chronic offenders went on to engage in adult criminal activities, or that over 3/4 of the offenders in the 1945 cohort terminated their criminal careers before adulthood. Their data indicate a strong tendency to terminate delinquent behavior during the teenage years.

Lyle Shannon and associates (1988) and West and Farrington(1977) have conducted similar longitudinal studies of delinquent activity from early teens through young adulthood and have similarly found that less than 25% of juvenile offenders had five or more recorded offenses. Both studies also indicate that most juvenile offenders do not become adult offenders. They desist criminal behavior prior to, or early in, young adulthood. Shannon reported that when official police contact records and self-report measures were combined, well over 90% of males in each of the three cohorts he studied appeared to have engaged in youthful misbehavior, as had 65% to 70% of the females, yet, few (13.9% of the 1949 cohort) continued to get into trouble after age 18. While these studies focused upon explanations

for the persistence of criminal behavior among the chronic offenders, they also drew attention to, and began to document the phenomenon of desistence in criminal careers. LeBlanc and Frechette (1989) used a longitudinal research design to study patterns of criminal career development, escalation, and specialization, and they also recorded data on the phenomenon of desistence. Following subjects until age 25, they determined the mean age for last recorded offense was just under 20 years of age, with desistence from some forms of crime much earlier and for other forms of crime somewhat later. While not quantifying the likelihood of persistence, this study confirms that most juvenile offenders do desist by their early twenties, with many desisting prior to age 18.

Many researchers refer to this pattern of desistence by young adulthood as *aging out*. There is a serious debate among criminologists as to the importance of the finding of an aging out process among offenders. One side of the argument suggests that aging out is irrelevant because all criminals slow down criminal involvements as they age. Proponents of this argument have attempted to demonstrate that although not all offenders desist at the same period in their lives, there is a uniform rate of desistence, and that this uniform rate of reduction in criminal involvement is similar across cultures (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1986;

Gove, 1985). Since aging out appears to be uniform, this argument suggests that aging out is caused by natural aging and the physical limitations aging brings about.

The arguments against the importance of the aging out phenomenon are based on macro trends in reduction in criminal behavior with age which are generally uniform. Yet, there are important exceptions to this pattern, especially among white-collar criminals who tend to increase criminal behavior with age. Further, a shift from focus upon general trends to a focus upon individual careers gives evidence of the relevance of the aging out phenomenon. When the focus is shifted to individual careers, it can be seen that even though physical aging may restrict even habitual criminals from engaging in certain forms of street crimes which require physical risk for low return, many habitual criminals shift to less physical forms of criminal activity. The individual focus also points out that criminal careers, while on average may reduce with age, have a great deal of variety in persistence and desistence. Some juvenile delinquents age out of crime before other youths and young adults have even begun their criminal careers.

The other side of the argument suggests that aging out is important to the understanding of crime; that aging out is not uniform for all individuals, thus indicating that there are causal factors which escalate and continue

criminal behavior for some while reducing or leading to desistence of criminal behavior in others. Proponents of this side of the debate argue that it is possible to discover and use knowledge of these causal factors affecting the quality and duration of criminal behavior over the life-span of individuals. The proponents of the importance of aging out suggest that the phenomenon is actually the result of other life experiences which become more prevalent as individuals approach adulthood. They contend that life experiences, such as finishing school, getting a job, getting married, and otherwise being socialized into more adult-like roles may be the actual cause of the aging out phenomenon, and since these life experiences are most prevalent between 17 and 25 years of age, desistence is also most prevalent in this age period. Also, since not all individuals experience these life-experiences during this age period, aging out is not experienced by all youthful offenders (Wolfgang, et al., 1972; West, 1982; Farrington, et al., 1986; Rand, 1987; Shannon, 1988). Shannon even concludes, from his birth cohorts study, that desistence is usually the result of a **positive** life event, such as marriage, getting a job, graduating high school, not simply the result of a general maturation (Shannon, 1988).

Most youths do tend to age out of criminal behavior as they approach adulthood. Yet, desistence should not be

confused with aging out, for some youths desist criminal behavior after one, two, or three offenses in their early teen years. LeBlanc and Frechette (1989) contend that desistence should only refer to termination of criminal behavior among individuals with recurrent delinquent or criminal behavior, but such a limitation excludes the cessation of criminal behavior among young teens. Since, as has been reported in longitudinal studies starting with Wolfgang's study (1972), nearly half of first-time officially recognized offenders cease delinquent behavior after this first offense, knowledge of factors contributing to this cessation, this desistence, could prove to be of great value in reducing delinquent behavior for a larger percentage of first-time offenders. The high rate of desistence in the late teens and early twenties suggests that life events, particularly high school graduation, getting a job, and/or getting married may be partly responsible for desistence, along with general maturation and other socialization into adult roles. Yet, the high rate of desistence at younger ages, as well, indicates that desistence either has age-specific causes, or is caused by antecedent variables related to the life events of late teen and early twenties years. Identifying causes which can operate at both young ages of 13, 14, and 15 and at the young adult ages of 18 to 25 years would be a significant contribution

to developmental criminology. Since persistence and desistence are two paths in criminal careers, it would be a mistake to pursue causes of one without consideration of the causes of the other and connections between the two.

Factors Known to Influence Persistence

The strongest and most often reported variable correlated with persistent delinquent behavior is membership in a delinquent peer group. Numerous studies have clearly shown that individuals who associate with, and are strongly attached to, delinquents are more likely to engage in criminal behavior than are those without such associates.¹ Although there is much debate as to how delinquent peers influence criminal careers, there is general agreement that such peers do play an important causal role in the development of persistent criminal behavior. There is also strong evidence, especially from analysis of longitudinal data, that membership in delinquent peer groups is not a matter of fellow criminals joining together to share a

¹See Short, 1957; Voss, 1964; Erikson and Empey, 1965; Hindelang, 1973; Elliott and Voss, 1974; West and Farrington, 1977; Akers, et al., 1979; Johnson, 1979; Matsueda, 1982; Patterson and Dishion, 1985; Elliott, et al., 1985; Morash, 1986; and Kaplan and Johnson, 1991; just to mention a few studies indicating the strong relationship between delinquent peers and persistent delinquent behavior.

common interest or activity, but rather causal to developing persistent criminal behavior (West and Farrington, 1977; Elliott, et al., 1985). Elliott, et al. (1985), report that membership in the delinquent peer groups precedes development of persistent criminal behavior. Membership in a delinquent peer group is one variable to be studied for its explanatory powers in desistence and persistence.

Another factor considered in this study is the age at onset of criminal behavior. A large number of studies have found that the age of onset of delinquent behavior, and particularly the age of official recognition of delinquent behavior, is related to later delinquency and rates of offending. Those whose age of onset was prior to age 13 were found to have a far greater tendency to remain delinquent for many years and a much higher rate of offending throughout their delinquent careers (Glueck and Glueck, 1940; Shannon, 1978; Loeber, 1982; Farrington, 1983; Hamperian, et al., 1985; Tolan, 1987; LeBlanc and Frechette, 1989). Tolan (1987) reported that the rate of offending reported by those who indicated their delinquency began prior to age 13 was three-and-a-half times higher than for those indicating their delinquency began later in the teen years, and LeBlanc and Frechette (1989) and Farrington

(1983) reported the rate was two times higher. Others empirically demonstrate that those who had been recognized by the juvenile justice and law enforcement agencies as delinquents at an early age had far less tendency to desist or age out by their early twenties than did those whose delinquency was not recognized until their later teen years (Tittle, 1988; Barnett and Lofaso, 1985; Greenberg, 1985; Farrington, 1977). They submit that the early official recognition of delinquent behavior and resulting early labeling of these youths leaves them little choice but to pursue delinquent careers with fellow delinquents. Whether, or not, this explanation is correct, the relationship between age of acquisition of a delinquent status and likelihood of aging out illustrates the lack of uniformity in aging out among individual delinquents.

There is strong evidence to suggest that an early age of onset of delinquency is related to persistent criminal behavior among teenagers. Yet, birth cohort studies show that nearly half of first-time offenders desist after just the first officially recognized offense (Wolfgang, et al., 1972; Shannon, 1988). While an early entrance to delinquent behavior may result for most in a long and frequent offense career, at least some youths (percentage not indicated in previous research) who begin offending prior to age thirteen desist after just the first offense. This would suggest

that there are causal factors contributing to desistence which can affect even those whose entrance to delinquent behavior is at a young age, and that these causal factors are not as effective on this group of young beginners as it is on older initiates to delinquency.

West and Farrington (1977) and Shannon (1988) noted a disturbing relationship among members of their birth cohorts who had encounters with the juvenile justice system regarding detected delinquent behavior. They noticed that youths had a strong tendency to increase delinquent behavior following such encounters with formal control agents. This finding of amplification, or escalation, of delinquent behavior resulting from official intervention has been supported in research by Marx (1981), Ray and Downs (1986), and Wooldredge (1988). Since the exact causal relationship in this amplification is uncertain,² these findings do not suggest a need for the juvenile justice system to do nothing with delinquent youths. In fact, a large percentage of youths who are processed by the Juvenile Justice System desist delinquent behavior under influence from these encounters. What is not known, and should be explored empirically, is just what is provided by formal justice

²Stigmatization and labeling is one most often suggested causal mechanism. See Becker 1963, Gold 1970, Williams and Gold 1972, Morash 1984, and Chambliss 1987.

system interventions which supports desistence and what is provided which promotes persistence, offense escalation, and offense frequency amplification.

There has often been noted a strong relationship between poor school performance/attendance and delinquent behavior. Several theorists and researchers have suggested that delinquents tend to also behave in other anti-social ways, with such behavior contributing to failure at school. Elliott and Voss (1974) and Elliott, et al., (1985) both demonstrate that poor performance in school is actually a partial cause of delinquent behavior, and that delinquent behavior is not causal of poor school performance. These studies further noted that delinquents who dropped out of school had a decline in delinquent behavior following their exit from school, the place where they were failing. Failure to succeed at school seems to be causally related to persistent criminal careers, leaving this strain-producing environment appears to be causally related to reduction and/or termination of delinquent behavior, and graduation from school appears to be linked to desistence and aging out of juvenile crime. Identification of specific aspects of school performance and success related to persistence and desistence of criminal behavior should also be a goal of desistence research.

These few social variables; delinquency of peers, age of onset of delinquent behavior, official recognition of delinquent behavior, and degree of difficulty with school; have been found to impact upon persistence in delinquent behavior. The only attention paid to variables affecting desistence in previous research has been suggestions by a few researchers that life-events marking maturation into adult roles might explain the strong tendency to age out of delinquent behavior by the early twenties of age (Shannon, 1988; LeBlanc and Frechette, 1989). Yet, even in these two studies, no empirical data is provided to support the researchers' suggestions. Existing research is of little help in identifying potential variables affecting desistence, with the exceptions of the vague concept of transitional life-events and the lack of, or reversal of variables which cause persistence.

Several other social factors need to be explored, as well, for their abilities to account for persistence and desistence in delinquent careers. Hirschi (1969) and several other researchers after him have clearly demonstrated the strong relationship between weak conventional controls and delinquent behavior. This relationship suggests that perhaps an increase in conventional controls might lead to desistence among delinquents. Opportunity to behave criminally is also strongly related to delinquent

behavior (Loeber and Stouthammer-Loeber, 1986), suggesting that decreasing opportunities to behave delinquently might result in desistence. Desistence research should explore the relationships between social controls and the persistence and desistence within criminal careers, and the relationships between opportunities (such as lack of supervision, availability of crime technology and tools, availability of time, and availability of targets) and persistence and desistence in delinquent careers. Since so much research supports the claim that many youths are influenced to engage in delinquent activities by delinquent peers, the potential for conventional peers to promote conventional behavior should also be explored.³ These are

³The distinction between delinquent and conventional peers and associates throughout this dissertation is both a distinction between behavior and values. The contrast is not one between absolutes, such that conventional individuals have never committed an illegal act while delinquent individuals constantly behave delinquently. Instead, individuals designated as conventional may only have violated laws in dispute and have not violated social norms accepted by the overwhelming majority of society. Conventional individuals also believe in the need for all to adhere to these majority held social norms. While these social norms include most of the criminal law, including norms against violation of personal safety and property, they do not include all of the criminal law. In contrast, individuals designated as delinquent are those who have committed several violations of these majority held norms, and who believe that their violation of social norms, is permissible. Individuals who have committed only occassional delinquent offenses in violation of disputed social norms (underage drinking, speeding) are not designated as delinquents. Such a distinction assumes that all designated as delinquents were at one time conventional,

but a few of the proposed persistence causal factors which might also play important causal roles in desistence and, therefore, should be considered in desistence research.

Persistence and Desistence in Prominant Theories

A theory of crime and criminality should be able to account for a number of trends among criminals, or delinquents when addressing juveniles, and for a number of dissimilarities between criminals and non-criminals. Among these trends and dissimilarities, a theory of crime should be able to explain why some criminals desist after just one offense, why others desist after a few or several offenses, and why still other criminals persistently offend over long periods of time. In accounting for desistence and persistence trends among criminals, such a theory needs to provide causes and causal mechanisms which lead to desistence or persistence at various points in individual criminal careers. These causes and causal mechanisms should

due to a lack of commission of delinquent acts. The age at which individuals acquire a delinquent designation varies. Some youths begin to violate norms at very young ages, while most individuals do not begin to seriously violate these norms until they are teenagers.

account for the variations noted due to delinquency of peers, age of onset of criminal behavior, type and degree of official recognition of delinquency, and degree of difficulty with school. The existing prominent theories of crime fail to adequately address the causes of desistence and fail to recognize that the previously mentioned variables not only impact upon criminality, but also upon desistence.

Control theory is most often associated with Travis Hirschi, though Reiss, Toby, Nye, and Reckless preceded Hirschi in developing aspects of control theory. Hirschi argued that all humans are motivated to behave criminally. He thus focused on explaining why some act on this motivation while most do not. His explanation was that all are differently restrained from acting on their criminal motivations by internal and external controls. Those who have weak social and internal controls - commitments to work, school, and/or family; (emotional) attachments to family and peers; involvements in activities, work, and/or school; and beliefs and values - will be more likely to act upon their natural desires to behave criminally than will those with strong social and internal controls. Those with strong controls will tend to repress (control) their desires to behave criminally (Hirschi, 1969).

With Hirschi's assertion that all humans are motivated to behave criminally, persistence is easily explained as continued lack of restraint of the natural impulse to behave criminally. As well, those who continue to avoid criminal behavior are said to have strong controls maintained, controls which repress the natural impulse to behave criminally. Control theory requires readers to make two derivations from the theory in order to account for the controlled individuals who later in life begin to behave criminally and to explain the uncontrolled criminal who later desists from criminal behavior. The theory does not directly deal with these two situations.

The first derivation is easily made, arguing that those who turn to crime after years of being restrained are individuals whose controls have become weakened. Yet, control theory offers no explanation for how such controls are built and later weakened. The second derivation is to argue that those who desist from criminal behavior are individuals whose controls have been restored or strengthened or even initiated for the first time after a period of having been weak or non-existent. Again, control theory offers no causal mechanisms to account for changes in controls and their strength and abilities to repress criminal behavior. In fact, Hirschi argues that imposing strong controls upon delinquent teens or criminal adults is

not possible, that control need to be developed as pre-teens (Hirschi, 1983).

This second derivation, the restoring or introduction of new strong controls, is more complex, though, than stated here. Empirical research has shown that the introduction of strong formal controls into the lives of criminals, controls such as incarceration and probation, instead of repressing future criminal behavior, tend to amplify criminal behavior (Marx, 1981). This evidence suggests that either the derivation is improper, and so too the theory from which it came, or that there are some controls which help repress while others, like formal controls, fail to repress criminal impulses. Since control theory does not directly deal with persistence and desistence, a more complete control theory version incorporating these derivations or other causal factors needs to be developed.

Sutherland theorized that criminal behavior was learned behavior, not the result of uncontrolled natural impulses to behave criminally. He argued that within any community there existed competing definitions of acceptable behavior. The criminal was one who had learned both techniques for criminal behavior and definitions which allowed for favorable judgements of criminal options. The criminal possessed an abundance of definitions favorable to criminality, or lacked sufficient countervailing definitions,

definitions indicating that criminal behavior was unacceptable and definitions of conventional behavior as preferable behavior. This learning was said to occur in a process of differential association, coming to associate with a particular set of definitions and with those who taught these definitions. Sutherland also contended that this learning, or differential association, occurred most often and easily in criminal peer groups, where an abundance of criminally favorable definitions were taught and countervailing definitions were crowded out (Sutherland, 1949).

A number of other theories have been built on the observation that crime is most common among those who belong to criminal peer groups. Sutherland had argued that membership in criminal peer groups was common among criminals because such membership provided most of the opportunity to learn both criminal techniques and definitions. Those who did not belong to criminal peer groups were far less likely to learn technique or definition (Sutherland, 1949). Several variations of this theory have been developed promoting a concept of criminal subcultures which promote criminal definitions and otherwise support criminal behavior (Cohen, 1955; Matza, 1964). Cloward and Ohlin (1960) claimed that, in addition to providing learning, criminal peer groups increased the opportunities for members to engage in criminal behavior, thus increasing the

percentage of crime committed by such members. Common to these theories are the claims that associating with delinquent/criminal peers increases the likelihood of one becoming delinquent or criminal and that most who behave criminally have such associations.

From Sutherland's differential association theory, one could deduce that persistent criminal behavior is caused by continued association with criminals and criminal definitions of acceptable behavior. Such a deduction would also imply that it would be necessary to replace these criminal associations with conventional associations in order to bring about desistence from criminal behavior. Sutherland's theory offers no causal mechanisms which might result in such an alteration of associations. Criminal subculture theories and opportunity theories more overtly claim that continued criminal associations will result in continued criminal behavior. Yet, these theories also offer no insight into how or why criminals might desist from criminal behavior and/or leave criminal associations. The need to exit from criminal associations and replace these with conventional associations in order to desist from criminal behavior is an easy and logical deduction from these theories, but how and why this might happen, especially for the majority of juvenile delinquents, is not possibly derived from any of these three theories.

Whatever the role of the criminal peer group in developing and/or expanding criminal behavior, the most often cited reason for individuals joining such peer groups is social strain. Strain theory is an extension of Merton's Anomie theory of deviance. Strain theorists suggest that individuals are not naturally motivated to behave criminally, rather most all strive to achieve conventional goals, such as having money with which to purchase fashionable possessions, maintaining honor, and receiving respect from others. It is further suggested that not all individuals who seek such goals have access to the legitimate means with which to achieve these goals. Those who lack access to the legitimate means are likely to resort to illegitimate, and often illegal, means with which to obtain desired goals. Those who are strained by the lack of access to legitimate means, such as those who cannot get good work, cannot succeed at school, are born into positions of low honor and respect, are also likely to seek out, or be recruited by, similarly strained individuals as associates. Together, such strained individuals can form their own subcultures in which they are respected, and can share in illegitimate means of obtaining desired goals. Strain leads to use of illegal means to obtain desired goals of having money, power, honor, and respect, and strain also leads to associations with similarly strained and criminal

associates. Such associations compound the criminal behavior by increasing criminal definitions, criminal technology, and criminal opportunities.

Strain theories offer one possible explanation for how individuals are motivated to begin criminal behavior and how and why such individuals join with other criminals to form subcultural groups. Strain theory incorporates differential association mechanisms to account for the increased and persistent criminal behavior which exists among members of criminal peer groups. It is not clear, though, if removal of the strain which led to criminal behavior and membership in criminal peer groups would be sufficient to bring about desistence from criminal behavior. Since strain theorists assert that individuals generally desire to behave conventionally, it would seem proper, based on this assertion, to expect that removal of strain would result in a return to conventional behavior.

There is some empirical evidence to support this expectation. Elliott and Voss (1974) found that most delinquents strained by poor school performance decreased delinquent behavior after dropping out of school. Many more youths desist from criminal theft and hustling when they obtain good jobs with good wages (Shannon, 1988; Sullivan, 1989; LeBlanc and Frechette, 1989). The positive life events reported to result in tendency to desist from

delinquent behavior are also events which remove some of the strains of adolescence. This extension of strain theory, suggesting that desistance is caused by a removal of strain, is not sufficient, though, for it does not explain how the removal of strain affects delinquent/criminal associations, and does not account for what removes strain at various other stages in development.

None of the originators of the societal reaction perspective, more frequently called labeling theory, claimed to have created a general theory of crime or deviance. Yet within this perspective are three separate explanations of how the social control of deviants leads to further, or persistent, deviant behavior by those controlled, those labeled. One explanation contends that official attempts to control the deviant/criminal labels the individual, attaching to him/her a master status. This master status of deviant or criminal, in turn, reduces the individual's access to legitimate associates and legitimate opportunities to achieve socially desired goals (Becker, 1964; Kitsuse, 1964; Erickson, 1964; Goffman, 1961 and 1963). In other words, the attaching of a master status in attempts to control criminals succeeds in increasing strain on these criminals, and such strain tends to lead to persistent criminal behavior. Erickson further contended that this attachment of a master status, this labeling was irre-

versible (Erickson, 1964), while Goffman wrote about differences in how labeled individuals managed their labels, some escaping the ill-effects while others were unable to avoid these ill-effects (Goffman, 1963).

A second explanation claims that official labels of deviant or criminal may be internalized by the one so labeled. Proponents of this explanation also assert that individuals choose to act in accordance with their self-images. If one's self-image - gained from internalizing what others say of him - is that of a criminal, then he shall choose to behave criminally in the future. Thus, official control efforts lead to increases in criminal behavior because they impute upon those controlled a criminal identity or label (Lemert, 1951; Goffman, 1961; Kelly, 1979).

All three labeling explanations assume that persistent criminal behavior stems from different causes than that which leads to initial criminal behavior, and labeling explanations set out to account for the persistent criminal behavior. Initial deviant/criminal behavior is viewed as natural behavior which normally would be very sporadic. The third labeling account asserts that official control efforts, especially efforts to control first offenses, are counterproductive because they draw attention to and amplify the very behavior which is unwanted. Proponents of this

explanation further argue that if the behavior were ignored, no effort made to control it, the behavior would tend not to re-occur (Tannenbaum, 1938; Schur, 1973).

Having assumed that initial deviant and criminal behavior is natural and sporadic, not likely to recur without additional causes, societal reaction theorists focus upon explaining persistent deviant and criminal behavior. This perspective specifically offers an explanation for persistent behavior. However, these claims that initial criminal behavior which is not labeled will likely not occur again and that initial criminal behavior which is labeled is likely to persist are not supported by empirical evidence which demonstrates that many first arrests are not for the first illegal act committed by individuals, nor by data which shows that a majority of juvenile offenders with court records desist after the first officially recognized offense (Wolfgang, et al., 1972; Shannon, 1988). Either there are labeling forces which intervene even in cases of undetected delinquent behavior, or delinquent behavior is not as sporadic as predicted by these theorists; and either the master status attached in labeling can be removed, can be well managed by most delinquents, or is not consistently applied to those who are officially recognized by juvenile courts for delinquent behavior. Also, the only possible explanation offered by labeling theorists for desistence

after several offenses, or after having been once labeled, is that such individuals have learned to manage their criminal labels within conventional society.

Among these four prominent social theories of crime there are several different explanations of initial and persistent criminal behavior. It is also possible to deduce from some of these theories causal influences which might account for desistence after just one offense or after several offenses. However, none of these theories adequately addresses the desistence phenomenon. In addition, recent theoretical development has centered around attempts to blend the strengths of these four perspectives into an integrated theory which in and of itself could explain more variation in criminal behavior, both initial and persistent. Braithwaite's Reintegrative Shaming Theory appears to be the only integrated theory, though, which blends the strengths of previous theories to account for initial and persistent criminal behavior while also offering a causal mechanism which would explain why some desist at any number of points in their criminal careers. A detailed presentation of Braithwaite's theory will be presented in the next chapter, along with how this theory relates to the questions addressed in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

TESTING DESISTENCE AND PERSISTENCE EXPLANATIONS IN BRAITHWAITE'S REINTEGRATIVE SHAMING THEORY

Braithwaite's Reintegrative Shaming Theory attempts to explain a variety of trends in criminal behavior. In particular, the theory focuses upon accounting for both the well documented differences between the majority of offenders who commit few criminal acts and are responsible for a small percentage of most serious crime and the minority of offenders with long criminal careers who are responsible for the majority of serious crime. Braithwaite contends that a good theory of crime needs to explain, among other things, how and why so many people act criminally on rare occasions, how and why most individuals do not engage in most forms of criminal behavior, and how and why a small minority of individuals vary from this pattern by engaging in frequent criminal behavior (Braithwaite, 1989). To meet this challenge in explaining such variety in criminal behavior,

Braithwaite has developed an integrated theory, incorporating the strengths of a variety of crime theories which, when taken separately do well to account for one or another aspect of this variety of criminal behavior.

Braithwaite's theory can also be divided into two parts. The first part of his theory attempts to account for both the usual avoidance of criminal behavior by most individuals within society and the atypical, but not so uncommon, tendency for most individuals to choose to behave criminally on rare occasions. The second part of the theory seeks to give reason for both persistence in criminal behavior and desistence from criminal behavior. This approach assumes that individuals are born with no pre-determined tendency towards conventional or criminal behavior, but rather born with complete freedom to choose either form of behavior. Braithwaite argues that individuals must be socialized to avoid criminal behavior, to find it so distasteful a choice of behavior that it is generally not even considered as an option. His theory provides explanation for how people are socialized to avoid even the consideration of most forms of criminal behavior. Braithwaite's theory has received high praise for its focus upon moral education as the process which can explain both typical avoidance of criminal behavior options and atypical, yet common, selections of criminal behavior, especially

among adolescents. It has also been praised for the potential of its moral education perspective to account for both desistance from and persistence in criminal behavior (Akers, 1990; Sheff, 1990).

Braithwaite's Integrated Theoretical Model

Braithwaite's theoretical model centers around the process of shaming. Braithwaite loosely defines shaming as a process of drawing attention to behavior which is deemed inappropriate by a majority of society. Shaming may involve physical and/or emotional means to make the actor aware that society regards the shamed behavior as unacceptable, and shaming seeks to encourage the offender to first appreciate the error of his/her behavior and to second seek society's forgiveness for the transgression. Shaming occurs informally in the family, school, and among peers, and it occurs formally in the criminal justice system, school, and work place. Informal shaming is an integral part of the socialization process. It usually takes the form of pointing out other's shame for bad behavior, sending the messages that such behavior is distasteful and improper, and that one should avoid such behavior in order to avoid similar shame. Formal shaming is claimed to be one of the goals of the criminal justice system, of formal sanctions in

schools, and of formal sanctions in the work place. Formal shaming is also an attempt to implant a sense of distaste for criminal behavior, or at least a fear of future and similar shame should the behavior be repeated. Reintegrative shaming theory recognizes that shaming is not always the only goal of the criminal justice system.

Shaming is conceptualized as the process of social control which both seeks to socialize individuals against criminal behavior and seeks to externally deter criminal behavior by way of fear of emotional sanctions from close associates should one get caught in criminal behavior. Shaming is viewed as a mechanism of socialization key to the development of internal controls, such that one who has been properly shamed and has been receptive to shaming influences should have internalized distaste for criminal behavior choices. Such distaste, then, helps prevent one from choosing criminal activities. Fear of being shamed is seen as a mechanism of external control, such that one susceptible to the fear of being shamed is deterred from choosing criminal behavior.

Braithwaite points to several variables which affect the receptivity of an individual to shaming and affect her susceptibility to the fear of being shamed. Age, gender, conventional commitments (marital status, work/school goals), and involvements in conventional activities affect

one's interdependency, including one's attachments to conventional others like parents, spouse, employer/school, and peers. Having strong commitments, being of certain age (under 15 or over 25), and being female, increase one's interdependency. The greater one's interdependency, the more receptive she will be to the influences of shaming in developing strong internal controls, and the more susceptible he will be to the external controls of fear of being shamed. Braithwaite also contends that shaming is made more potent in communitarian societies, societies where individuals are more interconnected and their lives are more intertwined.

Braithwaite goes on to claim that not all shaming leads to development of internal and external controls on behavior such as to reduce criminality. As he defines the process of shaming, Braithwaite carefully distinguishes two forms of shaming: one is predominantly stigmatizing and the other predominantly reintegrative. Stigmatizing shaming is shaming which not only draws negative attention to the criminal behavior, indicating its inappropriateness and unacceptable nature in the community, but also draws the same attention to the individual who committed the criminal act. Stigmatizing shaming is shaming which equates the actor with the behavior, condemning both and providing no opportunities for a welcomed return to conventional society.

stigmatizing shaming is shaming which tends to cut the criminal off from conventional ties to society, usually by way of labeling and attaching stigma to the character of the individual criminal. Some examples of the severed ties between offender and conventional society brought on by stigmatizing shaming would include the difficulties the ex-con has in gaining employment (Buikhuisen and Dijksterhuis, 1977) and the community's unwillingness to accept ex-cons as respectable members (Moore, 1985).

Reintegrative shaming is shaming which tends to stigmatize only the criminal behavior, not the individual who engaged in such behavior. Reintegrative shaming then turns to reintegrate the individual who committed the criminal behavior and has been sufficiently shamed. This reintegration is any of a number of processes of welcoming the shamed individual back into conventional society without any degradation of character.

He argues that reintegrative shaming most assuredly develops internal controls and bolsters one's interdependency, while stigmatizing shaming decreases the power of fear of being shamed and makes continued shaming to develop internal controls less useful. Braithwaite contends that stigmatizing shaming cuts individuals off from conventional attachments, makes them less interdependent, and thus reduces the potency of conventional shaming in developing

conventional internal controls and reduces the potency of the fear of shaming to act as a conventional external control. He also contends that those cut off from conventional attachments are more likely than more interdependent people to join criminal subcultures, seeking attachments with those similarly cut off from conventional others. Those who join criminal subcultures become more exposed to criminal opportunities and become susceptible to shaming from non-conventional others to adopt criminal values and fear being shamed for not choosing criminal choices.

A crucial link between the breakdown of controls accounting for primary criminal behavior and involvement in criminal peer groups accounting for habitual criminal behavior is the potential for shaming to result in stigmatization, as opposed to reintegration. Braithwaite argues that shaming which is predominantly stigmatizing often results in the stigmatized individual bonding with a criminal peer group. Stigmatizing shaming is the mechanism which, as Braithwaite contends, accounts for those few primary criminals becoming members in criminal peer groups, many of whom become habitual criminals. Reintegrative shaming is the mechanism which accounts for the many primary criminals who do not join criminal peer groups and do not become habitual criminals.

Braithwaite's shaming mechanism not only accounts for individual criminality, it also accounts for differences in crime rates at macro levels. Shaming operates at the societal level in much the same way as it does at the individual level. As mentioned previously, Braithwaite contends that the potency and use of shaming differs from community to community and culture to culture, thus producing more moral distaste for crime among the members of a community which frequently uses potent shaming than in a community which infrequently and ineffectively uses and communicates shaming to its members. Braithwaite also argues that individual societies tend to use shaming which is predominantly reintegrative or stigmatizing. He argues that societies that shame reintegratively will produce members with strong internal controls and greater interdependency and communitarianism, with these accounting for low crime rates, while societies that rely too heavily on stigmatizing shaming will decrease interdependency and communitarianism and increase the number and membership of criminal subgroups, leading to high crime rates. He also contends that over-reliance on stigmatizing shaming has a negative affect on a community's ability to induce in its members a moral distaste for criminal behavior. Others made aware of excessive stigmatizing shaming of community members are less likely to be receptive to the moralizing message

than are those who find the community shames reintegratively, for the former will reject the messenger, because of his stigmatizing methods. Having rejected the messenger, they will not hear his message.

Braithwaite is also careful to point out that his theory only has explanatory powers for predatory crimes for which there exists overwhelming consensus in society as being deviant behavior in need of control. He includes both forms of white-collar crimes, like embezzlement, fraud, and the marketing of products known to cause harm, and blue-collar crimes, like theft, assault, and arson, and many other forms of crime which cause harm to property and others. He is careful not to assume that all behavior legally defined as criminal should be socially defined as criminal. He avoids the difficulties of explaining behavior legally defined as criminal, but for which a social consensus of definition is lacking, and he avoids having to account for behavior which is defined as criminal by an elite group only to control less powerful groups. Braithwaite asserts that less than overwhelming consensus reduces the power of shaming and makes participation in subcultures less distinguishable from conventional society.

Theoretical Strengths Integrated into Braithwaite's Theory

The many recent integrated theoretical models of crime causation all recognize that previous theories are not mutually exclusive and contradictory explanations, but rather explanations of different parts of the crime phenomena. Control theory is believed to explain how most initially get involved in crime, strain theory is believed to explain why others initially get involved, as well as why criminal subgroups form among those who have been punished by society for initial and habitual criminality. Labeling theory also offers reasonable cause for the motivation among the punished first offenders to bond with other offenders, separated from conventional bonds. Social disorganization theory fits with both control and strain theories, accounting for differences in community controls and levels of strain. Subcultural theories and learning theories describe the process of developing an habitual criminal out of a few of the many novice criminals. Taken together, these empirically supported elements of the various original theories are able to explain both original, singular episodes of criminal behavior and the habitualization of criminal behavior among some of these many first-time offenders.

Braithwaite begins to build his theory on some very well supported claims of Control theory. Individuals with strong attachments to family are less likely to engage in criminal behavior than those with weak attachments to family (Nye, 1958; Hirschi, 1969; Gold, 1970; Elliott and Voss, 1974; Hagan, et al., 1979; Elliott, et al., 1985; Kaplan and Johnson, 1991). Individuals with strong attachments and commitments to school or work are less likely to engage in criminal behavior than are those with weak attachments and commitments to school or work (Empey and Lubeck, 1971; Elliott and Voss, 1974; Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1990). Although he may not agree with Hirschi's claim that humans are always motivated to behave criminally, Braithwaite does contend that criminal behavior is always an option for humans. Yet, Braithwaite suggests that through use of shaming in socialization most individuals have been conditioned to view most forms of criminal behavior as distasteful, and at least fear future shame should they behave criminally. That is, those with strong controls are very likely to have developed strong internal controls, and the stronger the attachments and commitments, the stronger the external controls, fear of future shame, will be. These strong controls account for why most individuals most of the time do not choose criminal options. Likewise, possessing weak or no internal and external controls for a particular

type of criminal behavior allows for the choosing of the criminal option, though not all with weak controls will behave criminally.

On a macro level, Braithwaite borrows from social disorganization theory the fact that communities with strong organization are more capable of properly socializing members in non-criminal norms and more capable of acting as powerful external controls on behavior than are communities with weak organization (Shaw and McKay, 1969; Clinard and Abbott, 1973; Sampson, et al., 1981). He suggests that strong social organization makes shaming more successful in socialization and increases external control powers by increasing the fear of being shamed if caught in criminal act. He also recognizes that any community, with strong or weak organization, has the potential to stigmatizingly shame.

Braithwaite stretches the limits of control theory, suggesting, as have others, that it is equally possible for one to develop attachments and commitments to criminal peers and criminal enterprises (Elliott and Voss, 1974; Box, 1981; Kaplan and Johnson, 1991). Hirschi's control theory makes no distinction between conventional controls and criminal controls. Braithwaite suggests that criminal controls can be as strong as conventional controls, influencing individuals to maintain criminal behavior and making return to

conventional behavior distasteful and risky. He also proposes that social acts can change the controls of individuals, strengthening or weakening them depending on the type of social action. He further proposes that a specific type of social act, stigmatizing shaming, has great potential to weaken conventional controls and lead to a strengthening of criminal controls.

While Braithwaite argues that control theory does well to account for initial and episodic acts of criminal behavior, he contends it fails to explain the more important, serious crimes committed by habitual criminals. Here he turns to the strengths of labeling theory. There is strong empirical evidence that efforts by the criminal justice system to control criminal behavior tend to amplify such behavior in those controlled (West and Farrington, 1977; Marx, 1981; Ray and Downs, 1986; Shannon, 1988; Wooldredge, 1988). Research has also demonstrated that in western cultures those officially controlled tend to be stigmatized and such stigma often has ill-effects on those labeled (Goffman, 1963; Gold, 1970; Williams and Gold, 1972; Buikhuisen and Dijksterhuis, 1971; Morash, 1984; Chambliss, 1987). Strong evidence exists supporting the contention that those labeled tend to seek membership in groups of similarly labeled and stigmatized peers (Goffman, 1963; Becker, 1963; Ageton and Elliott, 1974; West and Farrington,

1977; Kaplan and Johnson, 1991). There also exists much evidence, as reviewed by Tittle (1980), that not all, perhaps not even a majority, who are processed through the criminal justice system become stigmatized and seek out criminal peer group membership. Such evidence, though, does not negate the evidence suggesting that stigmatization can and does occur for some, and that this stigmatization may be causal to one's joining a criminal peer group. Whereas labeling theory appears to have correctly pointed out that at least some formally sanctioned criminals are stigmatized by the formal process, resulting in secondary deviance, labeling theory has been unable to account for why some are stigmatized and others are not. Braithwaite's concepts of reintegrative versus stigmatizing shaming, developed from the strengths of labeling theory, is a means of explaining how and why some sanctioned individuals do and others do not join criminal peer groups.

Membership in criminal peer groups is key to Braithwaite's explanation of serious, habitual criminality. He recognizes the overwhelming evidence that individuals who associate with criminals and/or are more strongly attached to delinquent peers are more likely to engage in criminal behavior, and more regularly so, than are those without criminal associates and attachments (Becker, 1963; Elliott and Voss, 1974; West and Farrington, 1977; Akers, et al.,

1979; Morash, 1984; Elliott, et al., 1985; Kaplan and Johnson, 1991). Borrowing from learning and opportunity theories, Braithwaite suggests that membership in a criminal peer group weakens one's internal conventional controls and replaces conventional external controls with pressure to conform to the group's criminal behavior pattern. In other words, membership in a criminal peer group is likely to surround one with a set of moral definitions conducive to criminal behavior and lacking in conventional countervailing moral definitions. Membership in a criminal peer group also blocks off access to legitimate opportunities and increases the opportunities to learn necessary criminal behavior technology (Becker, 1963; Matza, 1964; Moore, 1978; Williams and Kornblum, 1985; Kaplan and Johnson, 1991). The criminal peer group provides many of the necessary ingredients for the forming of an habitual criminal.

Braithwaite also calls upon strain theory to further account for how and why some move beyond petty and episodic initial involvements in crime to membership in criminal subgroups and habitual involvement in criminal behavior. Strain theory accounts for why some, especially those strained also by stigmatization, join criminal peer groups (Elliott and Voss, 1974; Moore, 1978; Williams and Kornblum, 1985; Elliott, et al. 1985; Sullivan, 1989). Strain theory also partly accounts for the development of habitual

criminality by suggesting that membership in a criminal peer group reduces one's options to achieve success through legitimate activities, leaving criminal means as often the only perceived option available (Elliott and Voss, 1974; Moore, 1978; Sullivan, 1989).

Theories such as control theory, strain theory, and differential association theory have sought to account for how and why some begin criminal behavior, and theories such as labeling theory and subcultural theories have attempted to explain why some who engage in initial and episodic criminal behavior become habitual criminals. Braithwaite's theoretical explanation is unique in its attempt to account for initial and episodic criminal behavior, for habitual criminal behavior, and for movements from episodic criminal behavior to desistent or persistent criminal behavior.

The same social process of shaming is claimed to account for all of these aspects of criminal behavior. Proper shaming as a tool in moral education is said to prevent most initial and episodic criminal behavior, and improper shaming, or a lack of moral education, in general or regarding specific criminal activity, is said to allow for initial and episodic criminal behavior. How one is shamed regarding initial episodic criminal actions, or any later criminal actions, is said to influence movement towards either desistence or persistence. If an offender is

stigmatizingly shamed for an offense, Braithwaite argues he/she will tend to persist in criminal behavior. If the offender is reintegratively shamed, she/he will tend to desist from criminal behavior. Stigmatizing shaming is claimed to lead the shamed individual to break from any conventional associates and to bond with criminal associates, and criminal associates are said to provide strong influence to continue to behave criminally. Reintegrative shaming is claimed to lead the shamed individual to maintain or return to conventional associates, who provide strong influence to avoid criminal behavior and/or desist from criminal behavior.

There is much within this theory which needs to be evaluated against empirical data, and there are concepts within this theory in need of further development. Whether this theory proves to be an improvement over previous theories in accounting for crime and its various aspects, or not, there are at least several important developments within the theory which should help in understanding crime and criminal careers. First, the theory draws new and important attention to the social process of moral education as both a deterrent to criminal behavior and as a tool for rehabilitation. Second, the theory focuses attention upon shaming as a social control mechanism, and the theory distinguishes two opposing forms of shaming: stigmatizing

shaming and reintegrative shaming. Third, the theory takes seriously the need to account for how and why individuals initialize criminal behavior, how and why some individuals persist in criminal behavior, and how and why some criminals desist from criminal activities. It is this third set of relationships between episodic initial criminal behavior, persistent criminal behavior, and desistent behavior with which this dissertation is concerned.

Research Focus

The dissertation research conducted was a test of these hypotheses: (a) juveniles who desist from delinquent behavior and refrain from illegal behavior for four or more years tend to have been reintegratively shamed for their first offense, while juveniles who persist in illegal behavior tend to have been stigmatizingly shamed, and (b) juveniles who belong to delinquent peer groups tend to have been stigmatizingly shamed, while those reintegratively shamed tend to not belong to delinquent peer groups. The dependent variables assessed were 1) persistence (operationally defined as three or more encounters with the juvenile justice system for delinquent offenses over a four year period), and desisters as the lack thereof, and 2) the nature of the juvenile's peer group, whether predominantly

criminal or conventional. The independent variable in these hypotheses was the dominant type of shaming experienced by the subjects, whether reintegrative or stigmatizing.

This research project also explored the various forms reintegration and stigmatization took in the lives of delinquent youths. One could study the impact of shaming within the family or the school, and one could study the impact of shaming differences on future decisions to engage in initial criminal behavior. Yet, this theory seeks to account not only for individual decisions to engage in criminal behavior, but also for the drift of some who encounter the formal control systems (and the lack of drift by others) into associations primarily with criminal subgroups, and therefore drift into habitual criminal behavior. Since I intended to test both of the previously stated hypotheses, it was essential I explore the role and forms of shaming in the lives of those who had encountered the criminal justice system (juvenile justice system in this case) for alleged criminal (delinquent) behavior. In so doing, I explored the impact of formal (if any) and informal forms of shaming on both subsequent decisions to engage in criminal behavior and on drift, or lack thereof, towards criminal associations.

Although Braithwaite suggests that the type of shaming could be measured by asking offenders if they felt rejected

or forgiven for their offense (1989), I argue such a measure would be incomplete in assessing the social aspects of reintegration and stigmatization. Events of welcoming, re-opening conventional doors, or of closing such doors, may not be perceived by offenders as rejection or forgiveness, and yet still have profound impact on their futures, on their decisions to join a delinquent peer group, and their future decisions to engage in criminal activities.

It is also not ideal to measure reintegration and stigmatization by typing some forms of sanctions one or the other, although such a typology may be useful at some level. Since the type of shaming is not an absolute, but rather a point one side of the middle on a continuum, and since events outside of the sanction itself can affect the type of shaming, no one form of sanction can be assured to result in a stigmatized individual or a reintegrated individual. It may prove to be appropriate to claim that a form of sanction, outside of other events, tends to result in stigmatization while another results in reintegration, and it may prove to be appropriate to claim that some forms of sanctioning tend to make reintegration more possible than other forms of sanctioning. If demonstrated reliable and valid, such a typology would be useful to policy makers and administrators.

It is also suggested that not all formal sanctioning for criminal behavior involves the same intensity of attempted shaming, although even when shaming is avoided and/or unintended, formal sanctions have great potential to shame. Braithwaite suggests that many Western cultures have in recent decades removed much shaming from formal control of criminal behavior, both avoiding shaming the accused criminal and publicizing any shame to the community. He asserts that this separation of shame and formal sanction explains much of the increase in crime in these cultures over this period of time. Therefore, shaming may be conducted more effectively by informal means, though based in part on the type of formal sanction given by the criminal justice system.

For scientific purposes, measures of shaming type need to look beyond offender perceptions and sanction differences. Since quantifiable measures of shaming based solely on perception or formal sanction type are incomplete, this research explored the various forms reintegration and stigmatization took in the lives of youthful offenders, and the various actors who were integrally related to tipping the balance towards stigmatization or reintegration.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In an ideal world, social scientific research would be as easy to conduct according to good design as is research in the physical sciences. In the real world, social scientific research must deal with many ethical questions and concerns and with a strong inability to control variables other than those being tested. These real world challenges to social research require that the design of a research project recognize the limitations of social research and plan to maximize the usefulness of conclusions while limiting the unreliability of results. The design presented here was the guide to this research, though not all design elements could be implemented as precisely as planned.

The mix of questions this research sought to answer presented a design conflict which required that one set of questions be addressed in a less than ideal and definitive manner. One desire of this research was to test the pair of

hypotheses presented in the last chapter, to determine if shaming type had the predicted impacts upon persistence/ desistence and upon drift toward delinquent or conventional peer groups. Ideally, these hypotheses would be tested using a quantitative design and a large random sample. However, to develop valid and reliable measures of shaming types and the connections between shaming types and future behavior, the second set of goals for this research needed to be answered first. Here, the questions included what shaming looked like in the lives of youths, what had greatest impact upon peer group ties among youths, and what had greatest impact upon future behavior among youths, and these questions needed to be answered first. A qualitative approach using a small, purposive sample was better suited to providing the depth of understanding requested by these questions. Such a qualitative design could also address the questions presented in the hypotheses and provide needed guidance for a large, quantitative study on desistence and persistence and/or on shaming influences and results.

In mapping out this small qualitative study, several goals needed to be addressed. First was the need to provide information regarding shaming in the lives of youthful offenders and the effects such shaming had upon peer group type. There was also the need to determine if shaming differences resulted in differences in persistent or

desistent behavior, and if such an association involved an intermediary influence of shaming upon peers and peers upon persistence or desistence. The interplay between shaming, stigmatization, or reintegration, peer group ties, and persistence in, or desistence from delinquent behavior was of particular importance to this research, and the design needed to provide data which could address the questions of such interplay. The desire to shed light upon what might be related to and causal of desistence was as important a goal of this study as was the description of shaming in the lives of juvenile offenders.

To meet these various goals, I decided to use a comparative, qualitative research design. Both persisters and desisters were to be compared; compared on shaming experiences, compared on peer group ties, and compared on strongest influences upon behavior and decision making. Two groups were to comprise the sample, one 15 member group of desisters, those who ended delinquent behavior following their first court recorded offense, and one 15 member group of persisters, those who had at least two additional court recorded offenses following their first. All youths were to have committed their first offense at age 13 and all were to be members of a birth cohort. I also decided to include equal numbers of black and white youths in each group, and to adequately represent female youths in both groups. The

ideal study would be longitudinal and commence with a large number of youths at the time of their first offenses, but, instead, a retrospective longitudinal approach was chosen to gain information over a four year period following first offenses. Reasons for these decisions, and for decisions to modify the ideal design in practice, will be presented later in this chapter.

Data was gathered using open-ended questioning in interviews with sample subjects, and where possible the data was checked against information in official court and school records and against information offered by parents, other relatives, and friends of subjects. The questioning was designed to encourage subjects to tell of their offense histories, their relationships with parents, other adults, court and school officials, and peers, and their decisions to desist or persist. Some questioning did focus in on specific stories youths told of shaming experiences, stigmatizing experiences, and reintegrative experiences. Other questions focused upon relationships youths had which they claimed were influential.

Data analysis was unstructured, as well, allowing the stories told by youths to point out the trends and associations which had greatest impact in their lives and on their decisions to desist or persist. In analyzing the rich and voluminous data, attention focused upon summarizing

shaming experiences, stigmatization experiences, and reintegration experiences, and upon placing these experiences in their proper context in the lives of these subjects. Attention also focused upon describing what, if any, relationship existed between peer group ties and delinquent behavior and between shaming type and peer group ties. The data was also searched for clues as to the strongest influences upon desistence and how these influences were, or were not, involved in the decisions of other subjects to persist in delinquent behavior. Again, relationships between these influences and the other variables - peer group ties, shaming, stigmatization, and reintegration - were noted in the analysis.

The Design in Theory and Practice

Most studies about the causes of delinquent behavior have gathered data about individuals at specific instances in time, then compared differences between those individuals at that point in their lives. Such cross-sectional views of delinquency offer a wealth of understanding, but this design was inappropriate for providing answers to the questions approached in this study. Cross-sectional data would not be able to provide information about effects of shaming, reintegration, or stigmatization over time, nor would the

data be able to determine if changes in behavior were lasting. Most important to this study, cross-sectional data would provide no insights into any interactions of variables, nor could such data determine a sequence to any interactions of variables. Several studies have attempted to measure individual behavioral changes over time by collecting data at intervals in the lives of subjects. While this approach provides information about changes in behavior over time, and whether such changes are lasting, or not, this design is not able to provide data regarding the interaction of variables.

A longitudinal design is best suited to the goals of this study. A longitudinal design follows subjects over a long period of time to provide data on changes, on causes for such changes, on the order of changes and the order of causes which might interact to bring about changes, and on the lasting nature of changes. A longitudinal study also allows for noting changes with time and aging, or maturing so as to determine if the reduction in criminality over time for any age cohort is uniform for all members of the cohort and the result of physical aging, maturation, or other causes which increase with age. A few studies, such as Empey's pilot project studies (Empey and Lubeck, 1971; Empey and Erickson, 1974) attempted to gather somewhat longitudinal data by following subjects for one year and noting

changes which were probably due to the experimental treatment these youths received. This short follow up, though, has been criticized, for most persistent delinquents go through active and quiescent periods of delinquent behavior, with quiescence usually following a court intervention (Maltz, 1984; Gottfredson, 1987; Wooldredge, 1988; Shannon, 1988). Longer follow up periods are needed to determine if desistence following a court intervention is temporary or lasting. A longitudinal design provides for a long period of data gathering.

The principle reason for most research choosing to use a cross-sectional approach is that ideal longitudinal research is costly and time consuming, with results becoming available many years after research has begun. In this research project the same practical constraints of time and cost were present. Yet, a third option was chosen to save time and money and to maintain the long period of time over which data was collected. I chose a retrospective approach because data could be collected in a short period of time, yet the data collected would cover a long period of time in the lives of sample youths. The retrospective design maintained the desired values of longitudinal research - the ability to detect change, to detect the lasting nature of change, to detect causes of such change, and to detect

patterns of interaction and sequence in influences, causes, and changes.

Going back over the past four plus years in the lives of subjects provided a longitudinal design which was inexpensive and quick, but it also raised special concerns and potential problems. It is well recognized that in recounting past events and perceptions of influence, informants might have told reconstructed versions altered to present themselves in a positive light, or altered to fit their current situations and perceptions of influence (Plummer, 1983; Denzin, 1989). Frazier (1967) and Plummer (1983) advocated the use of other sources of information against which recollected stories could be checked for accuracy. Following this recommendation, data from subject recollections was checked against official court records, and where applicable, against school records and the recollections of others involved in the lives of subjects. This process provided no reason to doubt the accuracy of recollections of any subject, though it did demonstrate that subjects did not recall everything that was related to their delinquency, nor recall all actions taken by others on their behalf. However, since one of the goals was to determine if being shamed, stigmatized, and/or reintegrated affected future delinquent behavior and peer group ties, the use of subject reconstructions was not as problematic. One set of

data sought was stigmatizing and reintegrating actions which might have affected subjects, but another type of data sought was whether, or not, subjects experienced stigmatization or reintegration, and only subject perceptions were relevant in this case. Schwartz and Jacobs (1979) suggest that reconstructed accounts be trusted as truthful in providing perception data.

The use of retrospective data presents an additional limitation over forward longitudinal data. In a retrospective study, data is limited to what subjects and informants recall. In forward longitudinal research, data can be collected first hand, allowing researchers to gather data as observers. Such data can include much more depth, but it presents its own problems. Observers can allow for personal bias to affect the type of data collected and the types of data ignored, while retrospective research gives the informants control over what data is relevant and will be collected. Observational data also has the potential for the observer to alter events by his or her presence, and retrospective research can only collect information on events which already occurred without influence from the researcher.

My decision to use a qualitative design was based on two points. The need for descriptive data regarding shaming, stigmatization, and reintegration, as well as the

need for descriptive data regarding social forces and variables impacting upon desistence and persistence decisions among subjects made qualitative data preferable over quantitative data. Also, the lack of understanding of reintegration and shaming made the development of reliable and valid quantitative measures difficult. It is hoped that the results of this qualitative study might help in the development of useable quantitative measures of shaming, reintegration, and other variables. It is also hoped that the results of this qualitative study will assist in ordering theoretically the sequence of interaction of these variables as they impact upon desistence and persistence. Although the use of a qualitative design loses the assuredness of representation of findings in the general population, the design excels at providing depth of understanding.

Many good qualitative studies have been conducted on various topics regarding juvenile delinquents, yet most have not used a comparative sample. Studies of delinquent gangs, of inner-city delinquents, of youthful drug users, or of any other homogeneous group offer a wealth of information about that group. However, the lack of a comparison group makes it impossible for these studies to address how their group is alike or different from any other group of delinquents. One important goal of this research was to be able to detect

how and why youths who desisted from delinquent behavior early in their teen years differed from youths who persisted in delinquent behavior throughout most of their teen years. Studying only desisters would tell us much about them, but would not provide sound data on causes for their desistence. To provide the needed data to answer these questions regarding differences between desisters and persisters, both groups needed to be studied simultaneously. The comparative sample allows for detection of differences which might account for desistence among the one group and persistence among the other.

In putting together a comparative sample, several goals were to be met. The two groups were to be as similar to each other as possible, except for differences in delinquent careers. Williams and Kornblum (1985), in their study of poverty effects upon youths, attempted to use a comparative sample so as to detect differences in poverty's affects upon different types of youths. However, they included so few members of so many different groups of youths that they were unable to draw clear conclusions regarding differential poverty effects. In sample selection, my goal for this study was to make the members of the two groups comparable on race, gender, socio-economic status, seriousness of first offense, age, and neighborhood of residence. By matching desisters of particular characteristics with persisters of

similar characteristics, these variables were to be held constant. If making such matches was too difficult from among the pool of a birth cohort of delinquents, then this difficulty would suggest that one or more of these variables being held constant was possibly causal to differences between persisters and desisters. Also, since one of the other goals of this study was to determine if shaming differences resulted in desistence difference, holding other possible causes constant made sense.

In planning for sample selection, I chose to use a birth cohort and to select subjects with an early age at first offense. This decision was based in part on practical needs to follow at least four years as teens after the first offense. The decision was also based on a desire to detect desistence causes among the young offenders. Previous mention of desistence in research has been among longitudinal studies of juvenile offenders. These studies have reported that nearly half of first-time offenders cease delinquent behavior after the first recorded offense and that even among habitual offenders, most have desisted from delinquent behavior by their early twenties (Wolfgang, et al., 1972; West and Farrington, 1977; Shannon, 1988; LeBlanc and Frechette, 1989). Shannon (1988) and LeBlanc and Frechette (1989) indicate that positive life events, such as finishing school, getting a full-time job, becoming a

parent, or getting married, are causal of desistance among those in their late teens and early twenties, but no mention is made of causes of desistance among younger offenders, especially those with short offense careers. It was a goal of this study to try to discover potential causes of desistance among the nearly fifty percent who only acquire one official record for a delinquent offense, and to detect causes of desistance among those who begin offending at young ages.

The decision to select subjects from a birth cohort was made to hold constant aging and maturational effects. Hirschi has argued that the decline in offending with age is not the result of desistance brought on by maturational causes, but rather is the result of physical aging which makes committing crime less possible. If the cause were either maturation or physical aging, a sample with subjects at various ages would not allow for separating out effects of age, maturation, or physical decline upon desistance or persistence. Since members of a cohort age together, wide discrepancies in physical abilities related to getting older should not occur, and life events such as graduation, marriage, or parenthood would be equally unlikely for all subjects at the time of the first offense. In addition, historical effects like economic conditions and crime waves would be constant for all.

My decisions to seek descriptive data and to use a comparative sample of desisters and persisters prompted my decision to not exclude one gender, nor to limit to only one racial group. Yet, in order to represent females, sorely lacking from most other delinquency research, and to represent blacks and whites, the two comparative groups had to have sufficient numbers in each group and had to be comparable in representation. I decided to include five females and ten males in each of the two groups, and to attempt fifty-fifty representation of blacks and whites. To control for equal representation of Socio-economic conditions in each group, subjects were selected in pairs, one desister and one persister, from comparable neighborhoods throughout the county. The inclusion of females and attempt to represent both blacks and whites was made to allow the research to address similarities or differences between males and females and blacks and whites as to experiences of shaming, stigmatization, reintegration, peer group influences, and other causes of desistence and persistence.

Since so little is known about desistence and so little research has been done on shaming and reintegration, it seemed appropriate for this exploratory research to attempt to describe these phenomenon among various groups. However, there was also the need to not attempt to cover too many groups and not be able to conclude real differences between

any two. The focus remained upon desisters verses persisters, and where possible, differences between males and females and between blacks and whites might be addressed if reasonable numbers of each comparison group were included in the sample.

Sampling Procedure

In order to practically select 15 desisters and 15 persisters of the same age with first offenses at the same young age of 12 to 13 years old, the assistance of a data set was needed. This need led to my use of official court records of first offenses as defining first offense, and official court records as defining three or more offenses. Offenses which escaped official court recording would not impact selection of subjects to either group, explaining how Cindy and Lamar were included in the desistent group when each had committed other delinquent offenses for which they were never charged. The use of official records allowed for practical identification of potential subjects and gave some information useful to contacting these potential subjects.

In November of 1991, permission to gain access to juvenile court records for the purpose of this study was sought from, and granted by Judge Michael Malmstadt, chief

judge of the Children's Court of "Salem" county.⁴ A search was then made, using a computer data base, to acquire a subfile of cases meeting the design requirements: all cases of youths born in 1973 who received their first official court record for a non-status delinquent offense in 1986. This group included 198 cases, and was then subdivided into a group who had no subsequent non-status delinquent records and a group with an additional two subsequent non-status delinquent records. From each of these two groups, fifteen subjects were selected using purposive selection and based upon availability. Great effort was made to select subjects in pairs from a variety of neighborhoods and to include in the final sample subjects whose first offenses were comparable.

Locating potential subjects was quite problematic and greatly limited the number of potential subjects. Many subjects who met the design criteria, especially those among the desister group, had last known addresses which were at least five years old. A variety of sources were used to attempt to locate youths, or their parent(s), yet addresses for many could not be found. I then assumed that most of

⁴Fictitious names are used for subjects, communities, and schools so as to protect the anonymity and privacy of the subjects in this study. This decision was made prior to the request for access to records, but it would also have been required by the Judge as a condition of access.

those who could not be located had moved out of the county and would not have been suitable for the study. Adult court records of potential subjects were also checked to aid in locating subjects and in selecting subjects for each group with similar adult records. Due to the difficulties in locating many prospective subjects, ideal selections of pairs living within blocks of each other or having nearly identical first offense charges was impossible in most cases. Yet, most subjects had a pair in the other group from within the same zip code, and most offenses had a near comparison in the other group.

The actual selection of the thirty subjects occurred by a process of elimination. Ideal pairs were identified, then individuals were contacted by letter and followed up with a phone call or visit. Individuals who declined to participate were eliminated, and had to be replaced with as near a match to the ideal pair who accepted as possible. This process of selection was less than ideal and left the two groups with less than comparable first offenses. It was then not possible to rule out seriousness of first offense as a cause of desistence or persistence. Yet, the selection process resulted in a sample which was comparable in the other desired areas of location, socio-economic status as determined by neighborhood, race, and gender.

Interviews

Interviews with subjects were the primary source of data for this study. Since the type of data sought was descriptive data regarding life experiences and influences affecting their delinquent behavior and changes in delinquent behavior, it was decided to use a non-structured approach to the interviews. Subjects were allowed to tell their stories as they remembered events and influences. In telling their own stories, subjects were allowed to indicate the most significant events and influences. The use of a structured questionnaire would have had the interviewer, myself, asking about what I believed should have been most significant, and subjects would tend to have given only what I requested. The unstructured approach was preferable in obtaining the most accurate descriptions of delinquent behavior and influences upon persistence or desistence.

One focus of the study was to explore possible factors which resulted in some subjects desisting delinquent behavior following their first offense and factors resulting in other subjects persisting in delinquent behavior. Another goal of the study was to explore the reactions of formal and informal agents to the delinquent behavior of these subjects, looking to describe any shaming, stigmatization, and/or reintegration which occurred and which may

have impacted upon desistence or persistence. To obtain data which would allow for such analyses, youths were asked to tell about troubles they had with the law, with school, and with parents. Youths were also asked to tell about the reactions to their troubles and bad behavior from the court, school personnel, parents, peers, and others of importance. From these stories, hints of shaming, stigmatization, reintegration, peer influences, and significant interventions were probed for greater detail.⁵

Interviews lasted from an hour to two hours. Most were conducted in the homes of subjects, though a few were held in private rooms at a local library, a state prison, and the city jail. Interviews began with a discussion of the goals of the study, of how and why subjects were selected, and of the potential risks to subjects from participation. I also informed subjects of the intent to use pseudonyms to protect privacy and anonymity, and of the assurances I had from the judge to protect the confidentiality of study data. Subjects were then asked to give oral consent to participation. Interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. A few subjects were contacted a second time to clarify particular details from the first interview.

⁵See appendix i for a copy of the interview outline used to guide data collection.

Additional data was collected from court records, school records, and conversations with parents, though conversations with parents were not sought, but occurred because a parent was present and offered insights and information. Court and school records were reviewed following interviews and were used to identify important events missed in the interviews and to check the accuracy of information given by subjects. There were no findings of record data disagreeing with accounts given by subjects, though record data did point out a few additional interventions and sanctions not recalled by subjects. In cross-checking data with a parent, questioning was more pointed, limiting conversation to the events subjects interpreted as most important. Also, parents were asked to provide information about what happened and what the parent did in these events, how they reacted to the events and their children at the time of these events. Parental perceptions and interpretations were not relevant to this study, and were not recorded.

Data Analysis

Just as a non-structured method of data collection was used to assure quality descriptive data, the method of analysis was primarily unstructured so as to allow the data

to present an accurate picture of shaming, stigmatization, reintegration, peer group influences, and other interventions as they affected the delinquent careers of sample subjects. The stories told by youths included accounts of how others attempted to get them to view their actions as unacceptable, to feel shameful and disgraced for their actions, and to desire to avoid these actions in the future so as to avoid future shame. Their stories included accounts of how others labeled and stigmatized them, how others maintained the shame and disgrace indefinitely, or how others praised and rewarded them for their illegal behavior. Accounts of being forgiven, of being welcomed back into conventional social groups, and of receiving desired affirmation in strengthened conventional relationships were also part of many stories told by the subjects. Subjects freely described the conventional or delinquent nature of their friends at different periods in their lives, and they identified when peers had influence upon their behavior, and when peers did not influence their behavior. Many subjects also reported special efforts, or interventions, which were made by parents, teachers, and others significant to them, interventions which often had positive impact upon their behavior. The only analysis of the descriptive data needed was to identify events and efforts as descriptive of one or another concept under

investigation, and this identification was guided by the definitions established prior to data analysis.

Testing the hypotheses under investigation in this research required a slightly more structured method of analysis. First, the descriptive data provided a clearer understanding of what the variables in question would appear like in the lives of youths. The descriptive data also provided an understanding of how these variables worked together in individual cases. The first step up in structure was to simply search for common patterns of variable interaction and common patterns to causal outcomes. The small size of the sample made this possible without the use of quantitative analyses. Finally, to test the hypotheses, each case was examined to see if it fit each hypothesis. Should each case fit a hypothesis, the hypothesis would be supported. Should any one case not fit, the hypothesis would be disproved, unless the case need to be dropped for good reason or the hypothesis were altered to fit the case. This method, analytic induction, allows for the use of small qualitative samples with case-study data in testing hypotheses, and it allows for the use of such samples and data in the development of more accurate and useful theory (Denzin, 1989; Silverman, 1985).

Since so few cases in the sample fit the hypotheses, the focus of analysis then turned to identifying needs for

alterations in the hypotheses and to identifying patterns which would fit all of the cases. This form of analysis sought not to assure or disprove new hypotheses, but simply to identify new hypotheses likely to explain the patterns presented in the data and likely to account for the studied phenomena. Future testing of these hypotheses was recommended in the conclusion.

CHAPTER FOUR

SAMPLE SUBJECTS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

The sample for this study was drawn from a single, urban county in the midwest to be called Salem county. In line with the desire to hold constant as many variables as possible, the choice of selecting subjects from a single county assured that all were processed through the same juvenile court and served by the same social and correctional services. The drawback to the selection from a single county is that the results might possibly be unique to only that county should that county and/or its juvenile justice system be in some way unique. Also, the results of this study may only describe juvenile delinquents living in urban areas. Yet, since populations are concentrated in urban areas and the majority of juvenile crime is committed in urban areas, it made sense to focus on urban youths, urban delinquents.

The Community and its Neighborhoods

One of the best ways to demonstrate the representativeness of the sample used in this study is to describe the community from which it was drawn, showing how this community is typical and atypical of other urban counties in the U.S. Salem county has a population of almost 960,000, most of whom reside in the city of Salem, which has a population of 628,000 (Slater and Hall, 1992). Salem county and city are rather similar in size and racial make up to Franklin county and the city of Columbus in Ohio. The total population of Columbus, Ohio is approximately 633,000 and the population of the entire county, Franklin county, is approximately 962,000 (Slater and Hall, 1992). Table One provides the racial percentages of the total populations of Salem city and county and of Columbus, OH in Franklin county.

Comparing the two cities, it should be noted that Salem has a higher concentration of blacks than does Columbus, 30.5% of Salem's total population compared to only 22.5% of Columbus' population, and Salem has a higher concentration of individuals who consider themselves hispanics than does Columbus - 6.3% to 1.1%. Other racial concentration differences are much smaller between the two cities. Though Salem is much larger in total population compared to

Cincinnati, Ohio - approx. 630,000 to 365,000, the proportions of each population who are white and black are very similar (Slater and Hall, 1992). White's comprise 63.4% of Salem's population and 60.5% of Cincinnati's population, while blacks make up 30.5% of the population of Salem and 37.9% of the population of Cincinnati. Salem's racial composition is typical of midwestern industrial cities.

Table 1 Population Comparison: Salem and Columbus

	SALEM		COLUMBUS, OH	
	City	County	City	County
Population	628,088	959,275	632,910	961,437
White	398,023 (63.4%)	718,918 (74.9%)	470,885 (74.4%)	783,714 (81.5%)
Black	191,255 (30.5%)	195,470 (20.4%)	142,404 (22.5%)	152,840 (15.9%)
Hispanic	39,409 (6.3%)	44,671 (4.7%)	6926 (1.1%)	9236 (1.0%)
Asian	11,817 (1.9%)	15,308 (1.6%)	15,190 (2.4%)	19,437 (2.0%)
Native Am.	5858 (0.9%)	6994 (0.7%)	1266 (0.2%)	2056 (0.2%)
Other	21,125 (3.4%)	22,585 (2.4%)	2532 (0.4%)	3390 (0.4%)
Youth Population ages 5-17	117,864	170,929		

Salem's economy and social condition are also typical of many major rust-belt cities. Salem is a major manufacturing center, though it has lost a considerable proportion of its manufacturing firms and jobs in the past 30 years. Such losses are typical for cities like Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Cincinnati, as well, and these lost jobs have had similar impact upon the economies of these cities. Unemployment among these urban youths is very high, as high as 50% for inner-city black youths. Unemployment in the greater Salem area is over 22% for blacks and just under 4% for whites, placing black unemployment in the Salem area much higher than in urban areas such as Detroit and Chicago, 18.4% and 16.6% respectively (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1993).

The large city school system in Salem is under fire from many parties for allegedly providing a sub-standard education, as are the city school systems in other large rust-belt cities, and the drop-out rate from this city school system is high. Salem is also highly racially segregated, at least as segregated as Chicago and more segregated than Columbus and its county, Franklin county in Ohio. Class segregation between city residents and suburban county residents is also strong and typical in Salem. Salem is quite typical of many major midwestern cities, having a rust-belt economy and racial and class segregation, and

suffering from many social problems affecting other major U.S. cities.

Since the youths in this study were served by the county juvenile court system, and since most subjects resided in the city of Salem, it is important to describe the county-city relationships. With nearly two-thirds of the county's population living in the city of Salem, county government is strongly influenced by city residents. Salem city and county governments are cooperative, not antagonistic. The city and county cooperate in providing numerous services to county residents, as well, though state law places most burden for providing social services upon the county.

Youth population is rather evenly distributed between the county and city of Salem - approximately 118,000 youths (19% of city population) between the ages of five and seventeen reside in the city, and an additional 53,000 youths (16% of suburban county residents) of the same ages reside in the suburban communities of the county (Slater and Hall, 1992). Life for teens in the county differs between city teens and suburban county teens, though. The 118,000 youths living in the city are served by one school system, while the 53,000 suburban youths are served by twelve different school systems. Family incomes are higher in the suburban county communities than in the city, and teenage

unemployment is much higher in the city than in the rest of the county.

Distinction between city and suburban county communities, though is not as great as distinction between inner-city neighborhoods and all other county neighborhoods. Salem's north-side inner-city neighborhoods are the poorest, have the highest concentration of youths, are almost exclusively inhabited by blacks, and are among the oldest neighborhoods in the county, having lost most of their industry over the past three decades. Salem's south-side inner-city neighborhoods are divided between a very old neighborhood of hispanic residents and a somewhat younger neighborhood of poor white residents. Conditions in these two south-side neighborhoods are below standards in most other neighborhoods throughout the county, but conditions are not as severely poor as they are in many sections of the north-side inner-city neighborhoods.

Crime in the city of Salem, as indicated by number of arrests, decreased dramatically from 1986, the year of the first offenses of study subjects, to 1991, the year prior to the collection of data. However, juvenile arrests increased even more dramatically than did overall arrests decrease. Using data collected according to the Uniform Crime Reporting procedures and definitions, juvenile arrests increased between 1986 and 1991, including arrests for

murder, burglary, robbery, auto theft, and other thefts. In 1986, 84 people were arrested for murder, only five of whom were juveniles, while in 1991, 359 arrests were made for murder, including 60 juvenile arrests for murder. Total burglary arrests went down from 8417 in 1986 to 1101 in 1991, while juvenile arrests went up from 397 in 1986 to 461 juvenile arrests in 1991. Robbery arrests decreased from 2207 in 1986 to 1580 in 1991, but juveniles arrested for robbery increased from 181 to 617 between 1986 and 1991. The shift in auto theft was most dramatic, decreasing overall from 5807 in 1986 to 1626 in 1991, while increasing among juveniles from 219 arrests in 1986 to 999 arrests in 1991. This explosion of juvenile arrests in the city of Salem between 1986 and 1991 also included females, who in 1991 comprised 23.5% of those juveniles arrested (Salem Fire and Police Commission, 1991).

It is my assertion that Salem is typical of many rust-belt cities in the midwest, and therefore that the sample used in this study is not so different from a sample which might be drawn from Cook county in Illinois, St. Louis County in Missouri, Milwaukee county in Wisconsin, Franklin or Hamilton counties in Ohio, or many other urban counties throughout the midwest and perhaps even throughout the entire U.S. I unfortunately do not have data to compare the juvenile court and supporting justice systems of Salem

county to those in other urban counties, so there remains the potential that some unique aspects of the juvenile justice system in Salem county might bias the results in this study, making the results less representative of youthful offenders throughout the U.S. It is my hope that the results from this study can be later challenged in a study using a larger, more representative sample from across the U.S.

Introduction of Subjects

The sample for this study consisted of 30 youths, and each provided very personal information. Their own stories, especially when told in their own voices, tell much more about getting into and out of delinquent behavior than I can tell from analysis. As often as space allows, I have used the exact words of subjects telling their own stories. Not every individual was quoted in this dissertation, but the stories of each were equally important. Some subjects managed to communicate common experiences better than did others, and these subjects were more often quoted. Since this study relies upon the understanding of the lives of each and all of these 30 individuals, it is important to introduce each individual. In briefly introducing each, the subject's chosen pseudonym will be used, and the sex, race,

approximation of socio-economic status, family structure, first offense, total number of juvenile offenses, and other unique information about each subject will be provided. The first fifteen subjects were members of the desistent group in the sample, and the second fifteen subjects were members of the persistent group of subjects. It is important to remember that subjects were chosen for the desistent group if they had no court record for a second juvenile offense for four years following the first court recorded offense. Therefore, two desisters engaged in additional delinquent behavior which remained undetected by the police and juvenile court systems, one desister reported engaging in delinquent acts after the four year follow up to his first offense, and two desisters were arrested for criminal acts committed as adults.

Desisters

PeeWee is a white male of hispanic ethnic background. PeeWee lived with his mom and dad and younger sister in the hispanic south-side neighborhood of Salem. His family was of lower working class status, his father having a steady unskilled job. PeeWee's first offense was for allegedly molesting a girl classmate at school, along with several other boys. PeeWee still maintains he was innocent of these

charges. PeeWee, after the four year follow up period, also had a juvenile arrest for car theft. At the time data was collected, PeeWee was finishing high school, with only a few weeks remaining until his graduation.

John is a white male living in a middle working class neighborhood of one of the largest suburban communities in Salem county. John lives with his mom and dad, both of whom work. John's family is of middle class status. John's first offense was trespassing and damage to private property, and this was committed along with a group of friends. John also has an adult arrest for burglary, and was awaiting trial at the time he was interviewed. John was a member of his high school's conference championship football team, and he graduated a year prior to being interviewed. John is working at a steady unskilled laborers job, waterproofing homes.

Jason is also a football player, currently on athletic scholarship to West State University. He is a white male whose family, of upper middle class status, lives in a small suburban community within the county. Jason lives with his mother and father and grandmother. Jason's first offense, physically assaulting a classmate, was never pursued by the county, officials believing it was a one punch fight not worthy of court intervention. Jason does have an adult

offense, having been charged for gambling while away at school.

Don is a student at a technical school, having graduated from a high school outside the county. *Don* is a white male who lived with his mother, older brother, and older sister during his teen years. *Don's* parents divorced when he was about 12 years old. *Don* has seldom seen his alcoholic father since the divorce. At the time of his first offense, slugging a friend while the friend's mother and school personnel looked on, *Don's* family lived in a poor white neighborhood on the south side of Salem. Soon after, *Don's* mom moved the family to a middle class neighborhood in the city of Salem. *Don's* mom worked nights as a nurse at a hospital, providing a middle class status for the family. *Don* had troubles in the Salem schools, and he dropped out of school as a result, later finishing school in another district while living with grandparents.

Frank is a white male who lived with his mother, older brother, and younger brother in a middle class suburban community, though he lived in a middle class city neighborhood at the time of his first offense. *Frank's* parents divorced when *Frank* was young, and *Frank* has not seen his father since the divorce. *Frank's* mom supports the family on a modest income from her clerical job, and the family receives additional support from their church. *Frank* is

very involved with his Mormon church. Frank's first offense was for child abuse, having molested a young girl who lived in the lower flat, and as a condition of Frank's probation, his family had to move.

Rashaad is a black male living with his mother and father in a middle class black neighborhood a few blocks from a large housing project. Rashaad's parents both worked, providing a middle class status for the family. Rashaad is a big guy, having played some football in high school. He now attends a technical college and wants to get into law enforcement someday. He says he wants to be both a provider and a strong role model for his son. He and the mother get along, but they no longer see each other. Rashaad's first offense was for hitting another boy while on a city bus, striking the other boy after that boy had made derogatory comments about his girlfriend. Rashaad has since been ticketed for fighting on several occasions, but he has avoided serious offenses.

William is a black male who lives with his mother, stepfather, older brother, and older sister in a middle class black neighborhood. William's father died when he was 11 years old. William is currently attending a junior college and hopes to become an accountant. His first offense was a case of misunderstanding. As William told it, he was attempting to encourage some young kids on bikes to

be careful due to a thief in the area, when the youths thought he was threatening them. They told a police officer about his threats and accused him of attempting to steal their bikes. The judge in his case held the charges open for six months and then dismissed due to William's avoidance of further troubles.

Jerry is currently attending college at Southern State University. He is a black male and lived with his parents and younger brothers and sisters in a poor black neighborhood at the core of the inner-city. His mom and dad each worked middle class jobs. The family was strongly committed to and involved in their small church, donating much time and money to the church. *Jerry's* commitment to the church increased following his first offense, which was for shoplifting from a department store. *Jerry* is studying music, and he has been involved in music at his church and at school, playing in the high school band.

DJ now works for the phone company and lives with his girlfriend, but while in high school, this black male lived with his mother, older brother, younger sister, and his mother's mother. *DJ's* parents divorced when he was in grade school, and he has seen little of his father since, though his father lives only a few miles away. *DJ's* family lives in a middle class black neighborhood, and *DJ's* mother works

a clerical job. DJ's first offense was the taking of a bicycle from a younger neighborhood child.

Lamar is a black male and lives with his mother, his older and younger sisters, and his younger brother. Lamar never knew his father, and his mother and the father of the younger brother and sister are also now divorced. Lamar and his family live in a poor inner-city black neighborhood, approximately a mile northeast of where Jerry lived and three to four miles south of William's home. Lamar's mother works a low wage job, earning slightly more than the family would make on AFDC. Lamar's first offense was for a minor fight over a girlfriend, and though Lamar has no other juvenile offense records, he has been involved in gang fights regularly over the years from 1986 through 1991. He currently awaits trial for first-degree intentional homicide.

Cindy, a white female, lives with her mother, her younger brother, and her daughter in an integrated neighborhood less than a half mile east of Lamar's neighborhood. At the time of the first offense, battery against her mother, Cindy lived with her mother and father and her older sister and younger brother. Her parents soon divorced after the first delinquent offense. Cindy's mom works as an unskilled laborer, and Cindy receives AFDC benefits. Cindy has also been involved in undetected delinquent behavior,

and as an adult has been ticketed several times for drug possession and for fighting.

Brandy is a white female living with her mother and father and her younger twin brothers. Brandy also has her baby son living with her. The family lives in a middle class white neighborhood on the far south side of the city, and Brandy's father is a city laborer. Brandy's first offense was for trespassing on school property and destruction of school property, offenses committed as a tag along with another girlfriend who became a persistent delinquent in the years since that first offense.

Lyn, a white female, is currently serving in the Air Force. At the time of her first offense, Lyn lived with her mother and her older sister in a slightly upper middle class suburb southwest of the city. Lyn's parents had divorced many years earlier. Following difficulties at school and at home, including being caught with a friend who was shoplifting, Lyn left her mother's home and went to live with her father and stepmother in a city of 100,000 residents some 20 miles south of Salem. Lyn did move back with her mother after graduating from high school and prior to joining the Air Force, and she claims they were then able to get along together well.

Tamara is a black female living with her mother and father and her five brothers and sisters in an integrated

middle class neighborhood on the northwest side of the city. Both of Tamara's parents work at clerical type jobs. Tamara is currently attending junior college, and she hopes to become a nurse someday. Tamara is also very involved in her church, especially the church youth group and the choir. Tamara's first offense was for fighting, but she soon grew out of the fighting stage in her life.

Lydia, a black female, lives with her mother, her older sister, and her grandmother in rent controlled housing just north of the downtown area of Salem. Lydia's mom works nights as a housekeeper at a large downtown office building. Lydia is now working in a fast food restaurant and hopes to go back to school. She wants to get an education so she and her daughter can have a better life. Lydia's first offense was for shoplifting, and she claims she never wants to be so embarrassed again.

Persisters

Lisa is a black female living with her mother, her older sister and her sister's son, her two younger sisters, and her younger brother. *Lisa's* family lives in a lower class black neighborhood in the inner-city, though at the time of her first offense, they lived in another similar neighborhood a mile away. *Lisa's* mom and dad divorced when *Lisa* was ten, and now her father lives in Hawaii. She still speaks with him, but he is more of a stranger to her than a father. *Lisa* is the only persister to have graduated high school. Now she attends junior college, works part-time with a catering business, and spends much time helping to care for her younger brother who is in grade school and her sister's baby boy. *Lisa's* mom works two jobs to support the family, one as a store clerk, the other as a housekeeper at a hotel. *Lisa's* three offenses have all been for fighting and assault, but her last offense was in 1987.

Shaun and her daughter live with her mother and two younger brothers in a housing project apartment blocks away from where *Rashaad* lives. *Shaun* never knew her father. *Shaun's* older brothers are around most of the time, but they live elsewhere. Both *Shaun* and her mother receive AFDC assistance, and *Shaun's* mom makes extra money styling women's hair in their homes. *Shaun*, a black female, spent

about a year and a half living in Chicago's Cabrini Green projects with the father of her child. She now has a new boyfriend who, like the others before, is a gang leader and drug dealer. She claims she enjoys the nice things he can provide for her and her daughter, and she likes how this boyfriend keeps her out of the dealing business and away from trouble and danger. Shaun's first offense was for stabbing a rival girl in the arm with a large kitchen knife. Her other juvenile charges have been for drug possession, having been caught while holding for her dealing boyfriends. She had no adult offenses.

Toni, a black female, now lives with her mother and stepfather and their two girls in a rent controlled apartment complex at the fringe of the black inner city just west of downtown. Toni never knew her father, and she has only recently come to accept her white stepfather. Her stepfather drives a cab at night and her mother cares for the two pre-school girls. Toni's mom and stepdad married in 1986, at just the time Toni started getting into a lot of fights. All three of her juvenile cases were for fighting and assault. Toni was sent to relatives in the south when her mom decided Toni could not live with her new husband. Since her return, Toni and her stepdad have been getting along rather well.

Casey is a white female living with her mother, stepfather, younger brother, and her half sister and half brother. Casey's baby son also lives with her. Casey's mom and dad divorced when Casey was ten, and at twelve, her mother married her stepdad. Casey's dad lives about 100 miles away, and Casey speaks with him often. Casey's mom works as a nurse and her stepdad is a sales manager for a small manufacturing firm. They live in a middle class neighborhood between the inner city and a middle to upper-middle class suburb west of Salem. Casey's first offense, a minor fight, occurred shortly after her mother remarried. Casey's other juvenile offenses were for another fight and for writing bad checks taken from a lost purse. Casey is currently awaiting trial on armed robbery charges as an adult.

Tina is a white, hispanic, female who has split living between her mother's place, her "stepdad's" home, and several juvenile institutions and treatment facilities. Tina never knew her dad, and she has lost contact with her older brother. Tina's younger sisters are the children of the man she calls her stepdad, though he and her mother are now divorced. The father of her younger brother is unknown. Tina claims her mother is an alcoholic and drug addict who uses crack a great deal. Tina's mom also has an arrest for prostitution, something Tina contends her mother began doing

"for money and drugs, though she has slept around all of her life." Tina's mother, who receives AFDC assistance, lives in the black inner city, while her stepdad, who drives a delivery truck, lives in the hispanic south side inner city. Tina's son is currently living in a foster home. Tina is studying for her GED, and she says she wants to go to school so she can have a better life and get her son back. Tina's juvenile record includes several assault offenses, a drug selling offense and a vandalism charge as her first offense.

Michael is a white male currently living with his mother, stepfather, and older sister in the family's upper middle class suburban home. At the time of his early juvenile offenses, Michael lived in a lower class white neighborhood. His mother and father divorced when Michael was 11 years old, and his family moved to the suburb when his mom remarried four years later. Michael's juvenile offenses have centered around his drinking habits. His first two offenses were major burglaries, and his last offense included a serious charge of possession of drugs, guns, and stoleh property. Michael spent nearly two years living in a detention center and halfway houses before returning home. He is now studying for his GED, and he works a part-time job.

Ken is one of only two persisters to live with both his mother and father. Ken also has an older brother who moved

out of the family home in 1989. Ken, a white male, lives in a working class neighborhood of a working class suburban community, the same community in which John lives. Ken's mother works part-time in a novelty store, and Ken's dad works full-time as a machinist. Ken dropped out of school when he was 16, and is now attempting to get his GED. He hopes to attend a special school for mechanics training. His first offense was for minor shoplifting of cigarettes, and his subsequent offenses were for store theft and stealing bicycles.

Tom, a white male, lives with his grandparents who operate a bar and a bar supply business. Their home and business are located in the white south side inner-city neighborhood, just blocks from the hispanic neighborhood where PeeWee lives and blocks from where Don lived at the time of his first offense. Tom's parents divorced when he was 11 years old, and Tom went to live with his father. One evening, after a fight with his drunk father, Tom took his father's car and was caught driving around the city. After this, his father no longer wanted him, so Tom went to live with his grandparents. Tom claims his mother was too much of a drunk and heroin addict for him to be able to live with her. Tom's other juvenile offenses were for possession of a small amount of marijuana and for assault for a time he got

into a fight at a party, just as the police arrived to investigate a complaint.

Jack, a white male, was interviewed in prison. He was back in state prison after his parole was revoked, and was awaiting trial on federal drug trafficking charges. Jack grew up in a lower class/working class neighborhood just south of the south side inner-city neighborhood. He lived with his mother, and his father had not been seen by the family since his leaving when Jack was very young. Jack claimed his mother was a terrible alcoholic, and that she had had a number of different jobs over the years. Jack's first offense was for being part of a group of boys who went on a vandalism spree and were seen throwing rocks at cars on the nearby freeway. Jack was in trouble twice for car theft, once for a minor fight, and was in prison following pleading guilty to endangering public safety in an incident where he claims he was trying to kill a rival gang member who had shot his best friend in the back. While on parole, and after having decided to avoid the gang and crime, he contends he agreed to drive an old gang friend to a meeting place where the friend was going to sell cocaine. He and the friend were caught by the waiting DEA agents.

Eric is a white male who lived with his mother and father and younger brother in a middle-class neighborhood in Salem, blocks from a suburb. His neighborhood was the same

as Frank's early neighborhood. Eric's mom ran a business from the home, and Eric's dad was a car salesman. Eric's first offense was for shoplifting. When he went to high school, Eric and his friends met other delinquents who got them involved in stealing cars. Eric was also involved in several fights and had a couple of assault cases in his juvenile career.

MO is a black male who also was interviewed in prison. He, too, was back in prison after revocation of parole following an armed robbery while out on parole. MO had been sent to prison originally for armed robbery, and was awaiting trial for his latest armed robbery/car jacking offense. He said he took the car because he thought his best friend would like the special hubcaps that were on the car. His first offense was for a minor fight which ended when Mo flashed a switchblade. His more serious offenses occurred when MO went to high school. Due to his troubles, Mo never finished school. MO had lived with his mother in a working/middle class black neighborhood. She was a secretary/clerk for a city governmental agency. She and her relatives were very involved with church groups, and they even got MO involved in the youth group for a year, or so.

Dee, a black male, lives with his grandmother, older brother, younger sister and younger brother. Dee never knew his father, and his mother died when he was 16 years old.

He has lived his entire life in a lower class inner city black community, now just a few blocks from where the family lived while his mother was alive. Dee claims she died from complications from her alcoholism. Dee's first offense was for burglarizing an unfinished apartment complex, attempting to steal the new appliances to be installed. His other juvenile offenses were for taking a car for joyriding purposes, and for burglarizing a novelty store in the building where a friend lived. Dee had not had any trouble with the law in the past couple of years, and now he works a fairly good job as a roofer.

Paulee and his younger brother were being raised by his single mother in an inner-city neighborhood well known for its street gang. His mother worked two low-paying jobs to support the family. Paulee, a black male, was first brought to Children's Court when caught in the act of painting gang symbols on garage doors in an alley close to his home. Paulee was close friends with members of this street gang, though he did not claim membership in the gang. His other charges included charges for fighting on more than one occasion, and a charge for auto theft when once caught joyriding in a stolen car.

Patrick's mom also worked two jobs to support her family in a better neighborhood west of the inner-city. Patrick, a black male, had two sisters, one older and one

younger. Patrick's first offense was for a fight in which he slashed the arm of the rival with a knife. For this offense, Patrick spent a short time in detention and additional county family services centers. Patrick went on to get involved in drug use and sales, along with friends from his neighborhood. His additional offenses were for joy-riding in a stolen car and for possession of drugs.

Travis, a black male, was a member of a street gang. He lived in a neighborhood near Paulee, though his street gang was a rival to the gang of Paulee's neighborhood. Travis lived with his mother and several younger brothers and sisters. He never knew his father, though he did know the father of his younger brothers and sisters. His mother is now divorced from Travis' stepfather, who is currently in prison for armed robbery. Travis' mother receives AFDC assistance so she can stay home with her young children. Travis' first offense was for a minor theft, something his gang friends put him up to doing, and his subsequent offenses were primarily for gang fights, some serious and some minor in nature.

These are the thirty youths who agreed to participate in this study. Each provided a wealth of information regarding their private and public lives. The brief introductions provided above should serve to help readers distinguish each from others throughout the remainder of

this dissertation. It is hoped the little information provided is sufficient for the analysis provided.

CHAPTER FIVE

ENTRANCES

One of the aims of this study was to make observations regarding patterns which influenced subjects' entrances into initial delinquent behavior, habitual delinquent behavior, and delinquent peer group membership. A few such patterns of entrances were easily observed among the subjects. First offenses were predominantly fights, cases of shoplifting, and cases of vandalism and trespassing; most rather non-serious. Most first court recorded offenses were also first self-reported offenses. First offenses were also usually performed with other associates, usually members of delinquent groups, and among the persisters, nearly all first offenses were committed with, or encouraged by, delinquent peers. A minority of first offenses were for more serious offenses, such as burglary, sexual assault, and assault, endangering public safety, and reckless use of a weapon. Entrances to delinquent peer groups resulted from being a member of a neighborhood peer group which gradually became a

delinquent peer group as all reached their early teen years. Very few subjects joined a peer group which was already delinquent. These general patterns of entrance, and the more specific patterns detailed below, offer valuable insight into the causes of desistence and persistence among juvenile delinquents.

First Offenses

First court recorded offenses fell into four general types of offenses. Most first offenses were for fighting, and most of these were non-serious battery. A second common form of first offense was for some form of theft. Acts of mischief, such as trespassing and destruction of property, were a third common first offense, and two subjects were accused of sexual assault in their first court recorded offense. Within each of these offense types, first offenses varied as to nature and seriousness. The table below provides a brief description of first offenses of persisters and desisters.

Table 2 First Offense Characteristics

	Fights		Theft/Burg -lary		Defiance/ Vandalism		Sexual Assault	
	Seri ous	Mi- nor	S	M	S	M	Deni ed	Adm it
Desister	0	6	2	3	0	2	1	1
Persister	4	2	2	3	2	2	0	0

Table two presents first officially recorded offenses for desisters and persisters in four general categories. A total of 12 first offenses were for fighting, and such fights were almost always physical disputes between the offender and a single opponent. Only one persister, Lisa, was involved in a fight along with several friends against several opponents. Serious fights were distinguished from minor fights by the presence and/or use of a weapon in serious fights. Minor thefts noted in Table 2 were incidents of shoplifting, while serious thefts were strong arm robberies or burglaries. The minor acts of defiance listed in Table 2 were acts of trespassing and minor damage to property and one case of taking a father's car without consent. Serious acts of defiance involved danger to public safety, as in setting fire to a building and throwing rocks at cars on the freeway. Two desisters were accused of sexual assaults, one denying his involvement and the other admitting his guilt.

All six desisters in the fight category were involved in minor fights resulting in battery charges, not all of which were processed by the Children's Court. Jason, Don, and Tamara were each involved in very minor fights with classmates at school, and charges were sought by a parent of the other classmate. None of these three had charges pursued by the court. Rashaad and Lamar were each involved in one punch fights with a rival over girlfriends, and charges were alleged due to the public place in which each fight occurred. Rashaad's fight was on a city bus, and Lamar's fight was in a shopping center. The bus company sought charges against Rashaad, and the security guard at the shopping center sought charges against Lamar. Again, Children's Court held these cases open for six months and then dropped them after each subject successfully avoided trouble with the law during this period. Cindy had a one blow fight with her mother, who she claims came home from work drunk and picked the fight. Cindy's mom pushed for charges, and due to Cindy's lack of cooperation with and respect for the arresting police officers, was also charged with resisting arrest and assaulting an officer.

CINDY: I went along with the whole procedure. Then, they went to put me in the cop car, they pushed me so hard. That made me mad, and so as a result, I kicked the officer where it counts. Then, cause of that, they added another charge. I didn't find that out 'til I went to court. So,

then I was real mad at cops, and I still don't like 'em."

Due to mom's initial unwillingness to cooperate with the court, Cindy spent two weeks in the juvenile detention center.

Among the six persisters in this category, the fights were generally more serious. Only two of these six persisters were involved in minor fights for their first offenses. Casey and Toni were, like several of the delinquent boys, involved in one punch fights with neighborhood rivals, and the parents of each rival pursued charges against each subject. As with the boys, Casey and Toni were instructed to avoid trouble with the law for six months and the incident would be forgotten, charges would be dropped. Three of the other four fighting persisters had possession of knives in their fights, with two having used the knife and one simply having flashed the knife to scare off the opponent. Shaun's first offense was the stabbing of a neighborhood rival with a butcher knife. Shaun claimed she had been harassed by this rival girl for months, day after day. Finally, Shaun told, she decided to put an end to the harassment. She went home and returned with a large kitchen knife, then used that knife to stab the girl in her upper arm. For this offense Shaun spent a month in detention and a year in a foster home. Following the year in the foster

home, Shaun spent several months in a halfway home for juveniles, and she remained on probation for several more months after returning home. Based on recommendations in the court records, much of the severity of Shaun's sanctions could also be attributed to the numerous court appearances made by her older brothers for serious and violent delinquent behavior. Patrick only slightly cut the other boy involved in his fight, and for this offense he spent a few days in detention and a year under probation supervision. Mo simply flashed his switch blade in the face of his opponent and the fight was over. However, a witness to the fight after school on school grounds reported the fight and the knife to school officials who sought charges against Mo. Here again, the court simply instructed Mo to avoid trouble again and the charge would be dropped. Finally, Lisa's weapon of choice in her fight was a spray can of deodorant from her gym bag, which she sprayed in the face of the school security guard who was attempting to break up the fight she and her friends were having with a rival group of girls. For use of this dangerous weapon, Lisa spent one month in detention and another two months under house arrest. The use of a weapon in a first offense resulted in substantially stronger sanctions from the court.

Five desistent subjects and five persistent subjects acquired their first court records for alleged thefts.

Three desisters; Jerry, Lyn, and Lydia; and three persisters; Ken, Eric, and Travis; were each charged with minor shoplifting as their first court recorded offense. Jerry claimed his shoplifting episode was his first and was done on a dare to prove he was cool, like other neighborhood kids with reputations for being "bad". Lydia, Ken, Eric, and Travis each told similar stories about how a friend got them started shoplifting and how they soon came to find shoplifting an easy way to get things they wanted but could not afford to buy. For each of these four subjects, the first shoplifting offense was committed long before the first time they were caught. Lyn contended that she was only a tag-along to the incident of shoplifting by her friend, and that she knew nothing of the shoplifting until a store security guard stopped her leaving the store. The friend who did the actual shoplifting got away. Lyn's case was held open for six months, then dismissed by the Children's Court. Each of the other six shoplifters were found delinquent and ordered to attend a class on the evils of shoplifting.

Two of the desisters, William and DJ, were each alleged to have been involved in strong arm robbery of bicycles from neighborhood kids. DJ admitted to taking bicycles and was placed on probation for six months for this first offense. DJ also spoke of how he had started taking bikes only recently before getting caught, and only after he saw an

older neighborhood kid do the same thing. William's story is one of misunderstanding. William claimed he was warning some neighborhood kids on bikes to be careful and to not stay out after dark for fear their bikes would be stolen by a neighborhood thief. The kids thought he was the thief and was threatening them, so they flagged down a police officer and the officer detained William. The police never could link him to the area bike thefts, so his case was dropped at his first hearing. William was one of only two subjects who claimed to be innocent of the first court recorded offense.

Two persistent subjects were involved in major burglaries for their first offenses. Michael was found delinquent for breaking into his parent's house to steal money and valuables for cash to be used to buy liquor. Michael had run away from home a few weeks earlier and needed money for food, expenses, and alcohol. The court ordered Michael to enter an adolescent alcohol treatment three month program. Dee was one of several neighborhood kids recruited by a neighborhood man in his fifties to help him in a burglary of a nearly completed apartment complex. Dee and his friends thought the older man was cool because of all the "things" he had, and they wanted to be like him, to have "things" like he had. For his involvement in the burglary, his first involvement in criminal behavior, Dee was placed on probation for one year. Michael, although he

completed the alcohol treatment program, continued to drink, to run away from home, and to associate with other juvenile delinquents. Dee, who avoided trouble while on probation, continued to associate with older criminals and with the group of his neighborhood peers with whom he was caught during the first burglary.

Acts of mischief and defiance were the first court recorded offenses for two persisters and four desisters. The most common acts of mischief and defiance were acts of trespassing and vandalism, or destruction and damage to property. The two desisters in this category; John and Brandy; and two of the four persisters in this category; Jack and Paulee; were parties to episodes of trespassing and minor damage to private property. None of these four claimed to have initiated the episodes, such as breaking into a school or into a mobile home court or throwing rocks at cars passing overhead on a freeway overpass. Brandy even denied participation in the vandalism, claiming she was just tagging along with a friend when the friend broke into the school and destroyed some supplies and machines. The other three stated they participated in the vandalism along with the group after the episode had been started by another individual. All four of these subjects were placed on probation for six to twelve months. Tina's first delinquent act was committed as defiance against what she perceived to

be overbearing control exerted upon her by counselors at the county juvenile treatment center where she was placed for status offenses. Tina set fire to the dorm, in which she had been placed, after a disagreement with counselors regarding her loss of privileges for visitors. For this act of defiance, Tina spent two weeks in detention and then was placed in a more secure dorm. Tom, as a retaliation against his father after a fight, took his father's car for a joy ride. His small size at the age of twelve tipped police officers off as to his illegal joy ride. Tom was released to his father and was placed on probation for six months. If court sanctions reflect the court's judgements of seriousness of offense types, then it would be easily concluded that the court found acts of defiance and mischief to be more serious than minor fighting and shoplifting, but not nearly as serious as violent fighting or major theft. The exception to this conclusion would be the case of Cindy, who in defiance to her mother's drunken behavior and abuse struck her mother and struck a police officer. Cindy was treated as harshly as those who injured others in their fights.

Finally, two desistent subjects received their first court records for alleged sexual assaults. PeeWee, along with several other boys, was accused by a female classmate of fondling her on the school playground, a charge he denies

even now, some six years after the incident. PeeWee contends the girl made up the story to gain attention, and that years later she admitted her wrongdoing to him. PeeWee was questioned by police officers, suspended from school for three days, and later had to change schools because of the accusations. PeeWee also received one year of probation from the courts. Frank was charged with child abuse for his admitted sexual contact with a younger girl who lived in the flat below where he and his family lived. Frank was placed on one year probation and agreed to seek counseling after he admitted to court officials his guilt. Frank's family also had to move, and Frank had to live with relatives until the family moved to a new location. In both of these cases of alleged sexual assault, the informal sanctions were far more severe than the formal sanctions, and generally more severe than the informal sanctions for all other first offenses, save the two cases of stabbing.

Causes and Influences

Control Theory suggests that the principle cause of delinquent behavior tends to be weak conventional controls; weak ties to parents, school, work, and other conventional activities and groups (Hirschi, 1969). Weak conventional controls are apparent in the lives of nearly all members of

the persistent group and many of the members of the desistent group. In most of the first offense situations, weak conventional controls played some causal role. In some of these situations, weak controls were indirectly causal, in others weak controls were partial, direct causes of the first offense. For some subjects the most important weakness in conventional controls was with parental control, for others, the most significant weakness was with attachment and commitment to school. Control theory offers strong explanation for most of the first offenses.

Among the desistent group, PeeWee, Jason, Don, Frank, William, DJ, Brandy, Lyn, Tamara, and Lydia all maintained good and close ties to their parent(s). Rashaad was fairly close to his parents and they maintained strict discipline on most issues, though he was allowed more freedoms at an early age and he was less supervised than most of the others with close parental ties. Jerry's parents were able to maintain control over Jerry, though at the time of his offense, Jerry was beginning to break away from his parents and take direction from his peers. After getting caught for his first attempt at gaining a reputation, Jerry decided to maintain his ties to his family and break with his peers, a decision which left him lonely and stigmatized by his old peers. Cindy was very emotionally close to her mother, yet her mother's drinking problem often left Cindy parenting her

mother. John and Lamar were the only two desisters who seemed to have had weak ties to their parent(s) at an early age. John spoke of getting yelled at a lot and threatened with punishments, but he claimed he could always talk them out of punishments, he could always get away with what he wanted. Lamar was very close to his peer group at a young age, taking direction from them rather than from his mother.

The persisters were nearly all detached from parents at an early age. Only Mo, Eric, and Shaun claimed to be close to their parent(s), willing to listen to parental direction, and fearful of parental shame over bad behavior at the time of their first offense. Yet, all three drifted away from parental controls and towards taking direction from delinquent peers within the few years following the first offense. Among those with poor parental ties at the time of the first offense, Lisa, Toni, and Ken returned to taking direction from parent(s) in the few years after the first offense. Tina, Tom, Jack, and Dee had very little supervision from their alcoholic parent(s), while Lisa, Casey, Michael, Ken, Paulee, Patrick, and Travis rejected the attempts by their parent(s) to supply at least some direction, supervision, and controls in their lives.

Entrances to initial delinquent behavior were influenced by three distinct forms of weak controls; lack of parental supervision of subject behavior, ineffective

control of inappropriate subject behavior, and multiple forms of weak controls among those families where parent(s) were alcoholic. In addition, a few subjects, at the time of the first offense, were beginning to distance themselves from their parents, making adequate supervision and control ineffective. Tables three and four present data regarding several control variables and the differential association variable of having delinquent peers.

Table 3 Desisters, Control Variables, and Peers

Desisters	Parents (M) other (F) ather (S) tep	Alcoholic Parent(s)	School (G) raduate (D) rop out	Delin- quent Peers
PeeWee	M&F	no	G	yes
John	M&F	no	G	yes
Jason	M&F	no	G	no
Frank	M	no	G	no
Don	M	Father	G	yes
Jerry	M&F	no	G	yes
Rashaad	M&F	no	G	yes
William	M&SF	no	G	no
DJ	M	no	G	no
Lamar	M	no	D	yes
Brandy	M&F	no	G	yes
Lyn	M, F&SM	no	G	yes
Cindy	M&F	Both M&F	D	yes
Lydia	M	no	G	yes
Tamara	M&F	no	G	no

Table 4 Persisters, Control Variables, and Peers

Desisters	Parents (M)other (F)ather (S)tep	Alcoholic Parent(s)	School (G)raduate (D)rop out	Delin- quent Peers
Lisa	M	no	G	yes
Shaun	M	no	D	later
Toni	M	no	D	yes
Casey	M&SF	no	D	no
Tina	M, SF	yes	D	yes
Mo	M	no	D	later
Paulee	M	no	D	yes
Dee	M	yes	D	yes
Patrick	M	no	D	later
Travis	M	no	D	yes
Michael	M&SF	no	D	yes
Ken	M&F	no	D	yes
Tom	F	yes	D	later
Jack	M	yes	D	yes
Eric	M&F	no	D	yes

Only eight desisters and three persisters were living with mother and father at the time of the first offense. Most of the remaining subjects lived with their mothers, and only a few of these youths ever knew their fathers. All of the single moms and dad worked outside the home, with the exceptions of Travis', Shaun's, and Tina's moms. Several moms worked two jobs, Lisa's, Toni's, Paulee's, and

Patrick's moms, and/or evening hours, Casey's, Jack's, Lydia's, Cindy's, and Don's moms and Tom's Dad, making them far less available to supervise their children when the subjects were not in school. A few of the subjects, most notably Shaun and Lyn, made comments suggesting their awareness of how the lack of two parents affected their supervision and their behavior. Shaun and Lyn each told of how changes in their living arrangements after the first offense, providing two-parent homes for a period of time, were changes for the better, providing them with more supervision and helping them improve their behavior.

LYN: (speaking of living with her stepmom and her dad) She was really good to me, and good for me. She made me feel like I belonged there and that I had a fresh chance to prove myself. Also, it's like with two parents there was a lot more supervision of me, and I needed that. She didn't let me get away with anything, she was always like ahead of me if I tried to do something I shouldn't, and that was good for me.

Certainly not all subjects with single parents were substantially less supervised than all subjects with two parents, but most subjects with only one parent in the home did have little parental supervision during the time spent out of school, and this lack of supervision did impact upon the decision to engage in the first delinquent act. Only a couple subjects had someone other than a parent available to help supervise.

A few of the subjects' parents were even less able to supervise their children due to their problems with alcohol and other drugs, namely Tina's, Jack's, Dee's, and Cindy's moms and both of Tom's divorced parents.

Int: How did your mom react to your trouble?

JACK: She didn't care much. She said I was grounded and she yelled a lot, but mostly cause my getting into trouble made her have to go to court with me. She had to take off work, and that made her mad. She couldn't keep me in though. She was always too drunk to know what I was doing, so I got out of the house almost all the time.

In addition to being unable to adequately supervise the activities of their children, alcoholic parents, and a few others, displayed ineffectiveness in controlling the inappropriate behavior of their children. As with the subjects whose parents' were alcoholics, John did not take direction from his parents. Instead, he utilized means to control his parents.

Int: When you would get into trouble with the law or at home, what would your parents usually do?

JOHN: They'd yell a lot and try to ground me, but it never worked. They'd never stick to it. I'd talk them out of it, after they'd stop yelling. I could always get to do what I wanted to do.

Lyn's mom was similarly strong with words, but ineffective with actions because she overused punishments. Rashaad's parents appeared to be quite effective at preventing most all forms of misbehavior in Rashaad, but were very ineffective at keeping him from participating in gang fights.

Although their parents were adequately involved in their lives, PeeWee, Jerry, Brandy, Michael, Ken, and Eric were not strongly effected by parental actions due to each subjects' drift away from parents and towards delinquent peers. Lack of adequate parental control appears to have played some role in causing or influencing initial decisions to engage in delinquent behavior.

Another control factor common among the subjects at the time of their first offenses is lack of commitment to schooling. Ten subjects, six persisters and four desisters, were occasionally skipping school. One additional desister was having substantial problems at school, though he had not begun to skip classes as of the age of first offense. An examination of reasons behind the school skipping uncovers factors which were causal for both the school skipping and the initial delinquency. Several of the school skippers were having severe difficulties with schooling and were performing very poorly; namely Tina, Paulee, Dee, Travis, Lamar, and Cindy. One youth, Michael, was having problems with school and most other conventional aspects of life due to his heavy drinking. Yet, these difficulties with school alone did not cause the skipping. These youths and a few others, Lyn and Lydia, were encouraged, and even persuaded, to skip classes by their delinquent peers.

LYN: I was trying to fit in with my peers, so I started doing all kinds of things. I started skipping school a lot, cause my friends at South Middle School were doing it. You know, it's hard going from a small school into a large middle school, and I just wanted to get along with people, make new friends and fit in. I think in Salem, especially at South Middle School, there's a lot of bad things going on, and a lot of pressure to join in to fit in. It's like in some cases it's if you're good that people will look up to you, and in other places they only look up to the people who are doing bad things. South Middle School was like the last one. The popular kids were the one's that skipped school, stole things, were tough, and stuff like that.

All subjects who skipped school at the time of the first offense stated they were influenced to do so to fit in with their crowd. Delinquent peers were influential in initial delinquency in many other ways, as well.

Differential association and subcultural theories suggest that the principle cause of delinquent behavior and long delinquent careers is not simply weak conventional controls, but weak conventional ties and strong ties to delinquent peers (Sutherland, 1949; Cohen, 1955; Matza, 1964; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Elliott, et al., 1985). Sutherland argues that delinquent peers provide needed training in the performance of deviant tasks. Cohen contends that delinquent peer groups develop subcultural values which are supportive of illegal behavior, while Matza suggests that delinquent peers provide needed value neutralization, the strong assertion of delinquent values which

over-powers the conventional values youths had been taught prior to membership in the delinquent group. Cloward and Ohlin assert that delinquent peer groups provide increased opportunity for members to engage in delinquent behavior.

A large majority of first offenses among both groups, and subsequent offenses among the persisters were done in the company and under the influence of delinquent peer associates. Eight of the fifteen desisters, and nine of the fifteen persisters, were members of a delinquent peer group, and their first offenses were all influenced by the group. Even though this only accounts for little over half of the first offenses, the influence of delinquent peers upon first offense is made more significant when those whose first offenses were simple fights are removed. Simple fights were the first offenses of two persisters and six desisters, none of whom were influenced by delinquent peers in their first offenses. Seventeen of the other twenty-two first offenses were influenced by delinquent peers. The overwhelming reason given by subjects as to how and why delinquent peers influenced them to participate in delinquent behavior was that subjects wanted to be accepted by these peers and felt pressured to behave in specific delinquent ways in order to establish an acceptable "bad" reputation for themselves.

JERRY: The situation that happened, though, uh, me and a couple of my friends went into this shopping mall. We were thinking of this gang, and

they were like, "oh, I bet you can't get this out before I can get this out." I wanted to be this kinda individual who had what we call props, some kinda identification that would be different from anybody else.

Just as Lyn reported her reasons for skipping classes, so too did most all subjects influenced by delinquent peers report that they did what they did because they thought it would improve their "bad" image and win greater acceptance among their delinquent peers. The many references by subjects to a desirable "bad" reputation suggests an influential subcultural value system which rewarded youths for behaving in unconventional ways. Also, the statements by many of these same youths that they knew their delinquent behavior was wrong but felt such behavior was acceptable within the group supports Matza's (1964) findings of value neutralization. The various pathways of entrance into delinquent peer associations will be presented later in this chapter.

While the data does support Braithwaite's contention that initial criminal behavior should be well explained by weak conventional controls, and supports his contention that delinquent(criminal) peer associates are related to much delinquent behavior, the data also strongly suggests that first offenses were often typical youthful behavior. Six first offenses were simple one-punch fights, and another

five were for petty shoplifting. Three other first offenses were for acts of mischief, such as throwing rocks at cars, breaking into a vacant trailer lot, and the attempted taking of street signs. Also, four first offenses were doubtful offenses: PeeWee probably never molested a female student, William claims he was not attempting to take kids bikes, Lyn was party to a shoplifting she knew nothing of until it happened, and Brandy was following the lead of a friend when the friend broke into a school. Shannon (1988) estimates, using official records and self-report data from his Racine, Wisconsin birth cohort studies, that over 60% and as many as 90% of youths engage in some form of non-traffic delinquent behavior as teens. What led to initial delinquent behavior for over half of the sample might best be explained as common youthful behavior for which these subjects became known to the formal justice system.

Comparing causes of and influences upon initial delinquent behavior between the desistent group and the persistent group does indicate some differences. As stated before, persisters were more likely to have experienced weak controls, since more persisters than desisters lived in single-parent households (12 persisters to 7 desisters) and more persisters had parents with drug and alcohol problems that did desisters (4 persisters to 1 desister). More desisters had first offenses which were doubtful in nature

or were for simple fighting. More persisters had serious first offenses (7 persisters to 1 desister), and more persisters had previous offenses which were unknown to the police and juvenile justice system than did the desisters (9 persisters to 5 desisters). This comparison indicates that entrances to initial delinquency have some common characteristics, but also have a great deal of variety. The comparison also indicates that persisters had a greater tendency to have engaged in more serious initial delinquent behavior than did the desisters, and that perhaps one cause for persistence is seriousness of initial offense. If not causal, the association between seriousness of first offense and persistence demands an explanation. Perhaps there is a common cause, such as having delinquent peer associations or a delinquent self-identity leading to both more serious first offenses and greater likelihood of persistence in delinquent behavior.

Yet, the strong commonalities of weak controls and delinquent peer influences, along with the general similarities in seriousness of first offenses between the two groups suggests that a look at the causes of entrances to habitual delinquency and the causes of exits from delinquent behavior will yield more insight into the causes of delinquent behavior than does an examination of entrances into initial delinquency. The decision to use a comparative

sample was made to aid an exploration of causes which contribute to both desistence and persistence among a group of initial delinquents. The next chapter will deal with the patterns of influence upon persistence in and desistence from delinquent behavior. Before beginning this description of patterns of persistence and desistence, though, this chapter will continue with a look at patterns of entrance into delinquent peer associations.

Entrances to Delinquent Peer Groups

As was detailed earlier in this chapter, many first offenses among these subjects were influenced by friends and other peers, most of whom had engaged in previous delinquent behavior. Many more of the subjects with additional offenses were influenced in the commission of these other offenses by delinquent peers. In some cases these delinquent peers were of the same age as the subjects, and in other cases these delinquent peers were older, with even a couple of influential associates having been adults with criminal records. Indication of which subjects belonged to gangs and which not is not an easy task, for definitions of what determines if a group of peers is a gang, or not, differ widely among youths, in the academic community, in the general public, and between youths and criminal justice

agencies. A few subjects with influential delinquent peers had just one or two such delinquent friends. At the other extreme, it can well be argued that a few subjects were encouraged to behave delinquently by a perceived delinquent peer culture. Most subjects were influenced in committing delinquent acts by a core group of delinquent friends. Whether influenced by one, several, or hundreds of delinquent peers, how subjects came to know and be strongly influenced by these delinquent associates offers insight into their delinquent behavior, the length and seriousness of their delinquent careers, and the odds of leaving such associations.

Nearly all subjects who had delinquent associates who influenced at least some of their delinquent behavior had relationships with these delinquent associates long before the associates became delinquent.

DON: In my old neighborhood there were lots of kids in trouble. I mean, we were friends all the time we were growing up, but when we got to middle school we started to do illegal things, mostly stealing little things, and such. They all went on to get into much bigger trouble, but I didn't. Mostly that was cause when my mom found out I was stealing little things, she moved us to this neighborhood, and I had to make new friends. I guess I made better friends here.

LISA: We was real close, my sister and my girlfriends. We kinda come up together, kinda wild and all. We was always doing things together.

Nineteen of the twenty-one subjects with delinquent peers knew their delinquent peers prior to the peers becoming delinquent, and in each of these nineteen cases the delinquent peers began delinquent behavior prior to the subjects' first offenses. Thirteen of these nineteen were most influenced by delinquent friends of their own age, while the other six were most influenced by older delinquent teens or by an adult criminal offender. The delinquent associates were primarily neighborhood friends from childhood, with a few peers having been school friends and/or relatives who lived in the neighborhood. Very few delinquent peer relationships were formed after delinquent behavior had begun.

Six subjects were members of peer groups introduced to delinquency by an older teen or adult who was already an habitual offender. Lamar, Lisa, and Ken were each, along with a couple of friends their own age, strongly influenced to begin delinquent behavior by older siblings who were persistent delinquents. Lamar and his friends desired to be like Lamar's older brother, to be members of a gang. They formed their own gang and, through Lamar's older brother, were affiliated with the older gang. Lisa was very close to her older sister and her sister's friends. Lisa was not a leader in this group, but a follower. As the older girls started to get involved in fights, Lisa joined in so as to

continue to be accepted by her older sister and her sister's friends. Ken was influenced simply by the example set for him by his older brother. Ken and his two neighborhood buddies found Ken's older brother and his friends to be people they wished to imitate, and so they began by stealing things from local stores, by smoking cigarettes and marijuana, and by trying to be tough in the neighborhood. Jack and Dee were each introduced to serious delinquent behavior by an older, experienced offender. Jack and his group of mischievous teens were attracted to an older neighborhood teen who had lots of money, lots of valued possessions, and lots of women. Wanting to have the things that he had, Jack, and his friends sought out, and received, mentoring from this older teen in the street dealing of drugs. Dee, a friend of his, and his cousin of his age, were approached by an older male in the neighborhood. This older man recruited these three young teens to help him in robbing an apartment complex under construction. Although they never saw this man again, all three young teens continued to get into trouble with the law. Rashaad, though never as complete a member of a delinquent peer group as some gang members were, did come to associate with persistent delinquents, especially one older friend. Rashaad referred to this older friend as an "Eddie Haskell" type of friend, always trying to get him into trouble. For these six subjects, peer

groups were influenced in their drift towards delinquency by older, persistent teens and adults, usually older siblings.

Only four of the thirty youths studied appear to have joined a delinquent peer group. Only of these four could it be argued that the decision to associate with certain individuals was a decision to associate with known delinquents, to associate with peers with similar delinquent interests and values. Tina and Michael each chose to associate with neighborhood and school peers who drank and used drugs, and peers who could support their lifestyles and their choices to live on the streets, away from parent(s). Each told of how they dropped childhood friends who did not drink or approve of their developing delinquent lifestyles, and of how they formed growing peer networks of drinking peers and street peers.

Mo did not join a delinquent peer group until he entered high school. Previously, he had close ties with only two friends, both very conventional. These friends helped Mo stay out of trouble, encouraged him to do well in school, and helped him develop his basketball skills. Mo, because of his good grades and basketball skills, was recruited to attend one of the better high schools in the city. He lost touch with his childhood friends and replaced them with a large group of friends who were interested in recruiting him into their gang. Mo was aware that the group

was a gang, but claims his primary interest in joining the group was for friendships; the group wanted him as a member and that made him feel good in a strange school. Shaun told of how she also did not join the neighborhood gang to which her brothers belonged until she went to high school. She claims she intentionally avoided the group until she felt so labeled a member that she might as well join and have some fun as the gang member she was believed to be.

SHAUN: After my first trouble, I stayed pretty much out of trouble. When I went to high school, they labeled me on account of my older brothers. My brother's was really bad. When I got there, they (teachers, administrators, and students) said, "Oh, she's a Carter." So, I says, if they's gonna label me, I think I'm gonna do it. So, I started fighting a lot, skipping and all. I started hanging out with my brothers' gang, and this one older guy in the gang, he kinda liked me, so I became his girl.

These four subjects differed from the others with delinquent peers in that these four developed relationships with peers who were already delinquent, while most developed relationships prior to the associates becoming delinquent. Three of these four subjects also appear to have specifically chosen to develop relationships with delinquent peers, with peers who shared common interest in delinquent behavior.

Nearly all youths who had some of their delinquent behavior influenced by delinquent peers described the influence as opportunity. Delinquent peers provided situations for the group to behave delinquently, and the

individual subjects participated; they joined in the activities of the group. Delinquent peers provided any needed training, and they provided motivation, encouraging and daring other friends to participate. In a few cases, additional motivation to behave delinquently seems to have been provided by a perceived delinquent peer culture which condoned and encouraged delinquent behavior as valued behavior. Three particular subjects; Jerry, Lyn, and Lydia; described how they were influenced to behave delinquently by what they thought, at the time, was general peer pressure to do "bad" things in order to be popular and accepted. As quoted earlier in this chapter, Lyn strongly felt influenced by the general peer culture of her middle school to skip classes, shoplift, and be "Tough". Lydia expressed similar perceptions of accepted youth culture which encouraged her to shoplift. Jerry spoke of all the gangs in his neighborhood and of how becoming a gang member was a general goal among his friends while growing up. One of the strongest motivations to behave delinquently and seek gang membership was to boost one's image in the neighborhood. Perceived delinquent peer values, in addition to delinquent associate's influence, played important roles in causing delinquent behavior among at least some of the subjects in this study.

Summary

First offenses varied among these subjects from typical youthful mischief to serious and violent assaults. Most first offenses were for minor fights, for mischievous behavior, and for petty theft, though a few were for more serious thefts and assaults. Desisters tend to have engaged in less serious first offenses than did persisters. Delinquent peers were associated with most first offenses, especially when those whose first offenses were for minor fights are removed from the sample. Persisters tend to have been influenced more often than desisters by delinquent peers. The association between seriousness of first offense and persistence indicates that either seriousness of first offense is causal of persistence or that other variables, such as having delinquent associates, are causal of both seriousness of first offense and persistence in delinquent behavior.

A number of aspects of the lives of subjects at the time of their first offenses are similarly associated with the commission of their first offenses, and these aspects have been demonstrated in theory and research as causal to delinquent behavior. Nearly all subjects, at the time of their first delinquent offense, had poor or nonexistent relationships with conventional adults, particularly

parents. Weak conventional controls in these youths' lives were the result of various situations. Many youths had only one parent to supervise their increasingly active lives, and persisters tend to have not had any other adult guidance or supervision, while a few desisters acquired such an adult after the first offense. These youths with only one parent rarely had an adult male role model, and this seems to have been more important to the male subjects than to the female subjects. Several subjects received poor supervision from alcoholic parents. Many subjects were also poorly supervised at schools which allowed youths to skip classes without consequences until youths were often beyond help. Youths at twelve and thirteen years of age also had few other conventional attachments outside of family, school, and peer group.

Several first offenses required youths to learn the particular delinquent behavior from others more experienced. Those who engaged in burglaries spoke of being recruited to participate by older youths and adults who could teach them how to steal and how to sell what they stole. Most who engaged in shoplifting had an experienced mentor teach them tricks, and it was usually these mentors who got them started in shoplifting. Although most first offenses were rather unskilled delinquent behavior, more experienced offenders played key roles in recruiting, training, and

encouraging youths for their first offenses. Learning became even more important for the commission of latter offenses of armed robbery, car theft, and drug dealing, for no youth got involved in stealing cars for profit or in selling drugs without the aid of a more experienced associate.

Entrance into delinquent behavior was also strongly associated with having delinquent peers and/or being a member of a peer group which included delinquents and condoned a delinquent set of values. Delinquent peer groups provided increased opportunity to engage in delinquent behavior than did conventional peer groups, and the older members of these groups provided training in delinquent behavior to the younger members of these groups. Many subjects spoke of how their peers promoted a delinquent subcultural value system. Many subjects also spoke of how they knew their delinquent behavior was wrong, and how their group of friends made the behavior seem right at the time. The commission of many first offenses, and many more subsequent offenses, were aided by value neutralization which occurred in delinquent peer groups. Youths whose first offenses were associated with influence from delinquent peers tend to have engaged in more serious first offenses such as shoplifting and burglary, though some group related offenses were for minor damage to private property.

serious violent offenses as first offenses were not related to group influence, though later violent offenses were related to group influence.

Comparing the patterns of entrance into delinquent peer groups between the desisters and the persisters reveals a very common pattern and some important differences. The common pattern is that most subjects knew their delinquent peers long before these friends became delinquents, and these subjects were influenced by delinquent peers in large part because of youthful friendship and loyalty. Two important differences between some persisters and the desisters are that (1) a few persisters were recruited into delinquent groups and behavior by older delinquent teens or criminal adults, while no desisters were so recruited, and (2) a few persisters joined known delinquent groups in order to share in common delinquent activities and values, while no desisters did so. Those persisters recruited into delinquent groups by older offenders who specifically associated with known delinquents so as to share common delinquent values and activities tended to have longer delinquent careers, more frequent offending patterns, and more serious offending patterns than other subjects. In the next chapters, the roles of delinquent peers in influencing desistence, persistence, and re-entrance in offending among the subjects will be detailed.

CHAPTER SIX

DESISTENCE

Several different types of exits are relevant to this study. Most notable and important were the exits from delinquent peer ties, for it appears that these dissociations from delinquent friends were key to successful exits from delinquent behavior. Dissociating from delinquent peers, though, was not an easily accomplished life event. Several subjects who gave up delinquent friends later returned to associating with them, and these returns to delinquent peers resulted in a return to delinquent behavior. Most of the subjects who gave up delinquent friendships were encouraged to do so and supported in the process of replacing former delinquent friends with new and conventional friends. Encouragement and support came in the forms of interventions, reintegration into the family, and a variety of other efforts which sheltered all subjects who desisted from the harmful influences of delinquent peers.

By design, this study was particularly interested in separating subjects who desisted, or exited, delinquent behavior for at least four years, and exited delinquent behavior after the first court recorded offense from subjects who persisted in delinquent behavior for at least two additional court recorded offenses during the four year follow up period. The sample was constructed to include fifteen desisters and fifteen persisters. Among the fifteen desisters, ten remained desisters at the time the data was collected, while five desisters had committed juvenile or adult offenses after the four year follow up period. Only four of the fifteen persisters exited from illegal behavior and avoided illegal behavior consistently for two or more years prior to the collection of the data. Ten of the remaining eleven persisters made strong claims that they were intending to desist from illegal behavior, and a few of these ten were also taking concrete action to assure their exit from illegal behavior. Many more of this group of ten persisters seemed to only be talking of a wish to stay out of trouble, a wish which extended to include the current charges pending against them, and for which they faced months or years in prison.

Exits from delinquent peers showed similar trends between desisters and persisters, and such exits were strongly related to exits from delinquent behavior. Seven

of the nine desisters with delinquent peers left these peers shortly after the first court recorded offense, and only two of these seven ever returned to associations with these or other delinquent peers. The two who returned to delinquent peers, and one of the two who maintained delinquent peer ties, were among the five desisters who committed illegal acts after the four year follow up period. Four of the twelve persisters with delinquent peers left these peers at the same time they exited from illegal behavior, as well. In addition, three other persisters made strong attempts to leave delinquent peers and illegal behavior within the last year before data collection, and all three returned to these peers on infrequent occasions. Also, all three were involved in a serious illegal activity on at least one of these infrequent returns to delinquent peers. The relationships between associations with delinquent peers and engaging in delinquent behavior, and between leaving delinquent peers and desisting from illegal behavior are very strong and consistent among the subjects of this study.

Desistence and Exits from Delinquent Peers

The stories of several subjects help illustrate the important relationships between desistence and exits from delinquent peer relationships. PeeWee, John, Don, Jerry,

Brandy, Lyn, and Lydia each had close ties to delinquent peers at the time of their first offenses, and each was encouraged to behave delinquently by their delinquent friends. Within a few months of the first court recorded offense, each of these desisters left their delinquent friends. Three persistent subjects; Lisa, Ken, and Toni; after several encounters with Children's Court over illegal behavior, also gave up their delinquent associations before the end of the four year follow up period.

Lisa, PeeWee, and Jerry, each in very different ways, broke away from delinquent peers who had been involved in their illegal actions, and each avoided further illegal behavior so long as they continued to avoid associating with these delinquent friends. Lisa told of how she got involved in a number of fights along with her sister and a small group of neighborhood girlfriends. These fights were usually with rival groups of girls. She spoke of how she and these girlfriends grew up together, "kinda wild and all," as she put it. Lisa also spoke of how she broke away from these girlfriends, and how this break from this group of neighborhood girls resulted in her not getting into fights as she had in the past.

LISA: I stayed out of trouble, but not so much cause of that (threats made by Juvenile Probation Officer to send her away to a detention camp). Mostly it was cause my friends changed, I stayed out of trouble. I didn't get into so many big

fight, just little fights with people, but they was mostly over real quick and the cops were never involved.

Int: How did your friends change?

LISA: They changed cause the girls I used to hang around with weren't around anymore. After we moved to a new neighborhood, I didn't see them no more.

Int: Did you and your sister stay close?

LISA: We're still close, but when my mom moved us to get us away from bad friends, my sister made new friends, so we didn't hang out together no more.

Int: So, did you make new friends, too?

LISA: No, not really. I don't have too many friends any more. No one's my real close friend, 'cept my mom. She's been real good to me, helped me out, given me good advice and direction.

Unlike Lisa, Jerry chose to change friends because he knew his friends were encouraging his bad behavior and he did not want to continue becoming a "hood". Jerry spoke of how, while sitting in the jail cell awaiting his parents, he decided he was going to change, of how he was not going to continue to do illegal things which might lead to a long time in jail. He also decided that in order to stay out of such trouble he was going to have to stop hanging out with his friends, for they were interested in pursuing a criminal career and he was not.

Int: After this incident of trouble and your decision to avoid delinquent friends and delinquent behavior, how did your friends react?

JERRY: Oh, they gave me a very hard time. It was to the point, like I said, I kept in communication, but, for about two years, it was like I didn't go to the park with them, I didn't ride bikes with them. If they did see me at all, I was going to the library or a relative or friend's house, someone who didn't do that stuff.

Other than that, I spent most of my time in the house. They was like "we don't want to be with you, you're a sissy." You know, you don't want to be called a sissy by nobody. So, it was a hard situation.

PeeWee made new friends at school when he was forced to change schools as a result of his first alleged offense. He did, however, maintain some ties with delinquent friends in his neighborhood, and when they offered to pay him \$300 for each car he helped steal, PeeWee began stealing cars. After being caught for his second car theft, PeeWee stopped hanging out with these delinquent friends, and he stayed out of trouble, as well.

Int: So, you said that after the trouble over the stolen car, the other guys you were with continued to get into trouble, but you didn't. How is it you stayed out of trouble?

PEEWEE: Well, I didn't hang around them much after that. My girlfriend, she would always tell me to come over to her house, so I started doing that. She told me later that she did that cause she didn't want me hanging around them no more.

The relationships between exits from delinquent peer associations and exits from delinquent behavior expressed by Lisa, Jerry, and PeeWee are similar to exits for most of the subjects in this study.

Tables five and six summarize data relevant to dissociation from delinquent peers and desistence from or persistence in delinquent behavior. For each subject, these tables indicate whether subjects with delinquent peers dissociated from these peers following the first offense, or

not, and whether subjects later returned to these peers. The type of formal court intervention and any informal interventions attempted on behalf of each subject are also presented. Informal interventions included moves of the subject or family, involvements with girlfriends or adult friends, and family support. The tables also indicate if subjects were stigmatized or reintegrated.

Table 5 Desisters and Dissociation Influences

Desisters	Dissociate from Delinquent Peers	Informal Intervention	Formal Intervention	(R)eintegrated/ (S)tigmatized
PeeWee	yes/return	girlfriend	probation	S then R
John	yes/return	moved	held open	neither
Jason	NA	NA	dismissed	R
Frank	NA	Adult	counseling	R
Don	yes	moved	dismissed	R
Jerry	yes	family	class	R,S(peer)
Rashaad	no	girlfriend	held open	neither
William	NA	Adult	dismissed	R
DJ	NA	Uncle	probation	R
Lamar	no	none	held open	neither
Brandy	yes	none	probation	R
Lyn	yes	moved	held open	R
Cindy	NA	NA	detention/ probation	S
Lydia	yes	moved	class	R
Tamara	NA	NA	dismissed	R

Table 6 Persisters and Dissociation Influences

Persister	Dissociate from Delinquent Peers	Informal Intervention	Formal Intervention	(R)eintegrated/ (S)tigmatized
Lisa	no/ later	moved	detention/ probation	R, S(peer)
Shaun	NA	moved	foster probation	R by foster, S by school and peers
Toni	no/ later	moved	held open	R
Casey	NA	treatment	held open	neither
Tina	no	treatment	detention/ probation	neither
MO	NA	church	held open	neither
Paulee	no	none	probation	neither
Dee	later	none	detention/ probation	neither
Patrick	NA	NA	detention/ probation	neither
Travis	no	none	class	neither
Michael	no	moved	treatment/ probation	neither
Ken	no, later	family	class	R
Tom	NA	NA	probation	neither
Jack	no	none	probation	neither
Eric	no	none	class	neither

Interventions, Reintegration, and Sheltering

Jerry, Brandy, and Toni left delinquent friendships voluntarily, claiming they knew these friends were bad for them and that dissociating from them would help in avoiding future trouble with the law. Others; Don, Lyn, John, Lydia, Lisa, PeeWee, Rashaad, Michael, Mo, and Jack left their delinquent friends because they were physically separated from them. Whether the exit from delinquent peers was voluntary, the result of being moved to a new neighborhood, or the result of constant interventions to keep subjects away from delinquent peers, all subjects who left delinquent associates received help from parents, adult friends, and/or peers. Even a few subjects without delinquent peers were aided in exits from delinquent behavior by the interventions of parents, adult friends, and/or peers.

The most drastic and successful intervention to separate subjects from delinquent peers was that of moving the family to a new neighborhood. The parent(s) of Don, Lyn, Lydia, Lisa, Michael and John moved their families to new neighborhoods after a specific offense committed by each subject. All but the family of John made the move with the sole intention of separating the subject from friends that were deemed to be bad influences upon their children. Whether intentional, or not, the moves helped Don, Lyn,

Lydia, Lisa, and John break from delinquent peers. Each of these five subjects avoided serious trouble with the law after the move, with the exception of John who returned to his old peers within the year prior to data collection and then returned to illegal activity upon their urging. In addition, only in the case of Michael, were the efforts to separate from delinquent peers by moving to a new neighborhood unsuccessful.

The intervention of moving a whole family to a new neighborhood simply to separate a child from bad friends was quite dramatic and effective. As previously stated, Lisa's mom moved her family of five to a different neighborhood in Salem in an attempt to separate her eldest daughters from neighborhood girls she perceived as bad influences upon her girls. After exhausting attempts to verbally encourage this separation, Lisa's mom brought about the separation physically. Don's mom moved to a different neighborhood in Salem when she discovered Don was involved in petty shoplifting along with neighborhood friends.

DON: In my old neighborhood, there were lots of kids in trouble. I mean, we were friends all the time we were growing up, but when we got to middle school, we started to do illegal things, mostly stealing little things, and such. They all went on to get into much bigger trouble, but I didn't. Mostly that was cause when My mom found out I was stealing little things, she moved us to a new neighborhood, where I had to make new friends.

Lyn had been living in Salem with her mom, who was divorced from her dad. At the suggestion of her older sister, Lyn went to live with her dad and stepmom in a nearby city, in hopes that there she could get a fresh start, make new friends who would be positive influences, and avoid the trouble she had gotten into while living in Salem. Lydia was sent to live with relatives in Mississippi for the summer months following her first court appearance, and when she returned to Salem, her family was living in a new apartment in a different Salem neighborhood. John's family moved to a neighboring suburb for different reasons, yet, like Lisa, Don, Lyn, and Lydia, John made good new friends in his new neighborhood and school, and avoided trouble with the law for many years.

Two persistent subjects experienced a temporary exit from delinquent behavior and delinquent peers as results of changed environments. After her first offense, having stabbed a rival girl in the arm during a fight, Shaun was removed from her home by the court and placed in a foster home for one year. This removed Shaun from the influences of her older brothers, who had long and violent delinquency records, and from the neighborhood gang to which her brothers belonged. Shaun described the foster family as very different from her own family, and she particularly enjoyed the close relationship she had with her foster

mother. She also spoke of the safety she felt living in this different neighborhood away from her brothers and their gang. The combination of the move to a new family and neighborhood helped to change the delinquent nature of her environment and helped Shaun break from delinquent peers and delinquent behavior until she entered high school, over two years later. Tom also changed environments shortly after his first offense. After fighting with his dad and taking his father's car for a joyride at age 13, Tom left his father's house to live with his grandparents. Having moved to a new neighborhood, Tom lost contact with delinquent friends from his old neighborhood, and did not return to these friends until high school. He, too, during this period, avoided delinquent behavior.

Another change which helped Tom and Shaun, and many other subjects break away from delinquent peers and avoid trouble for at least a few years was a change in schools attended, for changing schools usually lead to changing friends. Tom, John, Don, and Lyn each had to change schools when their families each moved to new communities, and each subject formed new relationships at their new schools. These new circles of friends were not delinquent groups. PeeWee was forced to change schools following his first alleged offense, being party to a group molestation of a girl while in school, which he still denies having done.

Teachers and administrators at his school requested that PeeWee be assigned to a new school, and PeeWee was transferred.

PEEWEE: I got suspended for three days and when I got back, my teacher wouldn't speak to me no more. Then, they told me I couldn't go to that school no more, so I had to change schools. I kinda got a bad reputation there and nobody would trust me, nobody would give me a chance. That made me feel real bad, cause I couldn't do nothing. But, then, at my new school, my teacher asked me what happened and she believed me. I got good grades at that school.

At his new school, PeeWee made new friends and was warmly accepted. PeeWee's new friends were his principle peer group through middle school and into high school, until his former, delinquent friends interested him in car theft for profit.

Shaun and Lisa also had to change schools following first offenses. Each was assigned to an alternative school, and each spoke highly of the teachers and the systems at the alternative schools.

LISA: I liked it. It was a good school. It was different being in the same room all the time. The teachers and social workers was real nice. They even had us over to their houses. That was real nice, special, that they cared and wasn't afraid of us or nothing. They treated us like real people.

Each made new friendships at these schools and each avoided groups actively involved in delinquent behavior. Changes in

schools attended helped these subjects make changes in peer groups and in behavior.

Several youths; Jerry, Lisa, Toni, Ken, and Lyn; were supported and encouraged to exit from delinquent behavior and delinquent associations by their parent or parents. In these few cases, parental relationships with the youths were strengthened after the delinquent behavior resulted in a Children's Court appearance. For Jerry and Lyn, the first offense, which resulted in Children's Court appearances, seemed to wake up the family to a deteriorating parent-child relationship. After the offense, parents spent a great deal more time with these two, and these two teens became more interested in listening to and accepting the advice of their parents than they had been before the incident.

Lisa, Toni, and Ken, each in somewhat different ways, after several run ins with police and courts, decided to avoid trouble, and each was strongly supported by her/his parent(s). Lisa, after being removed from her old delinquent girlfriends, found her mother to be her best friend. After rejecting his older brother and the brother's friends, a very delinquent group of guys, Ken was supported in his pursuit of vocational training to become an auto mechanic. Ken's parents also helped smooth the way for Ken's rejection of his older, delinquent brother, helping him avoid his brother and protecting Ken from his brother's reprisals.

Toni, like Lisa, had been one of a group of girls who often fought with rival groups of girls, and was found delinquent on at least three occasions for engaging in such fights. Toni's mom managed to convince Toni to give up these friends after one of the friends was sent to a detention center.

TONI: My mom would get real mad at me, real upset every time I got into trouble. She tried to tell me I was heading for big trouble if I kept hanging out with my sisters (not biological). She told me I'd get sent away and she didn't want to lose me. My PO tried to scare me with the same threat, but I knew better, or at least I thought I did at the time. See, I knew lots of girls and guys who got into trouble lots of times, and none got sent away. Every time they had to see the judge they got a lecture and more probation, which was no big deal cause probation was nothing. Then, one of the fights my sisters and I was in got way out of control. Keshia carried a knife, and when the girls we was fighting started to beat on her, she used the knife. She got sent to a detention center for six months. I guess that's when I started believing my mom. I thought that that could've been me, cause I carried a knife, too, but I had never used mine. After Keshia got sent away, I was real scared about what was gonna happen to me, so I stopped hanging with my sisters, like my mom wanted me to.

Toni's mom had Toni transferred to an alternative high school, as well. After the transfer and the friend's departure for the detention center, Toni left the group and developed a very close relationship with her mother. Toni's relationship with her stepfather, however, did not improve until after Toni spent a year living with relatives in Mississippi.

A number of other subjects also received encouragement and support from parents in avoiding future trouble after the first offense. Jason, Rashaad, Brandy, and Tamara each spoke of how their parents gave them good advice, good supervision, lots of support, and just the right amount of discipline to encourage good behavior while not discouraging a strong relationship with parents. Again, in each of these cases, the relationships between teen and parent(s) seemed to grow much stronger after the delinquent episode than it had been prior to the incident.

A small group of subjects, including a few whose parent or parents were unable to provide support and encouragement, received support and encouragement to exit delinquent relationships and behavior from an adult friend or family member other than a parent. John and Lydia received needed direction and support from a grandparent, and Dee and DJ each received limited help from an uncle. Dee received some help in securing a good job from an uncle in the roofing business, and DJ received more sustained help from his uncle who got him interested in the uncle's street vending businesses. For each of these four, this relative was the only adult each considered close and helpful. Frank and William each grew closer to an older brother after their delinquent incidents, and each reported that the older brother was always there for them and usually very helpful.

Frank and William each also had an adult friend and mentor who provided a great deal of support and positive direction in their lives.

WILLIAM: Well, at the time I think I listened more to my coach (a grade school recreation league coach who allowed William to stay on as an assistant coach after grade school years). Coach was real cool. I could talk to him about a lot of things, you know. He listened and tried to help out. He was like a father to me after my father died. He used to check up on me.

William continued to talk about specific instances in which coach had helped him, such as the time the coach suspended him from the team for bad grades and told him he could not return as an assistant, and role model, until his grades were up. He got his grades up and thanks coach to this day for being strong with him when he needed it. Frank's mentor was a member of his church who stepped in and befriended Frank when others were abandoning him. Frank spoke of how this man was always there to talk to him, to listen to him, and to provide male direction, discipline, and support to him. Frank and William each gave much credit to these adult male friends and their older brothers for helping them stay out of trouble after the first alleged delinquent offenses.

Lisa was a rare recipient of help from a high school teacher and an assistant principal. Lisa, like many of the delinquent subjects in this study, had developed a habit of skipping classes at the suggestion of peers. During her

junior year of school, Lisa's math teacher took special interest in Lisa and began encouraging her to stay in school, to stop skipping classes, and to avoid friends who talked her into doing things which were bad for her. He would take time out of his free time to talk with Lisa at least once a week, and he helped Lisa deal with school pressures and peer pressures. He even got the assistant principal involved in monitoring Lisa's attendance. The assistant principal went out of his way to get to know Lisa and to praise her for weeks of perfect attendance and challenge her when her attendance was poor.

LISA: Mr. B. at South High was real nice to me. He always talked to me and helped me with some of my classes. Then, there was Mr. G., the assistant principal at South. He was always watching out for me, trying to keep me out of trouble. If he'd see me in the hall and class was starting, he'd stop and take me to class to be sure I got there and didn't get in no trouble.

Lisa credits these two individuals with preventing her from dropping out, with helping her stay in school and graduate on time with good grades. This interest in the welfare of a marginal student with a troubled background was the exception among the subjects in this study.

Involvement in sports, church, and other activities helped John, Jason, Jerry, and Tamara stay out of trouble, at least through high school, and helped Mo stay out of trouble until he entered high school. John and Jason each

played school football and credited coaches, the time demanded by sports, and the spotlight sports placed upon them for helping them stay out of serious trouble, with the exception of drinking too much. Mo played recreational youth basketball and credits this activity and his close friend and b-ball teammate for helping him stay out of trouble during middle school years, yet claims his high school coaches were of no help when he started in with the wrong crowd in high school. Jerry and Tamara each became deeply involved in church youth activities following their first delinquent episodes. For John and Jerry, involvements in these activities helped fill the void left when each exited from delinquent peer groups.

Girlfriends provided crucial interventions aiding the exit from, or avoidance of delinquent peers for a small group of male subjects. In each case, the girlfriend attempted to keep the subject involved in activities with her so as to limit the subject's time spent with delinquent friends. PeeWee's girlfriend⁶ helped PeeWee exit from these delinquent friends, and Rashaad's girlfriend managed to provide a convenient excuse for Rashaad on occasions when he did not want to participate in illegal group activities.

⁶See quote page 140 of this chapter.

RASHAAD: ...Then, he starts talking about robbing this house. Shit. So, I says man I'm not with this. I'm gone. So, we talk him into leaving and I tell him I have to go do something with my girlfriend and he drops me off at my girlfriend's house. They go back over there and break windows and goes into the house.

Recent to the time of data collection, Mo's and Jack's girlfriends have each helped these two avoid most contact with longtime, delinquent friends, but neither was able to totally prevent contact with these old friends. Both Mo and Jack returned on occasion to their old friends, and on one occasion for each, the meeting with old friends led to involvement in illegal activities, arrest, and revocation of parole. Interventions by girlfriends appear to have been of only temporary effectiveness, alone incapable of assisting a permanent exit from delinquent peer associations.

Nearly half of the subjects gave indications that their exits or attempted exits from delinquent behavior were in part the result of maturing out of delinquent behavior. Jerry, Jason, and PeeWee indicated that they each were concerned about their futures and stopped engaging in delinquent behavior out of fear of becoming a criminal and spending much time in jail, and out of a desire to have a better future than they had witnessed among other delinquents. Each also spoke of ending their delinquent behavior because they did not want to provide a bad example to

younger siblings. These three youths matured out of delinquent behavior prior to age 18.

Several other subjects have given indications they are attempting to mature out of illegal behavior or have recently done so just prior to the collection of data. Rashaad and Shaun have made efforts to limit their exposure to criminal peers and opportunities to engage in illegal behavior, and both claimed they did so because they wanted to be able to provide well for their infant children. John, Casey, Tina, and Jack, though each facing current charges, did speak of a desire to avoid future trouble specifically to be able to better provide for their infant children. These last four, and three others; Mo, Dee, and Tom; also gave indications they were maturing out of criminal behavior due to recent recognitions of the high cost of adult crime. The fact that John, Casey, Tina, Jack, and Mo were each facing charges for serious adult offenses at the time of data collection gives evidence of the difficulties these youths face in attempting to exit from delinquent behavior. It is also important to note that while these five subjects wanted to exit from delinquent behavior, the illegal acts for which they face charges were committed in the company of criminal peers they had known for years. Separating from bad friends proved to be difficult for these youths, and on the rare occasion of returning to hanging out with these old

friends for just one night, all five committed a felony offense.

As important as were variables such as dissociating from delinquent peers, receiving interventions from parents, adult friends, and others, and a maturing into more adult-like roles, being reintegrated into a conventional group like the family, sports, church, or conventional peer groups was crucial to successful exiting from delinquent behavior. Among the fifteen desisters, Lamar and Cindy continued to engage in delinquent behavior during the four year follow up period, though neither was caught for serious offenses. Of the remaining thirteen, only PeeWee and John expressed perceptions that they were not close to their parents, were not welcomed back into a close relationship with parents after their first offenses.

PeeWee, John, Lamar, and Cindy were also the only four desisters to engage in serious illegal behavior after the four year follow up period. John avoided returning to his delinquent friends during his school years when he was welcomed into the conventional activities of sports and conventional relationships at his new school. PeeWee also avoided delinquent peers and behavior during his relationships with conventional friends made at his new school. When these conventional activities and relationships were over, each returned to older friends who were also

delinquent/criminal, and each became involved in illegal activities in which these old friends were involved. The fact that these four desisters returned to illegal activities and the other eleven, who were reintegrated into their families, didn't return to illegal activities indicates that being reintegrated into the family is crucial to successfully exiting delinquent behavior.

Reintegration, though, was not the only necessary variable for bringing about desistence from illegal behavior. Subjects who had delinquent associates had to first give up these friends. The parent(s) of Lisa, Toni, Casey, Michael, Ken, Eric, Mo, Paulee, and Travis all attempted to build stronger relationships with their teens following the first offense. Only Lisa, Toni, and Ken gave up or were removed from delinquent relationships, and only these three were successfully reintegrated into the family and exited from delinquent behavior. Nearly all successful exits from delinquent behavior were preceded by, or accompanied by, a reintegration into the family, and for those with delinquent peer ties, nearly all had to end these relationships prior to being successfully reintegrated into the family.

Whether reintegrated into the family, supported by an adult friend, helped by a girlfriend, or kept active in sports or church activities, the common function which helped these youths exit delinquent behavior and helped most

avoid re-entry into delinquent activity was a sheltering from delinquent influences. In their book, Growing Up Poor, Williams and Kornblum (1985) introduced the concept of sheltering. Sheltering was viewed as a process of keeping particular youths away from any number of bad influences common in poorer neighborhoods and among teen subculture. Williams and Kornblum saw this sheltering as occurring when certain youths were involved in conventional activities like church groups, athletics, a job, and their families. They attributed the success of certain poor youths in their sample to having been sheltered during their teen years, and they pointed out that most who engaged in crime or failed at school were not so sheltered. The successes in exiting and remaining desistent among the subjects in this study also appear to be attributable to experiencing sheltering.

Conventional activities provided sheltering for a few subjects, and girlfriends provided a different type of sheltering for others. Involvement in church and sports kept youths busy, surrounded by conventional peers, and away from delinquent friends from the past. Girlfriends sheltered by closely monitoring the activities of their boyfriends and providing alternatives to spending time with delinquent friends. Common to both of these types of sheltering was their ability to keep certain youths away

from delinquent peers and fill their time with conventional behavior.

Parents and adult friends provided even more sheltering. Parents and friends also provided close monitoring of behavior and alternative conventional activities, helping many subjects fill their time and replace delinquent relationships. In addition, parents and adult friends sheltered by providing direction and guidance to youths, helping them learn to make tough choices for themselves so as to avoid bad influences. When youths were away from their church or sports activities or away from girlfriends, the sheltering stopped, but the sheltering provided by parents and adult friends often was able to continue in their absence. The parents and adult friends of many subjects provided strong relationship bonds which made bonds to delinquent peers unnecessary and easier to leave behind. A few parents sheltered by physically protecting their children from bad influences by moving the family to new neighborhoods. These forms of sheltering helped subjects to avoid peer pressures from delinquent peers, to avoid the increased opportunities to behave delinquently present in delinquent groups, and to avoid the value neutralization common among delinquent peer groups, all of which helped subjects avoid future delinquent behavior.

Summary

Most of the subjects in this study desisted from delinquent behavior for periods of two to six years. Thirteen of the fifteen members of the desistent group avoided serious delinquent behavior for the four year follow up period to their first court recorded offense, and only three of these thirteen committed any offenses after the four year period. Two members of the persistent group avoided delinquent behavior for two plus years following their first offenses, returning to delinquent behavior when they entered high school and joined delinquent gangs. Three other persisters desisted from illegal behavior within three years following their first recorded offenses, and all three remained desistent at the time data was collected. At the time data was collected, several other persisters claimed they were attempting to desist from illegal behavior. Desistence from delinquent behavior was not necessarily permanent, nor was it limited to the desistent group.

One of the strongest associations with desistence from delinquent behavior was the dissociation from delinquent peers. Those subjects who had delinquent friends and dissociated from these friends also desisted from delinquent behavior at the same time. No subject who maintained delinquent friendships was able to desist from delinquent

behavior, and those who desisted and later returned to delinquent behavior did so upon the return to association with delinquent peers.

Leaving delinquent relationships was not an easy transition, and all who managed to leave delinquent associations received some help in the form of interventions and other actions which helped shelter them. The most drastic of interventions to break youths from delinquent friends and shelter them from delinquent influences was the moving of the family or the youth to a new neighborhood. Other youths were aided by a changing of schools. Both of these interventions required the youths to make new friends, and nearly always these new friends were conventional. The strengthening of an adult or parental relationship with subjects also managed to provide support in exiting from delinquent relationships and in sheltering of subjects from delinquent influences. Girlfriends and school and church activities also provided temporary interventions separating a few subjects from delinquent associates, thus sheltering them in the interim from delinquent influences. Yet, when these relationships ended, the intervention ended and the sheltered youths generally returned to delinquent friends and delinquent behavior.

A key ingredient to a successful intervention to shelter, and a few were not successful, was the ability of

the intervention to reintegrate the youth into a conventional relationship, preferably with adults. Interventions by family members were successful when they were able to reintegrate the youth into the family, and these interventions provided the greatest and most permanent sheltering. The sheltering provided by girlfriends and activities was in part temporary because the interventions could not reintegrate these youths into lasting conventional relationships.

A few other factors may have contributed to desistence experienced by some subjects of this study. Maturation into adult roles was present among several desisters and those persisters who recently claimed they were desisting. A few subjects matured at a young age, recognizing their influence upon younger siblings and not wanting to provide a bad influence. Most who appeared to be maturing out of delinquent behavior were parents and had grown up quickly upon the arrival of their offspring. Fear of adult punishment is another factor which was said to have influenced recent decisions to desist from delinquent behavior, though the few who so claimed were also facing such harsh adult penalties for illegal behavior. The lack of sufficient follow up time to these claims of maturation and fear of adult punishments prevents a more definitive statement on their influence upon desistence.

The strongest evidence in this study points to the importance of assistance from conventional adults and parents in desisting from delinquent behavior, and to the necessity of dissociating from delinquent friends in order to desist from delinquent behavior. Delinquent peer groups provide much influence to behave delinquently: they provide increased opportunity, they provide shaming and pressure to behave as delinquently as others in the group, and they provide neutralization of conventional values which normally prevent youths from engaging in delinquent behaviors. Parents, adult friends, and, to a limited extent, girl/boyfriends and school and church activities can provide sheltering from these delinquent influences, especially when these individuals and groups can reintegrate youths into conventional relationships.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PERSISTENCE

The most striking pattern of behavior, and the pattern most distinguishing desisters from persisters, was that of association and disassociation with delinquent peers. Subjects who persisted in delinquent behavior tended to maintain ties with delinquent peers, while subjects who desisted from delinquent behavior tended to break away from their delinquent peers. Subjects who desisted delinquent/criminal behavior for several years but later returned to delinquent/criminal behavior tended to have dissociated from delinquent peers during the non-delinquent period and to have returned to ties with delinquent peers just prior to a return to delinquent behavior. As was shown in chapter 5, influences from delinquent peers were strongly related to the commission of the first delinquent offense for many of the subjects. Associations with delinquent peers was even more strongly related to persistent delinquent behavior among persistent and a few desistent subjects.

When a disassociation with delinquent peers was accompanied by a reintegration into a conventional group, desistence was maintained, and when not accompanied by reintegration, subjects tended to return quickly to delinquent peers. For a small number of subjects, major changes in life, such as the changing of schools, resulted in a loss of conventional associates, and these few subjects replaced the lost conventional peers with former delinquent peers. These returns to delinquent/criminal peers soon lead to a return to delinquent/criminal behavior. Subjects who had maintained delinquent ties for several years tended to have difficulties totally dissociating from delinquent peers, even when this was their goal. As a result, these subjects tended to return to illegal activities even after they firmly decided to desist, and these returns were associated with returns to old, delinquent peers. These subjects with lengthy ties to delinquent peers also tended to either not be offered reintegration, and/or have difficulties accepting reintegration efforts offered by conventional others.

Subjects who successfully exited from illegal behavior tend to have dissociated from delinquent peers and tend to have been successfully reintegrated into conventional groups. In many cases, the disassociation and the reintegration were brought about in large part by an intervention effort made by a parent, adult friend, peer, or school

employee. Subjects who persisted in delinquent behavior tend to have maintained associations with delinquent peers, and tend not to have received any attempts at intervention, or to have rejected efforts at intervention and/or reintegration. The last chapter focused upon behaviors and experiences common among those subjects who successfully exited from illegal behavior and delinquent peers. This chapter will focus upon behaviors and experiences common among subjects who maintained delinquent peer ties and persisted in illegal behavior and upon behaviors and experiences which distinguished persisters from desisters. The chapter will end with a summary comparison of desistent and persistent subjects.

Stories of Persistent Careers

Persistent delinquent behavior varies among the subjects from petty offenses to serious property and violence offenses, with a few subjects persisting into adulthood. Persistent offenses were strongly encouraged by delinquent peers, often related to drug and alcohol use and/or gang membership. Persistence is also tied to persistence in delinquent relationships, not receiving efforts at intervention, and not being receptive to interventions and attempts at reintegration.

The number of court recorded offenses among the persistent group in the sample varied from a minimum of three to more than a dozen. Eight of the fifteen persisters had only three court recorded offenses, two had four such offenses, and five had eight or more court recorded offenses. Self reports of offending among the persisters indicated that nearly all engaged in additional delinquent behavior, and these additional offenses were almost all minor offenses and in numbers consistent with the number of officially recorded offenses.

Several important characteristics of these persistent careers need also be mentioned. Lisa, Toni, Ken, and Paulee ended their illegal behavior prior to adulthood: Lisa by age 15, Toni and Ken by age 16, and Paulee just prior to age 18. Among the group of desisters who had ties to delinquent peers at some time in their teen years, 12 in all, nine maintained these ties into adulthood. Eleven persisters used drugs while teenagers (five using alcohol alone), and at least some of their offenses were related to their drug use.

Of special importance to some is the affiliation to gangs among the persisters. Caution need be taken in characterizing delinquent peer ties as gang membership. Only Shaun was affiliated with an organized and police recognized gang, and her affiliation was as a girlfriend of

gang members. Three of the other four female persisters were members of small delinquent groups of girls that some referred to as gangs, but none of these girls considered themselves to be gang members. The same is true of four of the eight persistent males who had delinquent peer ties. These four guys were members of small groups of delinquent guys and were sometimes thought of by school officials, police, and neighbors as gang members, though none of these four defined their associates as gang members, none claimed membership in a recognized gang.

Four of the fifteen persisters; Shaun, Ken, Tom, and Paulee; engaged in only minor, or petty, persistent offending, while the other eleven had a mix of petty and serious offenses making up their persistent delinquent careers. Although Shaun's first offense was very serious, having stabbed a rival girl with a butcher knife, her two subsequent offenses were for minor drug possession. Both times she was caught while holding small quantities of drugs for her drug dealing boyfriend. Ken's second and third offenses were for shoplifting a pack of cigarettes and for theft of bicycles from around his neighborhood. Ken said the bikes were taken to get additional parts and accessories for his own bike. Tom was once charged with minor drug possession, what he called a couple of marijuana cigarettes, and once charged for battery after being involved in a large

fight following a party. Paulee, who had ties to a group of delinquent peers for many years, was involved in numerous group fights, but he was only charged with one minor fight and once was caught while joy-riding in a stolen car. These offenses were minor in comparison to some of the offenses committed by other persistent subjects.

Violent offenses were among the most serious offenses committed by some persisters, and most violent offenses were "gang" related or drug related offenses, unlike most first offenses for fighting.

JACK: Then, when I was 16, I was charged with attempted murder, but they reduced that to endangering public safety and reckless use of a weapon. I got sent to prison, to Dodge for that one.

Int: How did this all happen?

JACK: Well, see, I was at Bayside High, and this one day another group, they had something on my best friend in my group, and they came up on him this night and they shot him in the back. You don't shoot nobody in the back. So, seeing as he was my best friend and all, my guys, we found out where they was gonna be this next day after school, so I walked down to where they was hanging out, I came around the corner, and I shot the one I knew shot him. I should have killed him, but I only got him in the leg. I jumped into a car and got out of there before they started shooting back. The cops came and got me at home, and I was waived to adult court with the understanding that I would get the lesser charges. I really wanted to kill him, but now I'm glad I just hurt him. I look back on it and I guess I'm lucky to be alive, all that stupid fighting with guns and all over such stupid stuff. I don't even remember what started it all.

LISA: Well, the first thing that I remember was this time, see, me and some friends from Franklin Middle School came to North High to meet my older sister, and we was gonna find these girls and fight them. See, these girls had jumped me a few days earlier, so we was gonna find them and fight them. So, me and my friends met my sister outside the school and we went in to find these girls, and we found them and started to fight, and this security guard was trying to keep me from fighting with this girl, so I sprayed him in the face with a can of Right Guard. He made me so mad cause I couldn't get at this girl who had jumped me, so I took the can from my gym bag and let him have it.

Int: How did you get involved in hustling drugs?
TINA: Well, see, I first started staying with guys who was interested in me. Then, I thought I needed some of my own money, so I knew of some guys in the neighborhood who was dealers and so I started hustling for them, selling drugs and all. They liked me and knew I could handle myself cause I carried myself like a guy when I did business. I was tough and they knew not to mess with me. They knew I had hurt people before when they messed with me and my folks. They knew I carried a piece and I was just crazy enough to use it, which I did to scare someone once when he tried to mess with my business. That was when I worked in the crack house. I was the only girl who had ever worked in a crack house, and they knew I could handle it.

Jack, Lisa, and Tina each were caught for these specific acts of violence, and each received stiff sanctions. Toni and Travis were also involved in "gang" related fights. Toni, like Lisa, ended her violent delinquency career after just a few fights, but Travis continued to fight for his folks and received stiff sanctions from Children's Court and adult court for his violent behavior. Lamar was involved in several gang fights as a teen, but he was never caught after

his first offense. He spoke of how the gang protected its members, never letting the police know who was involved in violent acts. It was not until Lamar was nearly 18 years old that he was charged for a violent offense, a homicide of a rival gang member. Lamar was waived to adult court and was awaiting trial at the time of data collection. All of the violent offenses beyond the first offense were gang related, or in the case of Tina gang and drug related.

The most common form of serious persistent offending was property crime, including burglaries, armed and strong arm robberies, and car theft. Car thefts fell into two categories: those for profit and those for joy-riding. Interestingly, the three subjects who were involved in car theft for profit were white males and the four youths who stole cars simply to joy-ride were black males. A large part of the explanation for this pattern lies in the associates each had. PeeWee, Jack, and Eric each became involved in car theft for profit at the suggestion of friends who were already experienced at the trade. In addition, each of these three subjects had legal access to a car when he wished to drive. Patrick, Dee, Paulee, and Mo had no legal access to cars, so they began stealing cars to joy-ride, and began doing so at 14 or 15 years of age. In addition, neither of these four youths knew of anyone who stole cars for profit, nor knew how to make money from a

stolen car, though Mo once stole a car to get the wheel covers to give to a friend.

Burglaries and robberies were committed to make money or to satisfy a need for fun. Those property crimes committed for profit helped support drug habits and other spending needs of the "gang". Dee, John, and Jason each spoke of committing at least one property crime just for the fun of it. Most property crimes, though, were committed along with others from one's group, or "gang". Michael and Jack each engaged in burglaries of homes to make money and acquire guns for their groups, to support the groups' needs for alcohol and other drugs and needs for protection from rivals. Mo and Travis claimed their property crimes, including burglaries, strong armed robberies, and armed robberies, were committed for the good of the group, to help make money for their folks. Casey, though not a "gang" member, did engage in a serious armed robbery, as she says, to get drugs her boyfriend desperately needed. Serious property crime tended to be committed at the encouragement of the group and for the group's benefit.

Half of the subjects reported they had committed adult offenses at the time of the data collection. Seven of these youths had committed felony crimes. Most of the other eight had been ticketed for minor fights. Four of these fifteen were desisters, and the other eleven were persisters. The

persisters all had continuous careers in illegal behavior, with the exception of Mo who had not committed a second delinquent offense until nearly three years after his first. Among the four desisters with adult offenses, Cindy and Lamar had rather continuous careers which had gone unnoticed by police and courts, and John and Jason had desisted from illegal activities following their first offenses until the commission of their adult offenses.

In the case of John, the second offense, burglary, resulted from a return to delinquent peers. John, who had been hanging out with other football players while in high school, began to hang out with some of his old friends after graduating. These other friends talked him into participating in the burglary. John claimed he knew the burglary was wrong, but stated that his being drunk allowed his friends to talk him into participating. Clearly his criminal friends neutralized his moral sense of right and wrong regarding burglary, as Matza (1964) points out is a causal factor in engaging in illegal behavior. Jason's adult offense was taking illegal bets on sporting events, a practice he began in his college dorm among friends and other students. Charges for Jason were reduced to a misdemeanor when the judge learned the bets were smaller than police reported, and were among college friends and associates. Jason, unlike John, was neither influenced by

peers, nor aware of the moral incorrectness of his behavior. He felt he was doing a service for his friends and doing no one any harm. He had no need for peers to neutralize his conventional values regarding taking bets. He also had not been properly educated as to the moral incorrectness of his behavior, if in fact taking bets is viewed by conventional society as a moral evil.

Five of the seven subjects who had committed adult felony crimes were awaiting trials at the time data was collected. Tina, Jack, and Patrick were each involved in drug trade offenses as adults, and Jack's offense occurred while on parole. Jack had previously plead guilty to endangering public safety by reckless use of a weapon for the incident when he shot a rival in the leg. Jack was 16 at the time of this offense, but was waived to adult court and had to serve part of a prison sentence. Casey had attempted to rob a drug store using a toy gun, claiming she was only trying to get more of the pain pills to which her boyfriend had become addicted. She was caught and charged with armed robbery. Lamar, a rather persistent member of the desistent group, was preparing for trial on 1st degree murder charges. Lamar, a gang member since age 12, had avoided court charges for more than four years following his first court recorded offense, but he had been involved in

numerous gang fights and gang offenses for which he was not caught. Lamar was 18 years old when the murder occurred.

Mo and Eric had already pleaded guilty to their adult offenses and were serving their sentences. Mo had pleaded guilty to armed robbery for having stolen a man's car while he was in the car. Mo claimed he carjacked this car because the car had fancy details his friend wanted for his car. He also claimed he would never have hurt the driver, and offered as proof the fact that he let the owner out of the car several blocks away from where he took the car. Mo was serving several years in prison for this offense at the time data was collected. Eric was placed on intensive supervision probation for his offense of car theft. He wore an electronic monitoring device which restricted him to his house. Mo spoke of having tried to avoid his gang before his adult offense and how he failed, and of how he intended to stay away from them and out of trouble when he got out. Eric, however, still saw his friends and did not speak of trying to change them, though he did find that criminal behavior had gotten very costly now that he was an adult. All subjects who had been charged with adult offenses, except Lamar, and even a few other persisters, told of wanting to avoid future trouble with the law now that they were adults, for adult penalties were too costly. This desire to avoid illegal behavior as adults for fear of

perceived harsher penalties is in agreement with the findings of Glassner and associates (1983) in their study of differences between juvenile jurisdictions and adult jurisdictions.

Lack of Sheltering and Maintained Delinquent Relationships

Persisters tend to have maintained delinquent peer ties throughout their delinquent careers, or stated somewhat differently, all subjects with three or more delinquent offenses maintained delinquent behavior as long as they maintained delinquent relationships. The only four members of the persistent group of subjects to exit from delinquent behavior prior to the end of the four year follow up period were also the only four persisters to end relationships with delinquent peers.

Persisters also tend to not have received, or not have been positively affected by, intervention efforts and attempts at reintegration into their families or other conventional groups. Only three members of the persistent group; Lisa, Toni, and Ken; were successfully reintegrated into their families and successfully sheltered there after from delinquent peers and other influences to behave illegally. Four other persisters were recipients of attempted interventions from family members, and these four

failed to be reintegrated and sheltered. To a limited degree, the Children's Court system attempted to intervene on behalf of all members of this study, yet only in a few cases did youths claim that court efforts helped them stay away from trouble and bad influences. Court interventions appear to have been ineffective in large part due to their inability to shelter subjects from delinquent influences, in particular from delinquent peers.

Four persisters; Michael, Shaun, Casey, and Tina; were each recipients of intervention attempts to separate them from delinquent peers and bad environments, yet all such attempts failed. Michael's mom and stepdad moved his family several miles away to a higher class suburb in an attempt to separate Michael from his drinking buddies. Michael, determined to remain with his group, refused to live with his family and chose to live on the streets and with friends. Tina, who was allowed to live with her former stepdad in a neighborhood 10 miles from where her delinquent peers and her mother lived, also refused to stop associating with her old, delinquent friends. Tina would take the bus to her old neighborhood and catch rides with friends just to get back with her old friends. When her stepdad tried to control her travels, Tina also took to the streets and to living with friends in order to remain with old friends. Casey's mom tried a variety of interventions, finally filing

a Child Protective Services petition in order to get Casey entered into the county's Child and Adolescent Mental Health facility. Casey interpreted her mother's attempts to separate her from her abusive boyfriend as attempts at interference in her life, and Casey also chose to run from home. Casey later came to realize her mother's efforts were in her interest, coming to view her boyfriend as abusive and a threat to her health. She left this boyfriend and returned home for a short while before leaving to live with a new boyfriend.

CASEY: After I had run away from the halfway house, I went back home and my mom was ready to take me home again, cause I had left Jay and I said I would do what I was supposed to do. So, the Judge said it was OK. But, I didn't stay home much. I took up with a new guy and moved out with him real soon.

Int: What do you think that was all about, your moving out with a new guy so soon?

CASEY: Well, see the Judge was too easy with me. He let me do what I wanted and not what I should have done. See, things were still bad between me and my mom, and she was working nights. So, I used to slip out at night to meet with my new boyfriend. My little sister found out and she got worried about me, if I was safe and all. So, she told me a couple of times that she was gonna check up on me in the middle of the night. I knew she would do it, so I stayed in on those nights, but I got tired of trying to sneak out on my sister and my mom, so I moved out.

The attempt to intervene to separate Casey from an abusive boyfriend did succeed after a difficult period of time, but

the intervention was not followed by a successful reintegration into the family.

Shaun, who was successfully separated from the gang influence present in her home due to the membership of her older brothers, returned to this environment when the court ordered separation ended. Shaun was placed with a good foster family for one year and then returned to her family when the year was completed. Due to the distance from her home to the foster home, and due to other factors, Shaun lost contact with the foster parents she credited with helping her so much. A couple of years later, after Shaun had begun associating with neighborhood gang members, Shaun's mom attempted to end these relationships by sending Shaun to live with relatives in Chicago. This intervention failed primarily because Shaun was already committed to an organized gang, and because the relatives, living in Chicago's famous Cabrini Green projects, were also associated with the Chicago chapter of this gang.

For a number of other subjects, attempts were never made by others on their behalf to separate them from delinquent peers. Tom, Jack, Eric, Mo, Dee, Patrick, and Travis, and Cindy and Lamar, each not only failed to tell of an intervention, but also claimed, when asked, no such attempts were ever made on their behalf. Some even said that probation officers never even suggested they change

friends, though they also said they would not have changed friends had anyone suggested they do so. With the exceptions of Mo and Cindy, these youths who claimed to have not been encouraged to change friends also claimed to not have been encouraged to strengthen and rebuild family relationships and relationships with conventional peers. Ken, Mo, Cindy, and Michael each acknowledged that a parent or parents consistently tried to build better relationships with them, and that parents were willing to allow them back into each family in spite of all the trouble each had caused the family. Only Ken chose his family over his delinquent friends, though, and only after several court appearances and years of efforts by his parents.

The parent or parents of Mo, Cindy, Shaun, Casey, Tina, and Michael all attempted to provide these subjects with some sheltering from bad influences, yet their efforts failed. Mo, Casey, Michael, and Tina each were partly responsible for the failure due to their rejections of efforts to replace delinquent friendships with stronger parental relationships. The poor conditions of relationships between parent and subject prior to the beginning of delinquent behavior for Michael, Tina, and Casey also appear to be strongly related to the failure of these later interventions, as do the messy divorces which occurred in each of these three families. Cindy and Shaun received very

poor and inconsistent efforts at sheltering from their moms, moms who worked long and odd hours to help support poor families, and mom's who each had personal problems which reduced their abilities to parent effectively. Whereas desisters with single parents, like Frank and William and Lydia, had outside adult friends to help supervise and guide them, the persisters with single moms had no adult conventional friends, and they received no outside help in guidance or sheltering. Common to all five of these cases is the resulting lack of sheltering from delinquent peers and other influences and the lack of appropriate guidance to help these youths avoid illegal behavior and other troubles.

Psycho-therapeutic and AODA treatment were used as interventions to attempt to separate three persisters from delinquent influences and delinquent behavior. Michael, as a term of his probation following his first offense, burglarizing his parents' home to make money to buy alcohol, spent three months in an inpatient AODA treatment program at a psychiatric hospital. Casey's mom, concerned about the abuse Casey was suffering from the older man she had moved in with at the age of 15, filed a Child Protective Services petition to have Casey admitted to the county's Child and Adolescent Treatment Center. Casey spent several months at this facility receiving psychological treatment and counseling. Tina also spent time at this county residential

treatment center after her mother and stepfather and the court grew terribly concerned about her frequent running from home and about her alcohol and drug use. Tina was also treated at a variety of other residential treatment programs for delinquents following subsequent offenses.

None of these three gave any indications that these treatment programs helped them avoid future delinquent behavior. Rather, all three reported they developed new relationships with delinquents at these facilities and learned more about hiding their delinquent behavior from fellow residents in these facilities. None of these three were encouraged by these programs to strengthen relationships with family, nor to sever ties with delinquent friends. Each told stories of how these programs actually made it more difficult to be with those family members with whom they wanted relationships.

TINA: I had worked hard for two weeks to do what they wanted, to earn my points, and I did get my points. I was the only one that weekend who had a pass to see my daddy (her stepdad, now divorced from her biological mother, yet the only adult she considered a good parent). I was so excited, I just stood up in the lunch room and yelled out how I was gonna see my daddy. The counselor, he didn't like that. He said I was being rude and teasing the others cause they didn't get to see their parents. So, he told me to sit down and shut up, but I didn't want to. I was excited about seeing my daddy, so I started walking out of the lunch room so I could go see my daddy, and he stopped me and took away my points right there.

Instead of attempting to build relationships with conventional forces in their lives, these treatment programs used the desire to see family as a carrot on a stick to control behavior inside the facility. They restricted contact with family and increased contact with fellow delinquents. This approach greatly failed to shelter these youths from delinquent influences, as well as failing to stop their delinquent behavior.

The most formal interventions into the lives of these delinquent youths, interventions with the goal of reducing and eliminating future delinquent behavior, are those interventions made by the Children's Court and its staff. Juvenile courts were established, and continue today, with goals of protecting the community from the crimes committed by youths and the goal of rehabilitating youths who had begun to go astray of the law. First time offenders of the ages of 12 and 13, as were the ages of the subjects of this study at their first offense, are processed through the juvenile court with the aim of trying to turn these youths away from delinquent behavior, not of primarily punishing them (Platt, 1969).

In the cases of this study's subjects, the Children's Court used a limited variety of interventions and sanctions. Twelve of the thirty first offenses were ordered held open for six months with the incentive that charges would be

dropped at the end if the subject stayed out of trouble during these six months, or charges would be dealt with severely if the subject continued to behave delinquently during the six month period. Six subjects were ordered to attend an anti-shoplifting program, and three subjects were ordered into treatment programs. Six subjects were placed in detention for short periods of time for their first offenses, and three subjects received only probation for their first offenses. Subsequent delinquent offenses usually were met with increased periods of probation, and more serious and/or numerous offenses were met with detention and juvenile residential detention/treatment orders. None of the youths without the informal interventions by family and friends were successfully sheltered from delinquent influences, nor turned away from delinquent behavior, by the efforts of the Children's Court or staff.

Only a few subjects reported that probation officers or other court personnel were of any help to them in severing ties to delinquent peers and/or avoiding further delinquent behavior. Ken gave some credit to his probation officer for having helped him choose to stay away from his brother and his brother's friends, the delinquents who had encouraged some of his previous delinquent behavior. Shaun gave much credit to her court-appointed foster parents for helping her stay away from gangs and trouble, but this relationship was

formed and ended by court order. Tom liked his probation officer and gave her credit for getting him interested in body building, but he didn't give any indications that she had influence over his peers or delinquent behavior.

Much more common were reports by subjects indicating that probation officers were ineffective and generally uninvolved in altering their behavior, in sheltering them from delinquent influences and guiding them to avoid delinquent behavior. Most reported that they had contact with probation officers for just a few minutes each week, answering questions about school attendance and any involvements in delinquent activities. Though most answered such questions truthfully, many indicated that they could easily tell the PO what he or she wanted to hear, whether true or not, and not be further bothered by the PO. A few even told stories of how their probation officers stretched rules, allowing them to make weekly contacts by phone, and/or ending periods of probation weeks early without any notice from the PO or the court.

PEEWEE: All he (his juvenile probation officer) did was ask me how I was doing at school, how I was doing with my parents, how I was doing with my friends. He never said or did anything. I could of told him anything, and I never told him about any fights I got in. I only saw him a few times, though. He started by coming to my house, then he just called me on the phone. We was supposed to keep talking for a year, but after talking once a week or every other week for about 10 months, he

just stopped calling. He never told me we was finished.

The brief encounters that made up the reality of probation were not sufficient to developing relationships capable of replacing delinquent relationships in the lives of these youths, nor sufficient to otherwise shelter these youths from delinquent influences.

The formal interventions of detention and residential treatment/detention were as ineffective as were psycho-therapeutic treatment interventions. Staff in these facilities, needing to control internal behavior, restricted contacts with families and other potentially conventional influences in the lives of subjects. In addition, such facilities threw together many delinquents who might not otherwise meet, fostering delinquent relationships and the acquisition of additional tools for delinquent behavior. The conditions which were part of detention were quite different from those conditions which were strongly related to successful exits experienced by many subjects in this study, and Lisa was the only subject who experienced detention and later exited from delinquent behavior. Her exit, though, was more strongly influenced by the interventions taken by her mother than by the interventions taken by the court.

Obstacles to Sheltering

Family conditions for several persisters were such that reintegration, like that offered to Ken and others, was not likely to be offered to them. Jack, Tina, Tom, and Dee had alcoholic parents who were unable to supervise their behavior or their associates. As quoted in chapter five, Jack said of his mother, "She was always too drunk to know what I was doing, so I got out of the house almost all the time."⁷ Tina claimed her mom was always too interested in her drinking and drugs to care about her. She recounted how on numerous occasions, when she was young, her mom would "dump" her with relatives, friends, or neighbors while her mom "entertained" men so as to get money for alcohol and drugs. Tom's parents divorced shortly before his first offense, and Tom chose to live with his dad. Tom spoke of how both parents drank too much and occasionally used drugs, and though his father often fought with Tom when he was drunk, Tom chose his father because his mother was, in his words, a heroin addict and "couldn't keep straight much of anything." When living with his father became unmanageable, Tom was invited to live with his dad's parents. Tom told of how his grandparents helped by providing him with a clean

⁷See quote on page 117 in chapter five of this dissertation.

and safe place to live, but he didn't speak of them as parents. Tom even indicated that he often had gone out of his way to keep things from them so as to not worry his elderly grandparents. Dee also told of how his mother drank heavily and was often in more need of supervision and support than able to give such to her children. Dee's mom died when he was 16 years old, after a long illness, and Dee never knew his father. After his mom's death, Dee took on some responsibility for helping his younger sister and brother, and an uncle from down south came to help the family. All four of these subjects recounted story after story indicating that they had been without parental supervision from very early in life.

Patrick, Travis, Lamar, and Shaun lived with only their moms, and each mom was extremely busy working more than one demanding, low paying job to try to support large families.

TRAVIS: See, for a while my mom, she was on welfare, but she didn't like it, she didn't like getting money hand outs. So, she got these two jobs that made her more money than what she got on welfare, but these jobs was in the day, then again at night, cleaning offices. She was home for a while in the afternoon, but she was usually busy doing house stuff, so she didn't know much what I was doing. I was supposed to be in for the night, sleeping and all, when she went to her other job, but I would sneak out a lot after she was gone. She lectured me a lot about my getting into trouble hanging out with the guys I was with, but she finally told me she gave up. She said she was more interested in doing for my younger brothers and sisters cause they cared about what she was doing for them.

Each of these youths was left unsupervised for most of each day, and their moms had little time to spend with older children. Shaun was the only younger child in this group, the three males were older children. As older children, their working mothers gave them considerable freedom and responsibility at very young ages. These four subjects were left without much supervision, sheltering, and guidance from their working moms.

Casey had both little time under her mother's guidance and supervision and little respect for her mother's guidance. Casey was angry at her mom over her parents' divorce and she blamed her mother when her father moved away and out of Casey's life. Casey's mom worked second shift, leaving little time for Casey to be with her mother. Casey and her mother had such a poor relationship that even when her mother attempted to intervene on Casey's behalf, there was little chance for the intervention to work. Casey and her mom didn't talk much with each other, and Casey interpreted her mother's interventions as hostile attempts to separate her from her boyfriend. When Casey's mom tried to intervene on Casey's behalf, her intervention was to ask the courts to take over helping her daughter. This type of hostile relationship and lack of personal effort at intervention made for poor sheltering of Casey and poor prospects for reintegration.

A common difference between those subjects who persisted in delinquent behavior and those who desisted from delinquent behavior was school attendance. Among the desistent group of subjects, all but Cindy and Lamar, the two who reported undetected persistent delinquency, had graduated or were finishing high school at the time data was collected. Among the three persisters who exited from delinquent behavior; Ken, Lisa, and Toni; Ken was the only one to not graduate from school. None of the persisters with delinquent careers throughout their teenage years had graduated from high school at the time data was collected, nor had any of these youths completed a GED program. All who failed to finish school told very similar stories about starting to skip certain classes in middle school. These youths began skipping classes along with other friends, and cutting a few classes soon turned into skipping out for entire days, then for several days at a time, and soon spending less time in school than out of school. Each youth also spoke of very weak efforts made by school officials to stop this pattern. Youths indicated that they were once or twice lectured by a home room teacher and/or assistant principal, and then began to receive notices sent to the home, notices which they easily intercepted and kept from parents. The next step taken by school officials was to suspend each youth. Since such a suspension required a

parent to come to school to speak with an assistant principal in order to reinstate the youth, such suspensions usually brought about the end of their school days. These youths either never told moms about the suspensions or had parents who were unwilling to go to school to reinstate the youth. A few did have a parent reinstate them once, but no other intervention from home helped to alter the pattern of skipping school.

Those who managed to finish school did include a few who also began skipping classes at a young age, namely Lisa, Toni, Brandy, Lyn, and Don. Don skipped school for very different reasons than those motivating the other youths, and he was helped by his family which supported him when first he decided to drop out of school in Salem, then shortly after when he decided to live with grandparents while he attended school in a different district. Toni and Lyn were similarly helped by family which intervened to move each out of the Salem district and into different school districts where each got a fresh start on school with new and non-delinquent friends. Brandy stopped skipping school when she broke with the friend who got her in trouble with the law. Lisa was the only subject who was supported and helped in staying in school by school personnel.

The only other subjects who had any stories about school officials taking supportive or sheltering steps to

help improve attendance and school performance were PeeWee and Shaun. PeeWee found the teachers at his new school were supportive, making him feel he was wanted. This was quite opposite of the treatment he received from teachers at his old school. Shaun and Lisa each found the staff at their alternative schools to be very helpful and supportive, quite different from teachers in traditional schools. Lisa and Shaun, however, also spoke of difficulties which began when each returned to traditional schools for high school. Where the alternative school teachers and counselors were always available to support and help, traditional school personnel were not, and this made transitions back to traditional schools very difficult. All other subjects had nothing to say about efforts made by school personnel to help.

The variety of efforts and actors involved in sheltering subjects from delinquent influences did not produce the same level of success. Efforts made by parents and adult friends of subjects tend to have succeeded for longer periods of time than did efforts made by girlfriends, juvenile justice personnel, therapists, teachers, and others. Youths who were placed in alternative schools found these schools to be very helpful to them, and did not report contacts with delinquent influences while attending these schools. Yet, these same subjects were returned to traditional schools, and when returned they again encountered and

were influenced by delinquent peers. Sheltering which was provided by activities, like sports and church, was also limited compared with sheltering provided by parents and adult friends.

PeeWee, Jack, and Mo were each sheltered from contact with delinquent friends for several months periods, yet the relationships with girlfriends did not last more than a few months and the sheltering provided ended with the end of these relationships. Shaun was well sheltered from the delinquent influences of her neighborhood and in her home (her gang member older brothers) during the year she spent living with her foster parents. Again, though, when the relationship with the foster parents was terminated by the courts, Shaun returned to the delinquent influences in her home and neighborhood. For a period of nearly two years after his first offense, Mo was sheltered from delinquent associations by a good friend and by involvement in basketball leagues and church activities. However, when Mo entered high school, he was separated from his good friend, he dropped out of the church youth group, and his new basketball coaches at the high school were not involved in his life as had been previous youth league coaches. In those cases where parents and/or adult friends managed to reintegrate youths into the family or into a conventional relationship with an adult, the sheltering tends to have

lasted throughout adolescence. Other relationships tend to have been temporary, and so too was the sheltering they provided.

Desistence and Persistence

John Braithwaite's Reintegrative Shaming Theory suggests that individuals who engage in persistent criminal behavior will tend to belong to criminal peer groups, and that the joining of such a peer group will be strongly influenced by how particular social groups react to the individual following involvement in early criminal behavior. As has been shown among this study's sample, persisters and a majority of desisters had ties to delinquent peers preceding initial delinquent behavior. Persisters maintained such ties throughout their delinquent careers, while nearly all who desisted, either after one or several delinquent acts, stopped engaging in delinquent behavior after breaking from delinquent friends. As Braithwaite's theory suggests, maintenance of ties to delinquent peers appears to have a strong relationship to maintaining delinquent behavior after the initial offense. However, as pointed out in chapter five, ties to delinquent friends preceded first offenses for most subjects. Very few joined a delinquent peer group after the first or second offense.

Braithwaite's theory suggests that a principle difference between persistent offenders and one-time offenders ought to be that persistent offenders tend to have joined criminal peer groups while one-time offenders have not. Here, the data suggests a principle difference is that desisters tend to have exited from delinquent peer associations while persisters tend to have maintained such relationships.

The stories told by these youths indicated several influences upon the maintenance or severing of ties to delinquent peers. Several youths who severed such ties were forced to change friends when they were physically removed from neighborhoods where these delinquent friends lived. Many more youths were encouraged to leave such friends by parents, adult friends, and girlfriends, and the strengthening of conventional relationships following delinquent episodes supported these youths and their efforts to avoid delinquent peers. These strengthened conventional relationships were crucial to the exiting from delinquent relationships, for they helped fill the void in social networks left when subjects no longer associated with delinquent friends. Those subjects who attempted to leave delinquent peers, but were not reintegrated into conventional social networks, experienced much loneliness and often returned to old, delinquent friends, if only for a night of fun at a time.

A few subjects even made personal decisions to break from delinquent peers, and made these decisions prior to parental encouragement. Yet, even these youths were aided in their efforts to exit from delinquent relationships by way of being reintegrated into family and other conventional associations.

Many other subjects maintained delinquent relationships. Some of these youths were recipients of interventions to separate them from delinquent peers, interventions which failed. Casey, Tina, and Michael each rejected interventions made by their moms, probably due to the confrontational relationships each of these youths had with their mothers. Each had placed blame for their parents' divorces upon the parent with whom each lived, their mothers. None of these three youths spoke favorably of their mothers, though Casey and Michael now admit that they had been too harsh on their mothers while growing up, and that their attitudes towards their mothers had led each to reject anything which came from their mothers. Shaun and Tom were also recipients of interventions, for each was moved away from bad influences to what was hoped would be better surroundings. However, neither was reintegrated into a conventional group as a result of these moves, and the interventions failed to shelter. Shaun was moved to relatives, but they were as much involved with gangs as were

the older brothers whose influence she was supposed to be escaping. Tom's grandparents never tried to be family for him, they simply provided a safe place in which to live. MO's mom continued to try to shelter him by getting him involved in her church, even after MO lost interest in church and stopped attending. Some of these interventions failed because the receiving youths chose to reject the effort and remain with delinquent friends, others failed because the receiving youths were not reintegrated into conventional associations, they were not supported in attempts to leave delinquent peers. Many more youths who maintained delinquent ties reported never receiving encouragement to leave delinquent peers, and when a few of these subjects made personal decisions to leave delinquent friends, the lack of support they received contributed to their return to old and familiar delinquent relationships.

Summary

Desisters tend to have exited from delinquent relationships and this exit appears to be strongly related to their exit from delinquent behavior. Two members of the desistent group were actually persisters whose other delinquent offenses were unknown to the courts. A few desisters were never associated with or influenced by delinquent peers, and

most of their first records were for typical youth fights or for no offense at all. Persisters who exited from delinquent behavior after only a few offenses also had left delinquent peers.

Though a few subjects voluntarily left delinquent peers so as to avoid their delinquent influences, most who dissociated from delinquent peers did so as a result of an intervention by a parent or adult friend. These interventions included moving the family to a new neighborhood, moving the youth to a new school, or involving the youth in conventional activities like church or sports. A couple of male subjects had girlfriends who intervened to keep these males away from delinquent friends. These interventions successfully sheltered these youths from delinquent influences when the interventions included a successful reintegration of the youth into a conventional group. Being reintegrated into the family resulted in the greatest and most lasting sheltering from delinquent influences, whereas the interventions by girlfriends were only temporarily effective, failing to shelter after the relationship between subject and girlfriend ended. The sheltering provided by conventional groups appears to have blocked the value neutralization common among delinquent peer groups and to have blocked opportunities to engage in delinquent behavior.

Persisters tend to have maintained delinquent behavior as long as they maintained relationships with delinquent peers. All subjects who maintained delinquent relationships persisted in delinquent behavior, though subjects like Rashaad who had a strong relationship with parents were able to refrain from some of the delinquent behavior in which their peers engaged. These persistent subjects differed from desistent subjects in experiences with interventions, reintegration and sheltering, as well as in maintenance of delinquent relationships. Some persisters never received any interventions to separate them from delinquent friends, while others who did experience interventions rejected help from parents with whom they were at great odds. Interventions which were made by a parent who had a poor and/or antagonistic relationship with the subject failed because these subjects believed they had more to lose in breaking with delinquent peers than in breaking with parents.

Several subjects severed ties to delinquent friends for periods of time. These youths left delinquent relationships with the help of interventions from girlfriends, sport team associates, and other activity associates, but since these relationships were temporary and the interventions were not accompanied by reintegrations into adult conventional relationships, these youths were eventually left without conventional sheltering. At these points in their lives,

these youths returned to old and familiar relationships with delinquent friends. These subjects also returned to delinquent behavior on these occasions.

Typical of teenagers in general, the teens in this study very rarely acted on their own initiative. The youths in this study most often behaved as their group did, and few found the courage to take risks, to engage in what they knew was unacceptable behavior, unless the group to which they belonged approved, supported, and encouraged the bad behavior. The peer group had the power to provide opportunities to behave delinquently, and the group had the ability to neutralize or support conventional values.

Those youths who maintained membership in a delinquent peer group were provided many opportunities to behave delinquently and were provided neutralization of conventional values. Those youths who broke from delinquent peer groups and were reintegrated into conventional groups had fewer opportunities to behave delinquently and had conventional values upheld, supporting controls against delinquent behavior. Reintegration into the family provided the most lasting sheltering from delinquent opportunities and value neutralization.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SHAMING, SHELTERING, AND REINTEGRATION

In defining the process of shaming which was central to his theory, Braithwaite suggested that there was a distinction between shaming which was stigmatizing and shaming which was reintegrative. He also suggested that there was a distinction between shaming which occurred after, and was directed towards, unacceptable behavior, such as when one is shamed for having violated a family rule, and shaming which used the shame of third parties as illustration of shaming consequences should the shamed party commit the same transgression. After having made this latter distinction, and having claimed that most moral education utilized the shame of third parties as teaching tools, Braithwaite all but ignores the impact of the more general shaming upon future persistence or desistence. Reintegrative shaming theory uses the impact of variation in stigmatization and reintegration among those who are shamed for their own

transgressions to account for persistence in or desistence from criminal behavior.

Due to this focus upon the impact of shaming for personal transgressions, this study was designed to test such impact upon desistence and persistence. A second goal of this study was to collect data describing shaming events so as to learn more about how shaming is conducted and how it might impact upon future behavior. Having collected so much data on shaming events, it was later decided that a description of shaming in this dissertation would have to be brief and incomplete, the more complete description needing to wait for a later report.

To best present the relationships between shaming, stigmatization, reintegration, desistence, and persistence, shaming events will be presented, and the division will be by types of agents. Shaming by formal agents of the court and of the schools will be presented, as will be shaming by informal agents of parents, adult friends, and delinquent peers.

Shaming by Formal Agents

Shaming by the courts was very limited, and that shaming which was attempted was usually extremely weak and ineffective. Shaming could have occurred at several points

in formal court processing of offenders: youths could have been shamed during pre-trial interactions with court social workers, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and detention center staff; youths could have been shamed during the actual hearings in front of judges or court commissioners, and youths could have been shamed during sanctioning. Yet, the youths in this study were not often shamed by court officials at any point in the official processing of offenders.

Attempts to shame were part of some of the sanctions youths received for their illegal behavior, though it is important to note that sanctions do not shame. Sanctioning has the potential to shame, and it is in this process of imposing sanctions upon offenders that some formal agents shamed offenders. Sanctions; such as having to report to a probation officer, having to attend shoplifter's class, or having to spend time in a detention facility or a counseling program; are infringements upon freedom and may be unpleasant experiences. Any shaming associated with such a sanction, though, arises from the reactions of others around the offender to his having been sanctioned. People are crucial to shaming, specific sanctions are not. Two youths sanctioned with detention will not necessarily experience similar shaming. One youth's family and friends may shame the youth for having been placed in detention by a formal

representative of the community, and the family and friends themselves may experience shame related to the detention placed upon someone in their social circle. The other youth's family may do nothing and friends may feel honored to be associated with someone who has received so much attention from the court and police, praising the detained youth for his offense and for maintaining a defiant attitude. Informal actors are more likely to shame offenders, even over formal sanctions, than are formal agents, and informal actors are also more likely to stigmatize or reintegrate offenders, as well.

Still, it is possible to speak of shaming by formal agents involved in sanctioning the youths in this study. These formal agents involved in sanctioning were primarily probation officers, a few counselors, detention center staff, and those who conducted the shoplifter's class. Probation was the most common sanction used by the Children's Court. The design of probation was such that delinquent youths would have a conventional adult to help monitor their behavior and to attempt to modify their behavior by providing guidance and serving as a role model. It was also intended that probation officers would sound early warnings of troublesome behavior and recommend further assistance for their probationers in need. In reality, the large case loads of probation officers reduced their

supervision time to a ten to fifteen minute conversation each week.

Very few subjects spoke of a relationship with his/her probation officer which was more than an appeasement of the system. Only two subjects reported not getting along with a particular probation officer, and in these two cases the PO was changed upon request from the youths. Most subjects, though, portrayed relations with their PO's as very business-like. Subjects reported that they had a short (usually less than fifteen minutes) conversation weekly with their PO's, and that PO's only asked them if they were having any troubles with school, parent(s), drugs, friends, and obeying the law.

PEEWEE: I only seen him (PO) about four times, then he just stopped calling me. I didn't get no letter from the court, or nothing. All he did anyway was ask me how I was doing at school, how I was doing at home with my parents, how I was doing with my friends. He never said or did anything. Anyway, you just answer their questions, tell them what they want to hear, that everything's OK, even if it's not, and they leave you alone.

None of the subjects spoke of any comments from a probation officer which could be interpreted as an attempt to shame them for their illegal activities. Shaming appears not to have been a process used regularly by probation officers, although threats were often made towards a few subjects who were difficult to control. Any shaming which may have been

attempted by probation officers was not remembered by subjects, and this was probably due to the lack of sufficient importance probation officers had in the lives of these youths.

Tom and DJ were the only two subjects to claim a relationship with a probation officer, and each told of how his probation officer was available for talk and guidance, willing to spend more than ten minutes with each. Tom recalled how his probation officer challenged him to take better care of his body and to begin weight lifting, an activity he claims kept him out of some trouble and gave him satisfaction. DJ spoke of how his probation officer helped him understand his mom and get along with her better. He encouraged DJ to team up with his uncle who could provide for him the missing male companionship in his life.

Counselors and detention center staff were remembered far less for their shaming efforts than for their use of coercion to control behavior at respective facilities. Subjects who were ordered into treatment programs did recall that some counselors tried to get them to view their drinking and other bad behaviors as unacceptable in society, but they also recalled that these same counselors excused their illegal behavior as a part of their disease, alcoholism. Michael claims counselors told him his stealing would end if he would control his disease by stopping his

drinking. Counselors appear to have directed some shaming against the drinking behaviors, but not against the stealing these youths engaged in to finance their drinking and drug use. Youths who had spent time in counseling facilities more so remembered meeting other drinkers and drug users who taught them a few things related to the drinking or drug use. They also easily recalled how most staff, including counselors, often degraded them as a tool for maintaining control. Youths who were detained for any offense had similar recollections of degradation, control, and coercion, with almost no recollections of being shamed by any one imposing the detention sanction.

Shoplifting class seems to have been unique among court ordered sanctions. The purpose of the class was to shame youths for engaging in initial shoplifting and to scare them away from repeated shoplifting. In other words, the goal was moral education of offenders. As part of the class, Jerry said, "they tried to make you feel like the people close to you were real upset about your having shoplifted, and that other people like employers and colleges and such would not want you if you continued to shoplift." In part, whatever success shoplifting class had in shaming youths away from future shoplifting seems to have come from its use of shame related to others in society to whom youths were closely attached. The leaders of the class were morally

educating by pointing out shame coming from others important to them.

Shaming was also present at a few stages in the court proceedings. Shaming was part of pre-hearing bargaining, part of the judge's or commissioner's remarks, and part of detention for the few held prior to their hearings. Pre-hearing bargaining shamed rather inadvertently. Those involved in attempting to get a subject to agree to specific charges and terms for the equivalent of a guilty plea often used scare tactics, threatening severe sanctions like time at a detention facility for those found delinquent on more severe charges. Sometimes court officials even threatened that the subject could be taken away from his/her family if the subject did not cooperate and the judge found her/him delinquent on the more serious charges. Scare tactics did work to get most youths to agree to lesser charges and light penalties.

ERIC: They told me since what I stole was worth more than \$100, the judge would have to give me time in detention if they charged me with theft, but if I agreed to not fight them, they'd reduce the charges to shoplifting and I'd get probation and that stupid shoplifting class. I was scared at the time, cause I didn't want to go to detention, so I did what they said. The class was so stupid, and probation was no big deal. The next time I was in and they tried to scare me, I didn't give in so easy. I knew the fight was no big deal, and that they never did anything to you for fighting without weapons, so I made them reduce the charges and promise only six months probation, and they did. Even when they busted me

for stealing cars, I got it reduced to driving without owners permission, which kept me out of detention.

Scare tactics also had the opportunity to shame the subject, pointing out not only how the infraction was unacceptable, but also pointing out what could well happen if such behavior were repeated. Scare tactics failed to strongly communicate these messages and, instead, scare tactics interfered with effective shaming. The bargaining which was the goal of the scare tactic also taught subjects that the court was tolerant and lenient. Prosecutors and other court officials involved in pre-hearing bargaining with accused subjects did draw upon the shame offenders should feel for the illegal behavior in which they had engaged. The shaming was not aimed at moral education, but rather used as a tool of manipulation and control.

Seven youths; Lisa, Shaun, Tina, Michael, Dee, Patrick, and Cindy; were held at the Children's Court detention facility prior to their first hearings, and only Michael was allowed to return home for the period before his second hearing. The six who spent up to two weeks in detention prior to their hearings all reported similar stories of humiliation and mistreatment by staff members at the detention facility. They reported being treated like hardened criminals or dangerous animals, ordered around like

slaves. They also all told of how they at first felt bad about winding up in detention for what they had done, afraid of what was to happen to them and how others would react to their having been in detention. Yet, this regret for their behavior soon turned to anger and contempt, anger at the way they were treated and contempt for the system that so mistreated them.

DEE: They was kinda strict out there. Like the dorm leaders, or who ever they was supposed to be, they was always trying to play bad. You say something smart to them, they keep you locked in your room and they like shoot your food on a tray at you through the door, like you're at some maximum security prison shit. I didn't want to go back there again, but not like cause it was hard to be there, just cause they was so strict for no good reason. They just liked to play with you. I hated that.

Here again the shaming conducted by detention center personnel was used as a means of control, not for the goal of moral education. Abusive treatment and manipulation spoiled the formal relationship between detention center staff and subjects, thus interfering with effective shaming.

Following their first offenses, ten other subjects were detained by police for an hour or two until a parent came to take them home. Most of these subjects were held briefly in a holding cell, and these subjects reported the experience as frightening, calling their attention to the undesirable consequence of prison if they continued to behave illegally.

The experience in the holding cell managed to shame most subjects so detained, and the few subjects who had a parent or other important adult reinforce this shame gave some credit for altered future behavior to the experience of having to sit in the holding cell.

The most promising point for effective shaming in the legal process was in the comments by judges and commissioners to individual subjects at their hearings. Judges and commissioners spoke of many things to the youths who faced them, sometimes asking questions, often warning youths of more severe consequences should they reappear in his/her court for future illegal behavior. Judges also often spoke on behalf of the community about the disappointment they felt regarding the bad behavior of the delinquent youth and of the disapproval the judge and society had for such bad behavior. These statements of disapproval and disappointment were clearly attempts to morally educate youths regarding acceptable conventional behavior, and shaming was used to help in this moral education.

All who faced a judge or commissioner claimed they were afraid of the powers of the judge that first time. They claimed they were afraid the judge would separate them from family, perhaps sending them to a detention facility. Those subjects who remembered the judge making any comments to them at the first hearing claimed they took the judge's

words seriously, yet these nine subjects were the one's whose cases were held open for six months pending dismissal. In these cases, the judge warned the youths that should they reappear for trouble during this six month period they would be severely punished for the suspended charge and any new charges.

MO: Yeah, I remember the judge telling me that they would forget this trouble if I stayed out of any more trouble for six months, so I did. He told me if I got in more trouble, they'd maybe send me to reform school. I was scared about getting sent away, so I stayed out of trouble. I wasn't in any other trouble till I was in high school.

Youths who were so warned on their first offense all managed to stay out of trouble for at least a year, most for the four year follow up period. Scare tactics such as these, though, used fear of punishment and not fear of future shame to control behavior. Such tactics should not be confused with shaming.

Those whose cases were held open and returned to court, and the other persisters who reported having been scared by the judge or commissioner, all lost fear of the court upon their second encounter with the court, or by way of witnessing friends who appeared in Children's Court more than once. In these cases, youths discovered that the court did not send them to reform school or to detention. In fact, they found that the court usually only extended probation,

and they had come to find probation, at its' worst, nothing more than a minor inconvenience. Those who continued to engage in delinquent behavior did not find probation causing any interference. Any initial effectiveness of court scare tactics to control behavior was lost due to the court's inability or unwillingness to follow through on its threats.

It is difficult to assess just how much shaming occurred as part of these court scare tactics and other comments from judges. Lectures from judges about the wrongfulness of the delinquent behavior do seem to have attempted shaming, to have strived for a change in youths' perceptions of right and wrong. However, the lack of substantial comment by subjects on these lectures and data which cannot attribute any desistent behavior to judge's shaming, questions the effectiveness of the court to shame youths. Although the judge is supposed to powerfully represent conventional society and act as the "great father" in the juvenile system, youths did not view the judge as such. They did report that they respected the power the judge had, and they did report that they were afraid of the judge the first time they appeared before him/her. Yet, they also reported taking the lectures less seriously than they did from teachers and parents. Their comments indicated that the lack of a relationship to the judge made the lecture rather meaningless to them. Jerry even reported

that he got the message and changed his ways because his father told him the same things the judge had said.

The other formal institution involved in the lives of all subjects was public education, and public school personnel were involved in attempts to alter behavior of all persistent subjects and five of the desistent subjects. Skipping classes was the unacceptable behavior involved in all of these cases, and violent behavior on school grounds was involved in four specific cases. All schools had policies for dealing with violent behavior and with truancy, yet shaming was rarely used in efforts to get students to stay in school or in efforts to get students to desist from violent behavior.

Like the juvenile justice system, school systems dealt with truancy and school fighting in very legalistic and rigid processes. Students who began to skip school frequently would have attendance monitored, and when they reached a pre-determined number of unexcused absences, a letter was sent home to notify parent(s) of the problem. Several subjects told of how they knew about the arrival of such a letter and intercepted the letter before it reached mom and/or dad. After a number of additional unexcused absences, youths would be suspended, and only when a parent came to school to reinstate these youths were they allowed

back in school. Five subjects chose never to return to school after the suspension. All but one persister, and two desisters had not completed high school as of the end of 1992.

This policy of informing parents of truancy long after the pattern had been established, then suspending youths after parental notification lead to no change in attendance patterns was a policy which failed to attempt any moral education. Suspending youths who were infrequently attending school only further separated them from school, increasing the chances these youths would drop out of school. Since this policy intervened after the pattern of skipping classes was well established, even more effective use of the formal relationship between students and school officials to shame youths over skipping school may have not been sufficient to alter the bad behavior. According to the subjects, though, only one such attempt at moral education was made by school officials to change the attendance pattern of one subject.

Four first offenses were alleged to have been committed on school grounds, and school personnel responded to these unacceptable acts as well as did the courts. Lisa, Don, and Jason were involved in fights on school grounds, and PeeWee was alleged to have participated in a group sexual assault of a female classmate during recess. Due to her use of a

weapon (deodorant spray) against a security guard, Lisa was expelled from her middle school and given only the option of attending an alternative school for middle grades. Don's striking of his friend's mother, an act he and the friend claimed the mother had provoked with her verbal assault on Don, was one more reason for his school to keep him in a class for emotionally disturbed students. Jason's principal had only a few words with him over the insignificant slap he gave to a fellow student, and nothing much was made of the incident by other teachers or students. PeeWee was not immediately dealt with by school administrators. However, his teacher and other teachers at the school began to treat him so terribly after the alleged incident that school administrators were forced to transfer PeeWee to another school. As PeeWee told it, teachers assumed he was guilty and would have nothing to do with him. They constantly told him he could never again be trusted.

School officials had great opportunities to morally educate these four youths about the errors of their ways, yet only Jason received any direction from a school official regarding proper behavior as a result of the first offense. Instead of building upon relationships with the other three students, and using such relationships to attempt shaming and moral education, school officials severed ties to, or distanced themselves from, these three youths. Had these

actions by school officials been temporary and ended with reintegration into their school communities, they may have served as shaming experiences, but since these actions were permanent, they resulted in the loss of conventional influences in the lives of these youths. In this study, such loss of conventional relationships never resulted in positive changes in behavior, unless the loss was replaced by a new and strong conventional relationship.

Formal Stigmatization and Reintegration

Several actions by formal agents, court officials and school personnel, stigmatized or resulted in the stigmatization of a number of subjects. A departure from Braithwaite's theory, most acts of stigmatization were not associated with shaming episodes. Detention and in-patient counseling did much to stigmatize youths. By their nature these sanctions separated youths from family, school, and community and placed them in facilities where they associated exclusively with delinquents. The abusive use of coercive control tactics spoiled any opportunity for detained youths to develop relationships with conventional staff members. Detained youths spoke of "doing time" in these facilities, simply waiting it out until they were released. They also spoke of how detention made them feel

like common criminals and often like caged animals with staff members as cruel trainers.

Children's Court actions also became fuel for stigmatization by others outside the court. Peers, especially delinquent peers, came to interpret survival of a court appearance with less than detention as a sign of a subject's toughness. These peers viewed such events as having beaten the system, and such views led to weaker ties to conventional society, promoting a hardened delinquent image.

Int: Did your friends change any because you had to stay inside for so long (2 months house arrest)?

LISA: No, not cause of that. My friends stayed with me. We was real close, my sister and my girlfriends. We kinda come up together, kinda wild and all. We was always doing things together. In fact, if anything, the 2 months house arrest mad my friends think I was tough, real bad. They thought it was great that I had done time. That tough rep stuck with me for a long time.

Every persister, except Casey, spoke of how their reputations and popularity among delinquent friends grew with each court appearance and eventual return to the group. Court sanctions offered little shaming as well, though in some cases court ordered sanctions were associated with stigmatization of a few youths. Sanctions which separated youths from family were associated with stigmatization and other negative outcomes, though for one youth the separation was

temporarily beneficial. Those youths who were held in detention or spent time at a detention center, either for first or subsequent offenses, reported the experience as humiliating and degrading. They told of how the experience of mistreatment from, and manipulation by, detention staff had led to their loss of respect for the courts and the law. Court ordered house arrest for Lisa lead to her friends' assertions that she was one "bad" girl for the court to have gone to all that trouble. Lisa reported that the "tough girl" label her friends gave her as a result of how the court treated her, stuck with her for many years. Court ordered counseling, like detention, also separated youths from family and concentrated them with other delinquent youths. Those youths ordered into counseling also found center staff to be highly manipulative and most interested in simply maintaining control over those sent there. None of the youths sent to detention or counseling could recall any attempts made by staffs to point out the inappropriateness of behavior which led to their detention, yet several reported learning from fellow detainees additional ways to behave delinquently. Any shaming which was attempted was not remembered or identified as such by those detained or counseled.

Though shaming was rarely used, stigmatization was a frequent result of control measures used by schools and

school personnel. Don was stigmatized by his placement in the ED class and by the lack of trust shown him when he attempted to account for the incident. Don spoke of how he felt his being labeled an ED kid led to the lack of trust school officials had in him. Lisa was not stigmatized by the move to the alternative school. Instead she found the alternative school was good to her and good for her. She said the teachers and social workers at the alternative school welcomed her. PeeWee was clearly stigmatized by his teacher and others at his school. They effectively shut PeeWee out of conventional ties with school. PeeWee was already terribly frustrated with his teachers and school in only a few days following the incident. When transferred, though, his new teacher effectively reintegrated him into education by her willingness to listen to PeeWee and to give him as much respect as she showed any other student. PeeWee had nothing but the highest praises for this teacher who gave him a chance to fit in and to learn, and PeeWee earned his best grades while with this teacher.

Shaun was also later stigmatized by the actions of school officials, and Lisa was later reintegrated by the efforts of a high school math teacher and an assistant principal. When Shaun left the alternative middle school to attend the traditional high school her brothers had attended, teachers and an assistant principal immediately

labeled her a potential troublemaker. Shaun knew she was being labeled and she felt it was wrong for teachers and administrators to assume she would make trouble. She believed that school officials should have given her a chance to show that she was not like her older brothers. Shaun also claimed that as a result of this labeling she decided to behave the way others assumed she would, so as to at least enjoy the fun that went with the trouble others were pinning on her. She reported that it was at this point in her life that she joined the gang to which her brothers belonged, becoming the girl of one of the leaders in the gang.⁸

Lisa was labeled by her former classmates as a tough girl, and when she left the alternative middle school for a traditional high school, she encountered these peers again.⁹ The label was still with her, and Lisa was pressured to fight a number of girls who wanted to test her reputation. After two years at this school, Lisa transferred to a different high school. There she began to skip classes along with her new friends. Lisa's math teacher became interested in seeing Lisa succeed in school, stay in school, and graduate from school. He made time for Lisa, helping

⁸See quote page 129 in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

⁹See quote page 218 of this chapter.

her with other classes and encouraging her to stay in school, to stop skipping other classes. This math teacher also enlisted the help of the assistant principal in efforts to keep Lisa in school. Lisa contends that the assistant principal checked up on Lisa's attendance and spoke with her very regularly about what they could do together to help her stay in school.¹⁰ Lisa credits these acts of reintegrating her into conventional school commitments and relationships for her success in high school and her having graduated on time.

The handling of students who skipped classes also stigmatized and gave opportunity for others to stigmatize youths. The policy appears to have offered reintegration to those suspended who returned to school with a parent, yet youths who had been suspended for truancy had been stigmatized by the process long before the suspension. Lyn and Michael told similar stories of how each had earned a reputation among peers as a skipper and a party person after peers learned that the school had sent home a letter regarding truancy. The lack of effort by school officials to seek out these truants and attempt to alter their behavior, coupled with the policy which pushed repeated truants out of the school sent a message to these students

¹⁰See quote page 152 in chapter 6 of this dissertation.

that the school system did not care about them. Most subjects who skipped classes told of how they soon got the message that schools did not care about them, some even telling of how they believed the schools were glad to not have them around. Although this form of stigmatization was not intended, it was the result of failure to attempt reintegration at crucial times in the lives of these subjects.

The only formal court action which reintegrated a subject with conventional society directly was the placement of Shaun in a good foster home. This action separated Shaun from her delinquent brothers and provided for the development of a strong conventional relationship with the foster parents.

SHAUN: (speaking of her foster parents) They was like parents. They treated you as their own. Like, when she would go shopping for her son, she'd always take me along. They didn't give her much money to care for me, but she always gave me an allowance. She'd take me to see my mom, or for other things. She was good for me. She was strict, but only cause I needed it. I needed the boundaries. She was really good for me.

Unfortunately, the relationship was temporary, and the court took this conventional relationship away after a year.

Shaun was returned home, and due to distance between Shaun's home and the residence of the foster family, Shaun soon lost contact with this conventional group in her life. DJ's

probation officer also provided direction which led DJ to be reintegrated by his uncle. In a rather indirect manner, the event of having to appear in court helped several youths and their parents renew deteriorating relationships. The legalistic process which dominated court proceedings for these youths promoted treatment of the accused youths as individuals, solely responsible for their own behavior. Such an approach seems to be responsible for the lack of attempts at reintegrating youths into conventional groups within society as part of formal court proceedings or outcomes.

The data indicates that two key ingredients to successfully reintegrating a youthful offender are (1) regular contact between offender and those attempting the reintegration and (2) a strong relationship between offender and those attempting reintegration. PeeWee's new teacher was with him every day, Shaun's foster parents were a constant influence for a year, and Lisa's math teacher and assistant principal made regular contact with her. PeeWee's new teacher worked hard to develop a special, trusting relationship with him, Shaun's foster parents treated her as well as they treated their own children, and Lisa's teacher and assistant principal did for Lisa much more than was typical. Probation officers were probably unsuccessful at any attempted reintegration due to the lack of contact and depth

of relationship with their probationers. Counselors, though they had frequent contact with counseled offenders, were unable to develop strong relationships with counseled youths, and their use of manipulation and other control tactics spoiled the trust needed for a strong relationship.

Shaming by Informal Agents

Although evidence of shaming by formal agents was limited among the subjects in this study, there was plenty of evidence that shaming was frequently attempted by informal agents. Parents were the most common shamers, though some subjects were shamed by adult friends and other relatives, by their peers, and even by themselves. Desisters were more often shamed than were persisters, and the shaming of desisters far more often resulted in the shamed youth adopting a conventional view regarding the unacceptable nature of the shamed behavior than did the shaming of persisters. Whereas formal agents were limited to shaming over specific actions, informal agents shamed subjects for their specific transgressions and used shame experienced by others as a moral education tool, attempting to prevent subjects from engaging in other forms of unacceptable behavior. This study produced enough evidence on a wide variety of shaming experiences to fill another volume.

presented below are examples of shaming typically experienced by desisters and/or persisters, as well as discussion of differences in shaming which appear to be related to differences in delinquent behavior.

Most subjects were shamed by a parent over the specific bad behaviors of their first offenses, and all subjects could recall some examples of attempted shaming by a parent regarding some types of unacceptable behavior. Subjects distinguished between attempts by a parent to discipline and attempts to shame. Many claimed parents most often simply yelled at them and gave them punishments, like groundings, when they had gotten into trouble. Yet, there were numerous stories about how parents sometimes expressed disappointment in the subject for particular behavior, or how parents made them aware of consequences of lost respect should they engage in particular behavior. Some subjects spoke of receiving lectures from parents about right and wrong behavior, lectures in which the shame of others was pointed out as something to be avoided. Yet, the most powerful shaming was that which came with very few words and plenty of body language. Most subjects, though, could not remember recent shaming from parents.

The most typical features of shaming were that it was easily distinguished from routine discipline, it was focused on the relationship between parent and child, and it relied

upon the ability of the shamed child to do most of the work and figure out what to do to avoid such shame in the future. Parents often did not spell out all the details, the youths were expected to know that the behavior which provoked the shaming was unacceptable, and to know that if the behavior were repeated, it would provoke the same shaming. When the details were spelled out, the shaming was part of a lecture from parents to youths. Several examples of parental shaming will help illustrate these points.

JERRY: Of course, I had a talk with my father after I got caught, which was a strange situation cause I thought I was gonna be half dead or whatever, but he just talked to me and asked me how it felt to be incarcerated. He had a lot of talks with me before about what was wrong to do and all, and he especially told me he didn't want me to be bringing any gang stuff into the family. This time he just reminded me about what I did was wrong and not the kind of example I should be setting for my younger brothers. Then, he just trusted me that I would do the right thing to get my life straightened out. He never said anything else about it.

JASON: (regarding his adult offense for gambling while away at college) Well, I talked to my dad from jail, and he had a lawyer come see me. Then, when I got home after finals, I sat down and told them both about it. My mom was shocked. She said she was disappointed in me, but she didn't treat me bad, or anything. My dad was quiet for a while, but he said he trusted I had learned a lesson.

Interviewer: What was that about that your mom made you stop seeing some friends?

DON: Well, they were always in trouble, stealing things and breaking other people's windows and

such. Mom found out I was stealing little things with them, and she made me stop hanging out with them. After that, I stayed out of trouble. I liked having my mom on my side, and I didn't like it when she was upset with me over my stealing.

Interviewer: What was it like riding home with mom after she had to come pick you up at the police station after the fight?

TAMARA: I felt like I was the worst kid in the whole world. My mom made me feel that way, too. I knew that after something like this it would take time to get her trust back, but I didn't expect her to be so hurt cause of what I did. It was a stupid thing to get into a fight about in the first place, and I wasn't gonna do that again and make my mom not trust me like that again.

Interviewer: How long was it before your mom trusted you again?

TAMARA: It wasn't that long. I mean she trusted me that I wouldn't do that again, but she also grounded me for a month. After that, she didn't treat me any different, but I knew she was afraid I was gonna get into fights again, which I wasn't cause I didn't want my mom to not trust me any more.

The shame these four, and other subjects experienced, was far more effective at preventing future offending than was typical disciplining like groundings or being yelled at, more effective because it helped develop and preserve conventional values of appropriate behavior. In other words, the shaming helped to morally educate these youths. Preservation of a trust relationship was also common to effective shaming. Unlike these four examples, most parental shaming described by subjects was actually prior to

the first offense and utilized the shame of others to teach appropriate behavior. Youths were told to avoid the shame and trouble experienced by neighbors, relatives, and older siblings, usually with the underlying message of protecting valued trusting relationships.

A few attempts at shaming so severely withheld trust from the child that the relationship suffered and the shaming was ineffective.

LYN: I was grounded forever. It took a long time to get her to trust me again. I mean, I know that after something like that you have to expect losing trust, and that you have to earn it again, and all. But, it was two months before I could go out of the house again to do anything other than school. Not too long after that, I left my mom's and went to live with my dad. That was real good for me. It gave me a clean slate and I could earn trust again.

PeeWee, DJ, Lydia, Eric, and Travis each told similar stories of having a parent so lose trust in him or her that the parent-child relationship broke down. Future shaming and discipline from these parents was ignored by these subjects.

Other attempts at shaming suffered due to weak relationships between parents and youths. Michael, Casey, and Tina were each at war with their mothers, blaming their mothers for divorces they did not want to have happened. Michael and Casey specifically recounted how their mothers tried to discipline and shame them to get them to stop their

bad behaviors, and recounted how they refused to listen to their mothers or care if their mothers were upset with them. John, Toni, Ken, Paulee, and Patrick, each for different reasons, had come to tune their parents out, to not be affected by shaming. Each of these youths had also learned how to manipulate parents to avoid discipline consequences. Cindy, Tina, Tom, Dee, and Jack¹¹ had difficulties maintaining respect for mothers who were alcoholics, and these mothers shamed more often for behavior which interfered with their convenience rather than over behavior which was socially unacceptable.

A few youths indicated that they were not shamed against particular illegal behaviors, though they were generally well shamed against most other forms of illegal behavior. Rashaad's dad and Mo's mom did not shame them for fighting, so long as these two boys were not the youths starting the fights.

RASHAAD: I mean my dad don't get excited about getting into fights. He knows I don't start fights, I don't go around picking fights. He'd probably get real mad if he knew I started a fight. He would get down on me for school stuff, or for staying out of gang trouble and not getting into drugs or other illegal things, but he didn't care about the fights. He got on my case for the tickets, so I don't go driving like I used to.

¹¹See quote on page 117 of chapter five of this dissertation.

Mo also said his mother did not think his use of a weapon in his first offense was serious, for she never believed he would use the knife. Ken's father was actually upset at local police for what he called harassment of his son over insignificant petty thefts. Ken's dad was far more concerned about shaming Ken to avoid the more serious trouble in which his older brother engaged. Each of these three expressed a strong use of discipline and shaming regarding most other forms of illegal behavior, and each of these three limited illegal behavior to that one specific behavior which was not strongly shamed.

Several youths whose mother's were single parents, and one youth who had tuned his parents out, each received special help in moral education from an adult relative or substitute parent who managed to effectively shame them regarding improper behavior. John was affected greatly by shaming which came from his grandfather, and DJ and Lydia were similarly affected by shaming from their grandmothers. Each of these grandparents commanded more respect from each youth than from the youth's parent(s), and each was available to frequently check up on each youth. John was particularly affected by the shame his grandfather, a retired firefighter, felt when his grandson was picked up by the police for vandalism.

William and Frank were each strongly shamed by older brothers, though each at times resented the shaming coming from a brother and not a parent.

WILLIAM: He's (older brother) about six years older. He was like a father to me after my father died. He was real hard on me when I messed up. Like when I got into fights at school, he used to kick my butt around and tell me I was stupid to let other kids get me into fights. He told me they weren't worth it. He would really get on me when I would do something that bothered my mom, like the bad grades or hanging out with some bad dudes. Sometimes I thought he was being too hard. I kinda thought he shouldn't be doing that cause he wasn't my real dad. But then, he was always there to stick up for me, and I really liked that. I respected him more when he did that, and I listened more to him after that.

William and Frank each also were strongly shamed by an adult friend who acted as a substitute father. William's youth basketball coach made special and frequent efforts to be a father to William, and on one special occasion, shamed him severely by banning him from the team until his grades improved. William improved his grades and the coach accepted him back. Frank was befriended by a male adult from his church, and this man frequently spent time with Frank, offering guidance and shaming when needed to help Frank grow and learn socially acceptable behavior. DJ was similarly befriended by his uncle, who involved DJ in his sideline street vending business. Toni, after several court

appearances for fighting, was sent to live with relatives in Mississippi.

TONI: When I got down there, I was happy to be with all my cousins, and all, but they wasn't so happy with me. See, I still had my tough attitude when I got there, and they was real hard on me for that until I lost the attitude and all.

She credits these relatives for helping her learn what was important in life.

Peers also provided shaming of subjects, with most of this shaming attempting negative influence. Only MO, Lisa, PeeWee, and Rashaad reported receiving positive shaming from a peer.

MO: This friend, we grew up together. See, his mom and my mom was best friends. He was like the only real friend I had. We played basketball and baseball together. We used to challenge each other to be better. We kinda stayed together and stayed out of trouble. And, he didn't want no part of me when I would get into fights and stuff, so I stayed out of trouble when we was together cause I didn't want to lose my friend.

LISA: The only friend I had was this one guy. He and I got along real well. At the alternative school, we used to compete with each other to see who could be the smartest. That was lots of fun. He even knew how to get on my case when I was being lazy. He kept me working hard, not just cause he'd be on me if I didn't, but because it was fun to compete with him.

The shaming provided by these friends was subtle, yet powerful encouragement to behave conventionally.

Mo lost his friend and the friend's positive shaming influence when MO was recruited to attend a prestigious high school to play on their basketball team. The friend could not attend this school, and the friends MO made at the new school provided ample shaming to get MO to participate in drinking, partying, and more serious illegal behaviors. Lisa also missed the positive shaming of her friend when she returned to traditional high school. PeeWee and Rashaad each had a girlfriend who attempted to shame them for hanging out with bad influences, though it was sheltering interventions, keeping these two occupied and away from bad friends, which provided the most effective help to these two.

Most youths in the study told of receiving strong shaming from peers to behave unconventionally, often illegally. Lyn provided the clearest example of a general peer culture which encouraged youths to be "bad", severely shaming those who tried to be good.

LYN: I think in Salem, especially at South Middle School, there were a lot of bad things going on, and a lot of pressure to join in to fit in. It's like in some cases it's if you're good that people will look up to you, and in other places they only look up to the people who are doing bad things. South Middle School was like the last one. The popular people were the one's that skipped school, stole things, were tough, and stuff like that.

Jerry also portrayed a neighborhood youth culture which encouraged youths to do crazy and illegal things in order to earn a reputation with which one could impress others, especially girls. Lyn managed to escape this negative peer shaming, and she found the peer culture at the high school in her father's town provided her with a positive shaming, opposite of the peer pressure back in Salem.

Jerry was also the recipient of negative shaming encouraging him to remain loyal to childhood friends who were becoming increasingly delinquent.¹² These friends shamed him severely, labeling him a sissy because he chose to avoid them and their trouble. Paulee felt pressure from his friends to remain loyal, to join in on all of their activities, legal and illegal.

PAULEE: See, I'm a big guy. It was never me getting into fights, it was always me helping out my friends when they got into fights. I always got caught up into it. I was influenced to help them cause they was my homies. I'm with you, for us to go down together.

Paulee said he would never even think of avoiding his friends, even if he knew they were going to start a fight he did not want to see happen. He claimed his loyalty to his friends was more important than what he wanted, and he was afraid of losing his friends if he was not there for them

¹²See quote on page 139 in chapter six of this dissertation.

when they needed him. This form of negative shaming was also powerful, sometimes subtle and sometimes blatant.

Like Paulee, several youths told about strong pressure to go along with the group when others engaged in illegal activities. Jack, John, Brandy, and Lyn were each tag-alongs, not instigators of their first offenses. Jack and John were each pressured into joining in with the group when others started vandalism sprees. Brandy followed a friend into a school and watched as the friend vandalized property, and Lyn remained with a friend when the friend began to shoplift clothes. Both girls said they knew the actions of the friends were wrong, but they did not want to be shamed and possibly stigmatized should they abandon these friends over these illegal acts.

Some of the most effective and potent shaming was conducted by the subjects themselves. Jerry, PeeWee, and Casey each told similar stories of feeling shame over the bad examples they were presenting to younger brothers and sisters, and of how such shaming encouraged them to avoid lots of other types of trouble.

JERRY: (speaking about thoughts he had while sitting in a police station holding cell) Then, the question came up in my head, 'Do you want your family to see you like this? Do you want your brothers, who look up to you -' I was thinking how I was gonna look at my little brothers and tell them. I thought I was gonna lose that respect.

Jerry gives partial credit for his decision to leave his bad friends to his desire to be a good roll model for his younger brothers. PeeWee contended that he chose to avoid the neighborhood gangs because he feared losing respect from his dad and little sister, and because he knew his membership would place his younger sister at risk, as well. Casey, not wanting to upset her little sister, often stayed at home, away from her boyfriend who abused her. She told of how her sister would come to her and tell her she was going to get up in the middle of the night to check to see that Casey was safe in her bed, so Casey would stay home those nights in case the sister actually did check up on her. Casey finally left her bad boyfriend when she became ashamed of her own behavior and bad example she was presenting to her sister. In several other cases, shaming which was begun by others became internalized by the subjects in this study. Ineffective attempts at shaming never were internalized, though.

Informal Stigmatization and Reintegration

As with formal agents, many actions taken by informal agents resulted in stigmatizing several subjects in this study. Most stigmatization was conducted by peers, with parents stigmatizing usually by way of withholding trust

from youths. Several parents, most notably parents of Lyn and PeeWee, stigmatized their children by claiming they could never again trust the youths. Actions supporting these claims included excessive grounding and denial of freedom and privileges accorded to other children in their families. Cindy's mom stigmatized her when mom had Cindy arrested and held in detention for two weeks following their fight. Cindy was also made the family scapegoat, blamed for the breakup of the marriage and other troubles in the family. Cindy remained loyal to her mother, as she claims, because her mother needed to be taken care of. Cindy helped mom deal with her drinking and problems which resulted from the drinking, and Cindy often took care of her younger brother when her mom was unable. Tina was also stigmatized by her mother. Tina's mother claimed Tina was crazy, and on several occasions, the mother had Tina committed to the child and adolescent treatment center. Although the loss of trust was less severe than the stigmatization received by Cindy and Tina, all of these forms of stigmatization destroyed parent-child relationships.

Peers stigmatized most subjects by attaching labels of support for bad behaviors, though two subjects were stigmatized by peers for refusing to behave delinquently like the others in the group. Jerry was harshly shamed by his neighborhood friends when he dissociated from them and their

delinquent lifestyles.¹³ In attempting to shame him back into the group and into delinquent behavior, these old friends labeled Jerry a sissy, and this label was well known around his school and the neighborhood. The only people around him who would allow him to be conventional were a few members of the school band, youths at Jerry's church, and his family and other relatives. For a while, PeeWee was also labeled a sissy for his unwillingness to join the neighborhood gang. In attempts to clear his reputation as a man, PeeWee occasionally fought for a few members of the gang, and he began to steal cars when encouraged to do so by some old friends who were in the gang. Yet, PeeWee maintained his resistance to joining the gang, and he did manage to win the respect of some of the gang members when he "took the fall" for a car theft.

Many of the subjects in this study were given labels by peers, and these labels were hard to ignore, hard to change. Lyn, Michael, Jack, Tom, Eric, Paulee, Patrick, MO, and Tina and Cindy were at one time given the label of being "bad", which was a good label among delinquent youth culture. They were given this label because of their involvement in drinking, skipping school, doing drugs, and attending

¹³See quote on page 139 of chapter six in this dissertation.

parties where alcohol and drugs were present and heavily used.

Rashaad, Lamar, Lisa, Toni, Tina, Jack, MO, Paulee, Patrick, and Travis each were labeled as "tough" because of their success in fights. Once so labeled, others challenged these youths more often, seeking to gain their own tough reputations by possibly beating a "tough" fighter. Lisa, upon returning to the traditional high school, was so challenged by several peers who knew of her from middle school.

LISA: Some of the kids tried to pick fights with me, though, cause I had this tough reputation and they thought I was still the same, but I wasn't that way no more. I just didn't fit in.

Jack was the member of his gang with the tough reputation, so when a member was shot by rivals, Jack was called upon to retaliate. Jack was caught, and he served time in prison for reckless endangerment and other charges. Since he only wounded the rival, he was not prosecuted for murder, though, as he claims, murder was his intent. Paulee, as stated earlier in this chapter, was labeled tough simply because of his size, and expectations were placed on him to defend the group when others got into trouble with rivals. These labels were powerful influences upon the behavior of subjects, and they were hard to remove, to live down.

Some subjects were also labeled "bad" for their successes at beating the system and defying authority. Among certain peer groups, having gone to court and escaping long time in detention was viewed as a success against the system and grounds for high praise. Lisa, Toni, Tina, Michael, Jack, Tom, Eric, MO, Paulee, Dee, Patrick, and Travis, all persisters, were labeled as "bad" for having gone to court and having returned from detention, counseling, and other sanctions in short periods of time. Instead of being shamed against such accomplishments, these youths were primarily shamed and stigmatized to reinforce such behavior.

The subject of informal reintegration has been previously covered in chapter six of this dissertation. Parents and adult friends were the agents of most attempts at reintegration, and the agents most often successful at reintegrating youths into conventional relationships. Parents and adult friends most often reintegrated by taking more time to talk with and be with youths providing support, friendship, and trust. These increases in contact and strength of relationships came after youths had been caught for illegal behavior, indicating that the attention brought on by the official intervention over illegal behavior sparked a renewal in the relationships between youths and

parents or adult friends. There were also many unsuccessful attempts by parents to reintegrate a few youths into their families. These attempts appear to have been as strong as successful attempts, but they seemed to fail because parent-child relations were too severely weakened prior to the reintegration efforts and/or because the youths involved were unwilling to leave delinquent relationships to concentrate on building conventional relationships with parents.

The parents of all desisters, except the parents of PeeWee, John, Lamar, and Cindy, and the mother of Lyn, attempted to reintegrate their children following first offenses, as did the parents of all persisters, except the parents of Tina, Tom, Jack, Paulee, Dee, Patrick, and Travis. Efforts by the parents of all persisters failed initially, with only the mothers of Lisa, Toni, and Ken eventually succeeding. William and Frank were reintegrated, as well, by adult friends, and DJ, John, and Lydia were reintegrated by relatives. Shaun was temporarily reintegrated by her foster parents, and Toni was reintegrated by her extended family in Mississippi.

Much more detail could be given to describing the individual reintegration efforts made, as well as to studying the causes of success and failure in reintegrating these youths. For the purpose of this study, it is important to note that success at reintegration was strongly

related to success at avoiding delinquent influences and avoiding future delinquent behavior. It is also important to note that informal reintegration was related to informal shaming, in that the reintegration followed some form of shaming regarding the delinquent behavior. Yet, informal reintegration often did not succeed immediate to the conclusion of the shaming. In several cases, the reintegration of a youth into the family or other conventional relationship took many months to complete, while the period of shaming over a specific offense was rather short in time. Reintegration most often appeared to have begun as the shaming was occurring, for without the strengthened relationship between parent and child, the shaming would have been rather ineffective. Reintegration also occurred after stigmatization occurred, in a few cases. Lyn was reintegrated by her father and step mother after her mother had stigmatizingly shamed her. Lisa was finally reintegrated by her mother after her mother physically separated Lisa from her delinquent girlfriends by moving the family, and this was long after Lisa had been labeled a "tough" girl. As with stigmatization, reintegration appears to be a powerful force in the lives of these youths, affecting their delinquent careers, yet reintegration also appears to be more unrelated to shaming than it is related to shaming in the manner described by Braithwaite.

Effects of Stigmatization and Reintegration Upon Peer Ties

The data in this study suggests that very few youths are stigmatizingly shamed, that stigmatizing shaming is not strongly associated with joining delinquent peer groups, that stigmatization in general is not strongly associated with joining delinquent peer groups, and that those stigmatized can be reintegrated. Braithwaite's contentions that stigmatization is often the result of shaming, and that stigmatization is causal to joining criminal peer groups were not supported among the subjects in this study, with the exception of Shaun. Most subjects had established relationships in childhood with peers who later became delinquents. Only a few later joined groups that were already delinquent in nature, and only Shaun indicated that she had been stigmatizingly shamed, with this stigmatizing shaming pushing her towards the gang she joined.

Attempted reintegration was far more common following shaming than was stigmatization among the subjects in this study. Reintegration, though, was not always successful, for some relationships were too weak to be renewed and a few youths were strongly opposed to a relationship with the one attempting reintegration. Reintegration was also not always conducted by those who conducted the shaming, and in a few cases, reintegration followed stigmatizing shaming by a

different party. Reintegration, whether following shaming, or not, was strongly related to youths leaving delinquent relationships and influences, to youths desisting from delinquent behavior, and to successful future shaming and moral education by those who conducted the reintegration. As Braithwaite predicted, those youths successfully reintegrated into conventional groups, especially into the family, came to fear future shaming and avoided delinquent activities which in the past had resulted in the strong shaming.

Summary

Among the data collected for this study were many different stories of being shamed by others in attempts to influence behavior. Some subjects reported being shamed by parents, others by teachers, adult friends, or peers, and a few subjects even spoke of being shamed by court officials. Some shaming came by way of social control over specific past behavior, yet most shaming was performed to promote conformity of behavior to a general moral code. This latter form of shaming was not specific to one's past behavior, instead it attempted to suggest a need to fear future shame should one not behave as the shaming individual or group desired. Specific shaming events also had variation in

impact upon future behavior. Shaming events were not without their challenge either. Some subjects received shaming from one party for a particular behavior while receiving shaming from a another party against the same behavior.

Analysis of shaming events and their impact upon future behavior, specifically upon persistence or desistence, revealed several strong relationships. Most important to note is the lack of shaming most subjects experienced regarding their own transgressions, and the lack of shaming used as a moral education tool by conventional parties in their lives. Shaming by formal agents was almost non-existent. Formal shaming was not a principle objective of court processes and did not often occur. According to youths' reports, judges were the most frequent users of shaming among the court officials they encountered, though a couple of probation officers also used shaming to attempt to alter subjects' perceptions of right and wrong behavior. Most formal attempts at shaming, though, were weak and ineffective, probably due to the weak relationships between the official shaming and the youth being shamed. The most effective shaming, occurring in the shoplifting class, used the shaming by others in the lives of youths in attempt to alter perceptions of right and wrong behavior, and two of

the three who attended these classes reported the shaming had some impact on their views regarding shoplifting.

Desisters were far more often shamed by informal agents in their lives than were persisters. The data also indicated that stigmatization and reintegration were not necessarily tied to shaming events, and some of the most potent stigmatization and reintegration were performed by parties not involved in shaming events. Stigmatization and reintegration were found to not be exclusive events, for some subjects stigmatized by one conventional group were reintegrated by another. The data clearly showed a need to distinguish between shaming, stigmatization and reintegration by conventional parties and by delinquent parties.

A number of factors were identified which had impact upon the success of shaming to influence future behavior and upon the type of shaming used (stigmatizing or reintegrative). The strongest relationship was found between the strength of relationship, between the shaming party and the individual being shamed, and the success of shaming to influence future behavior. A relationship between the formality of a shaming agent and the use of stigmatizing shaming was also detected in the data, though it would appear that this relationship is better explained by a desire to control rather than morally educate. As noted in earlier chapters, reintegration was strongly linked with

desistence from illegal behavior, and stigmatization, though not frequently occurring, was related to persistence. However, unlike the suggestion in Braithwaite's theory, stigmatizing shaming was not found to account for decisions to join delinquent peer groups.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned at the end of chapter two, this research was undertaken to explore differences between those who desist from delinquent behavior early in their teen years and those who persist in delinquent behavior throughout their teen years. It was hoped that such differences would point to possible causes of desistence and persistence. In particular, this project sought to test specific hypotheses developed from Braithwaite's Reintegrative Shaming Theory, hypotheses which predict relationships between type of shaming experienced and decisions to desist from or persist in delinquent behavior, and relationships between type of shaming experienced and drift towards or away from delinquent peer groups. The sample in this study, and the design of the data gathering and analysis, were chosen to afford greatest opportunity to meet these goals of hypotheses testing and relational and causal exploration.

In summarizing the findings of this research, conclusions regarding the hypotheses will first be presented,

followed by a summary of findings regarding the relationships between shaming and moral education, between types of peer relationships and persistence in delinquent behavior, and between formal and informal interventions and desistance from delinquent behavior. This summary will point to several conclusions regarding assisting desistance from delinquent behavior and avoiding promotion of persistence in delinquent behavior. Policy recommendations will be added in relation to conclusions presented. Finally, this paper will appropriately end with a summary of questions left unanswered by this research and an outline of future research needed to explore the clues uncovered by this research and fill in the blanks remaining regarding desistance from delinquent behavior.

Conclusions Regarding Hypotheses

The most troublesome finding in this study was that few subjects had been stigmatized due to their delinquent behavior, and even fewer subjects had been stigmatizingly shamed following their first offenses. Braithwaite's theory suggests that a great deal of crime is committed by persistent criminals/delinquents who have been pushed into criminal subgroup membership as a result of having been stigmatizingly shamed following a first offense or earlier offense. The two hypotheses tested in this study include

the relationship between stigmatizing shaming and delinquent peer group membership and persistent delinquent behavior. Since stigmatization in general, and stigmatizing shaming in particular, were rare occurrences, the study is not able to support Braithwaite's claim of a relationship between stigmatizing shaming and high rates of offending by way of membership in a criminal subgroup.

Stigmatization was found to only account for one subject joining a delinquent peer group, though there is much evidence that stigmatization was associated with maintaining delinquent peer ties. Members of the persistent group were no more stigmatized for first offenses than were members of the desistent group, though over time they did experience more stigmatization than did desisters. Stigmatization was performed by the juvenile justice system and those who imposed sanctions upon offenders, by school teachers and administrators, and by peers who attached labels to subjects based on their delinquent behavior. These peer labels, while closing doors to conventional groups, were a source of pride among delinquent groups. Stigmatization did help to solidify delinquent identity for some youths, for it closed doors to conventional identity and it was a source of pride among a delinquent subculture.

Being stigmatized, even stigmatizingly shamed, did not prevent reintegration, for a few subjects who were stigmatized were also later reintegrated by others. Just as

stigmatization was not always associated with shaming, reintegration was not always performed by those shaming youths over unacceptable illegal behavior. Data clearly showed that shaming could be typed as either predominantly reintegrative or stigmatizing, as Braithwaite claimed, but reintegration and stigmatization were independent of shaming. One could be, and often was, reintegrated or stigmatized outside of a shaming event.

Shaming alone was not strongly associated with desistance, nor with dissociation from delinquent peers. Subjects who dissociated from delinquent friends more often needed stronger interventions, such as physical or social separation from delinquent associates. They also needed to be reintegrated into a conventional adult relationship for the desistance to be maintained. Only a couple of subjects with delinquent friends dissociated from these peers as a result of shaming alone. Members of the desistent group were far more often reintegrated following the first offense than were members of the persistent group reintegrated following any offense. While stigmatization was not associated with joining delinquent peer groups, reintegration was strongly associated with terminating ties to delinquent peers, as well as associated with desistance from delinquent behavior. Reintegration was also more common among these subjects than was stigmatization.

These relationships between reintegration and desistence and delinquent behavior and between stigmatization and the maintenance of delinquent peer ties, and the lack of necessity of tie between reintegration or stigmatization and shaming, indicate that reintegration and stigmatization are important to the understanding of desistent and persistent behavior. They also indicate that shaming is not related to persistence or desistence in the manner suggested in Braithwaite's theory. Desisters did tend to have been reintegrated while persisters were stigmatized, but not all who were not reintegrated were stigmatized and some who were stigmatized were later reintegrated. Thus, the first hypothesis, that juveniles who desist following their first offense tend to have been reintegratively shamed while those who persisted in delinquent behavior following the first offense tend to have been stigmatizingly shamed for the first offense, is rejected. The lack of a firm relationship between shaming and stigmatization or reintegration also leads to a rejection of the second hypothesis, though stigmatization does reinforce delinquent relationships while reintegration helps youths dissociate from delinquent peers.

Although Braithwaite's theory did not well explain desistence or persistence among the subjects in this study, the concepts of shaming and moral education, of stigmatization and reintegration, and of delinquent and conventional influences were found to be important to explaining

desistence and persistence among the study's subjects. The analysis used in this qualitative study calls for additional explanation when proposed hypotheses are rejected. The ideal of this form of analysis is to eventually develop explanations which fit all cases in the qualitative sample.

Agreements with Braithwaite

The relationships between having delinquent friends and persisting in delinquent behavior, and between having conventional relationships renewed and strengthened and desisting from delinquent behavior are similar to components of Braithwaite's theory. Braithwaite argues that, based on existing knowledge of criminal behavior, much crime is accounted for by those who are repeat offenders, and that most repeat offenders are members of criminal peer groups and are strongly influenced to engage in habitual criminal behavior by these peers. He also asserts that criminals can be returned to conventional behavior if they are surrounded predominantly by conventional influences, as opposed to criminal influences (Braithwaite, 1989). These assertions are supported by the data in this study, for those who desisted from delinquent behavior were surrounded predominantly by conventional influences at the time they desisted, and those who persisted were surrounded predominantly by delinquent influences.

Braithwaite also appears to be correct in his contention that reintegration is crucial to the re-establishment of conventional ties and the support of conventional values and controls. Youths in this study who were not reintegrated into strong, conventional relationships did not fear shaming from conventional associates, did not receive reinforcement of conventional values, and did not desist from delinquent behavior. Youths who were reintegrated into strong, conventional relationships once again feared shaming from conventional associates, received reinforcement of conventional values, and desisted from delinquent behavior.

As Braithwaite argues, fear of being shamed, of having others disappointed in him/her, was a powerful control mechanism which helped youths avoid illegal behavior. Although not a strong part of Braithwaite's arguments, youths who remained with delinquent peers, also feared shaming, only they feared shaming from their delinquent peers, not from conventional associates. This fear of shaming from delinquent peers made dissociating from such peers difficult. Unlike Braithwaite's claim, shaming was not related to the joining of delinquent peer groups or the dissociation from such groups.

Associating with and Dissociation from Delinquent Peers

Braithwaite argues that the joining of delinquent/criminal peer groups is a consequence of having been stigmatizingly shamed for earlier delinquent behavior. He further alleges that initial illegal behavior is caused by weak conventional controls and that habitual illegal behavior is the result of influence from delinquent/criminal peers. This study found only one case of a youth joining a delinquent peer group due to stigmatization, and this stigmatization was not part of a shaming event. It was also discovered that among the subjects of this study, relationships with delinquent peers preceded most initial delinquent behavior. Youths in this study belonged to peer groups which were conventional in childhood and became delinquent as they reached adolescence. Youths did not join delinquent peer groups, peer groups to which youths belonged became delinquent. Membership in delinquent peer groups was found to be causal to initial and persistent delinquent behavior. The difference between desisters and persisters was not as Braithwaite suggested, that persisters belonged to delinquent peer groups and desisters never joined such groups, but rather that desisters either never had delinquent peers or dissociated from such peers. No one who maintained ties to delinquent peers was able to desist from delinquent behavior, and those who left delinquent peers and later

returned to associating with these friends also returned to delinquent behavior after returning to the delinquent friends.

Subjects with delinquent peers were usually not the ones who recognized the need to dissociate from delinquent friends in order to desist from delinquent behavior, though a few did initiate the dissociation. Most subjects who broke away from delinquent peers did so as a result of an intervention made by a parent, adult friend, or girlfriend. Most interventions were designed specifically to separate the subjects from old friends, while a few were accidental interventions. Moving the family to a new neighborhood, sending the delinquent youth to live with other relatives far away from delinquent friends, and getting youths involved in conventional activities not including the delinquent friends were the intended interventions. A couple of youths accidentally were removed from delinquent influences when family moved or the school system moved them to new schools. Whether planned or accidental, interventions which separated youths from delinquent friends forced them to make new friends, and among the subjects in this study, nearly all who made new friends did so with conventional peers.

These interventions were crucial to aiding dissociations from delinquent peers. All who dissociated from delinquent peers were thankful of the efforts made on their

behalf to separate them from delinquent influences. They were also thankful of other necessary help they received in dissociating from delinquent peers and from delinquent behavior. Simply separating these youths from delinquent friends was not sufficient to support permanent desistence. These youths, and those who dissociated on their own initiative, were aided as well by other sheltering efforts from parents, adult friends, girlfriends, and activities. Sheltering was attained when youths were kept occupied in conventional pursuits and kept away from the delinquent group where delinquent influences and value neutralization were prevalent. Some youths were occupied in employment, in sports, or in church groups, while others were kept busy in relationships with girlfriends, family, or adult friends. In nearly all cases, sheltering was the intended goal of these activities, and someone close to the youth initiated involvement in the activity to help shelter the youth.

Critical to successful dissociation from delinquent friends was the experience of being reintegrated into a permanent and conventional relationship, and this was usually a relationship with the family or an adult friend. No youth managed to remain apart from old delinquent friends if he/she were not reintegrated into a conventional adult relationship. A few youths were moved to new neighborhoods, were sheltered by involvements in conventional activities like work or church, or were kept occupied by girlfriends,

but due to lack of reintegration into a conventional relationship with parents or an adult friend, these few youths returned to association with delinquent peers when the sheltering activities or relationships with girlfriends ended. Reintegrating subjects was also not possible while youths maintained relationships with delinquent peers. A couple of youths even reported that they remained with delinquent friends even after parents or others tried to strengthen relationships with them, and they remained because they were uncertain of what could be between themselves and parents, but were comfortable with the friendships they had with delinquent friends. It is clear that among the subjects in this study, it was first necessary to break away from delinquent friends, then was necessary to be reintegrated into a conventional relationship and sheltered from delinquent influences in order to successfully dissociate from delinquent peers and to avoid their delinquent influence.

Need for a Theory of Desistence and Persistence

The key conditions in need of explanation among the cases in this study include explanation of first offense, explanation of subsequent offending, and explanation of desistence for those who desisted. In addition, the strong associations between delinquent peers and the commission of

delinquent offenses, between dissociating from delinquent friends and desisting from delinquent behavior, and between interventions, reintegration, and sheltering and desisting from delinquent behavior need to be included in these explanations.

Simply stated, a minority of delinquent offenses were committed without knowledge of their illegality and moral incorrectness, while most offenses were committed in spite of knowledge that the actions were illegal and morally incorrect. In these latter cases, value neutralization was needed to allow subjects to commit these offenses, and delinquent peers and delinquent peer culture provided such needed value neutralization. When youths dissociated from delinquent peers and were reintegrated into strong conventional relationships, the value neutralization ended and conventional values were strengthened, were renewed. Reintegrated youths did not commit delinquent/criminal offenses for which they had been adequately informed were immoral and illegal, except in the cases where these youths returned to delinquent associates and the value neutralization occurring in delinquent peer groups.

Youths who dissociated from delinquent peers and remained dissociated and desistent received help in the form of interventions to separate them from delinquent friends, and they received other efforts to help shelter them from the delinquent influences and value neutralization which

were a part of delinquent peer groups and peer culture. However, not all who received interventions and attempts to reintegrate them accepted such efforts and were reintegrated. For others, the interventions and conventional relationships which replaced delinquent relationships were temporary and failed to provide lasting sheltering from delinquent influences.

Hirschi's control theory only partially explains the delinquent behavior of some of the subjects. In several cases, first offenses for fighting were reported as uncontrolled behaviors, actions which these youths had not been taught were immoral, illegal, and unacceptable actions in conventional society. Several youths clearly were without conventional controls from parents and lacked commitments to conventional groups and activities such as school, a job, or sports. Yet, Hirschi argues that such poorly controlled youths would commit delinquent acts in large part because they would not have been properly socialized, properly taught of the unacceptable nature of delinquent acts (Hirschi, 1969; Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1990). Hirschi further contends that such poorly socialized youths could not later be resocialized (Hirschi, 1983). Most delinquent acts were performed by youths who knew, at the time, that such acts were not acceptable in conventional society, even most delinquent acts performed by youths who had poor parental relationships and few ties to conventional society.

Many youths who did commit delinquent acts for which they had not previously been properly taught of their delinquent nature, mainly those who engaged in fighting as a solution to problems, were later resocialized to view fighting as improper response to problems. While there may be a strong association between weak controls and the commission of delinquent acts, Hirschi's control theory does not well explain the patterns of delinquent behavior among these subjects, and especially does not explain in the theory's terms, both the lack of continuous engagement in delinquent behavior and the ability of many subjects to desist from delinquent behavior in spite of weak controls.

The subjects themselves frequently pointed to the strong impact of subcultural groups upon their behavior, influence which control theories cannot accomodate. The data provided much evidence that an influential deviant and delinquent youth subculture existed, a subculture that promoted separation from parents and promoted such delinquent behavior as school skipping, the use of alcohol and other illegal drugs, acts of defiance such as vandalism, and the use of violence to solve personal disputes and to establish a superior identity within the subculture. Such evidence and its strong association with the commission of most of the delinquent acts among these subjects is consistent with subcultural theories, though this delinquent youth subculture was not class-based.

The evidence also, however, demonstrates that stronger influence to behave delinquently came from close associates, not simply from a large subculture. Delinquent friends provided subjects with needed instruction on both the skills needed to perform delinquent acts and the knowledge that such actions were possible, and they provided youths with increased opportunities to behave delinquently and with the needed value neutralization which made delinquent behavior possible. Cloward and Ohlin (1960) were supported in that subjects with delinquent associates had many more opportunities provided to them to behave delinquently than did youths without delinquent friends. The data also well supported learning theories in general. Subjects learned techniques and motivations for their delinquent actions, but most also had learned motivations against their delinquent behavior. The fact that youths more closely tied to delinquent friends more frequently engaged in the delinquent behavior promoted by these friends, and that youths more closely tied to parents desisted from delinquent activity points out that these youths accepted and were influenced by the motivations of the group to which each was more closely connected.

Matza (1964) asserted that youths were generally in a state of drift between conventional and unconventional behavior, and this theory appears to most closely fit the data. Subjects were seldomly involved in a constant state

of delinquent activity. Most all only occasionally acted delinquently, with such actions highly influenced by delinquent peers and/or a delinquent youth subculture. The influence from delinquent peers came in the forms of teaching techniques, providing opportunities, and supplying a neutralization of conventional values most all had been socialized to accept.

I would add to drift theory that youths can also drift, or be drawn, back into conventional behavior and value systems. Most of the subjects in this study, at the time of their first offenses, were drifting away from their parents and their parents' values and codes of conduct. Yet, many of these youths later returned to strong relationships with parents. A few of these youths drifted back to parents and conventional society and away from the delinquent subculture, though most were drawn back by actions of conventional adults to intervene to separate youths from delinquent influences, shelter them from these influences, and to reintegrate them into conventional relationships. These youths were not constantly in a state of drift unless there were no attempts by conventional parents or other adults or by delinquent peers to secure a dominant relationship with each youth.

Some youths were surrounded by delinquent friends, making attempts at influence from parents and others ineffective, and many other youths were drawn back from

drift into strong conventional relationships which sheltered them from delinquent influences. The data showed that delinquent peer ties were difficult to break unless youths with strong delinquent relationships were completely separated from delinquent peers. A few youths wishing to maintain delinquent friendships when parents and other adults were attempting to sever such relationships managed to maintain these delinquent relationships because they had a variety of resources which helped them live independent of their parents. Those youths who were successfully separated from delinquent peers were more dependent upon parents, were unable to resist parental efforts to separate them from their delinquent friends.

This study points to the importance of accounting for drift into delinquent influence and the probable drift back into conventional influence. Contrary to Braithwaite's claims, the youths of this study were not pushed into delinquent relationships. Their relationships became delinquent relationships as some members of their circle of friends introduced delinquent behavior into their group and these subjects remained with and were influenced by the new delinquent values and behavior options. The evidence supports Braithwaite's claim that it is possible to reintegrate those who have committed illegal acts, for many subjects were reintegrated into strong conventional relationships and desisted from delinquent behavior. However,

reintegration among these subjects often required more than simple shaming.

Even a modified drift theory, though, is not able to account for all delinquent behavior among the subjects in this study. Many first offenses can only be explained as actions which subjects had not been properly taught as unacceptable actions. A complete explanation of delinquent behavior needs to account for the important role of moral education and the role of social controls over youthful behavior, in addition to the key role of drift. Such a complete theory need pay attention to the influences of both delinquent peers and peer culture and the influences of conventional relationships which can be renewed between youths and parents and youths and adults.

Rehabilitation: Formal and Informal Supports

Empirical evidence clearly supports the claim that youths who engage in delinquent behavior can be rehabilitated. They can and most do desist. The evidence in this study also supports Hirschi's contention that youths raised with poor moral training from family tend to remain delinquent into adulthood, though the evidence supports a different reason than argued by Hirschi. Hirschi argues that it is nearly impossible to morally educate youths once they have reached adolescence, for such youths are too

detached from family to be affected by discipline and other moral training attempted in the family (Hirschi, 1983; Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1990). I found, rather, that most persisters remained unaffected by rehabilitation efforts because so few efforts were made on their behalf. The few attempts made were by agents with poor or no relationships to these youths. Most important, persisters usually did learn conventional definitions, but due to a stronger message of delinquent values coming from delinquent friends, the conventional message lost influence.

Several youths in this study initially found delinquent behaviors such as fighting, stealing, and drinking to be acceptable behaviors. They indicated they had not been properly taught of the delinquent and immoral nature of these activities, yet they were eventually taught, morally educated, through shaming for their own bad behavior and by other means. Their moral education occurred while they were teenagers. Other subjects did not learn of the unacceptable nature of their behavior because no one of significant importance to them attempted to morally educate them. These youths were distant from family, sometimes of their choosing, but often because they had no conventional family. Several of these youths had alcoholic parents or single mothers who worked two jobs to support the family. None of these youths had the benefit of conventional older siblings or adult friends to help teach them. The evidence indicates

that youths as teens could be, and were, rehabilitated when conventional parents, older siblings, and adult friends made efforts to intervene to break up delinquent friendships, to provide other sheltering efforts against delinquent influences, to reintegrate these youths into conventional relationships, and to use the strength of their conventional relationships to morally educate these youths when such was needed. In most cases, proper moral education had occurred, but the value neutralization occurring in delinquent peer groups provided temporary overrides of conventional values and controls. Such value neutralization continued so long as youths remained in delinquent relationships, and ended when youths left delinquent friends for conventional friends and family.

Rehabilitation is often stated as the intended goal of the juvenile justice system. Sanctions imposed on youths for their delinquent behavior are usually intended to communicate to youths the community's displeasure with their delinquent behavior, and sanctions are designed to provide some guidance to youths in hopes that such guidance will help them stay out of trouble in the future. Juvenile justice interventions often failed to communicate the community's displeasure, especially for offenses beyond the first. These interventions also provided almost no support to desistance, and they often indirectly promoted persistence by promoting delinquent relationships.

The principle sanction imposed on youthful offenders is probation, and it is hoped that probation officers who oversee the period of probation can help youths desist from delinquent behavior and learn more conventional values. The youths in this study found probation a joke. Probation was not viewed by subjects as a period of rehabilitation, nor did they sense a need to prove their worthiness to the community while on probation. Probation officers were so overworked that they very rarely were able to provide any guidance or supervision of their probationers. Youths soon learned that they could tell their probation officers what the PO wanted to hear, whether true or not, and probation officers would leave them alone. Probation officers, even when available, did not have the strength of relationship and significance to youths to provide the needed sheltering, reintegration, and moral education to assist desistence. The ingredients found to be key to assisting desistence had to come from someone in the youth's community.

Juvenile justice interventions which attempted discipline or treatment actually indirectly promoted persistence among subjects. With the exception of Shaun's placement in a good foster home, these interventions placed youths in situations where there was a concentration of delinquent associates. Youths in detention were surrounded by other delinquents, many older and far more experienced in delinquent behavior, and youths placed in residential treatment

facilities were also surrounded by other delinquent and alcoholic youths. While in detention or treatment, subjects reported they made new delinquent friends and learned new delinquent techniques from older and more experienced thieves and alcoholics. The strong use of coercion as a technique of control within these institutions also led youths to view these sanctions not as discipline or treatment, but a cruel revenge. The concentration with other delinquents and the use of coercive control undermined the goals of rehabilitation and promoted persistence by promoting delinquent relationships and values.

The juvenile justice system within this county, and probably true of most other urban counties, is designed to treat the offender as an individual. In so doing, responsibility for offenses is placed solely upon the juvenile, and responsibility for rehabilitation is also placed solely upon the juvenile. The evidence in this study points out, though, that youths most often act with the support of delinquent peers, not as independent actors. Desistence also required those youths so influenced by delinquent peers to give up these friends, and all who desisted and were rehabilitated were supported in these efforts by others in their communities. Delinquency was not an individual initiative, nor was rehabilitation accomplished solely by efforts from delinquents.

Youths' social networks were critical to most delinquent behavior, and they were crucial to successful rehabilitation and desistence. The courts would become far more supportive of desistence if they would treat the offender as the product of his/her social network and focus treatment upon the social network, as well. Most delinquents, and all with three or more offenses, needed to have their social networks altered to shut out delinquent peers and influences while increasing conventional peers and influences. The courts could and should promote such alterations to social networks, instead of the current indirect promotion of delinquent relationships court actions provide.

Proposals to Assist Desistence

The findings of this research point out need for change from the current methods of attempting to help juvenile delinquents desist from delinquent behavior. Attempting to prevent youths from becoming delinquents should not be the only avenue pursued in attempting to reduce juvenile crime. Longitudinal studies document that delinquent behavior is widespread among youths, that delinquent behavior is part of being a teenager (Wolfgang, et al., 1972, Shannon, 1988). Some success may be possible in reducing certain forms of delinquent behavior through prevention programs, yet the above mentioned research indicates that it is not likely to

prevent a majority of youths from engaging in any delinquent behavior.

This leaves us with decisions regarding what to do with those youths whose delinquent behavior becomes known to the juvenile justice systems and those youths whose delinquent behavior goes unnoticed. The findings of this research assert that it is possible to bring delinquent behavior to an end prior to youths becoming adults. Juvenile delinquents can and should be assisted in desisting from delinquent behavior. They can and should be rehabilitated, and such help should be provided as early in their delinquent careers as possible. The longer youths have been committing delinquent acts, the longer they have probably been attached to delinquent peers and separated from conventional ties, making reintegration less likely to succeed.

This study points to delinquent relationships as key to persistence, and to dissociation from delinquent peers as crucial to desisting from delinquent behavior. Interventions and assistance aimed at promoting desistence from delinquent behavior, then, must focus first on interrupting associations between delinquents instead of promoting such associations. Placing individual delinquents in institution settings where the other detainees or "patients" are also delinquents serves to promote delinquent associations. Placing youths in detention should occur as infrequently as possible, being reserved for cases of protection of the

public. Other settings should be used to house detainees separate from other delinquents, preferably surrounded by conventional others. Placements in in-patient treatment facilities should also be reserved for cases where nothing less will do. In-patient treatment puts delinquents in the company of other experienced delinquents for long periods of time. Out-patient treatment should be used whenever possible to replace in-patient treatment, for out-patient treatment reduces contacts with new delinquent associates, preventing the spread of delinquent knowledge and networks. Out-patient treatment also provides potential to bolster conventional relationships within an individual's social network. Such out-patient focus would require changes in treatment style, as well.

The focus of most formal interventions to rehabilitate delinquents has been upon the individual, placing blame on him/her and requiring him/her to change while the social network remains unchanged. Once a youth returns to his delinquent social network, he is subjected again to the value neutralization which this study has shown is greatly responsible for delinquent behavior, for persistence. Formal interventions must alter their focus from the individual delinquent to the social network of the delinquent. This does not mean that the only way to reduce juvenile crime is to fix all of the social problems of communities.

Much progress in reducing juvenile crime can be achieved by altering the social networks of those youths whose delinquent behavior becomes known to the courts. Courts, corrections, and treatment programs need to work with the families of these youths, with the adult friends of these youths, with the schools these youths attend, with the churches these youths attend, and with leaders of other activities in which these youths participate. They also need to work to break up delinquent groups, gangs and other networks of delinquent friends, and to combat delinquent peer culture. Unless the social networks in which youths live are altered, desistence cannot be expected to last.

Courts need to recognize their limitations. Judges can issue dramatic warnings and give virtuous advice, but youths, aware of the tolerance of the courts, will ignore warnings and advice from such distant figures as judges. Probation officers are likewise distant to the everyday lives of their youthful probationers and unlikely to affect change in their lives. Court officials can do little to actually break up delinquent relationships or replace these with conventional relationships. Such actions best come from individuals within the social network of each delinquent. The courts should limit their efforts to supporting roles: finding the right people within each youth's social network to intervene, shelter, and reintegrate; training and rehabilitating parents and others to carry out these

conventional tasks; and supporting these individuals in their informal attempts to rehabilitate delinquent youths.

The justification for the use of probation officers usually include arguments that probation officers are highly trained professionals who can offer guidance and assess when youths need additional services, and arguments that far too often there is no one else available close to these youths to offer such services. The youths in this study clearly stated that there often were adults close to them far better suited to the task of rehabilitation and far more available than were their overworked probation officers. Probation officers generally meant to help, but due to lack of proximity socially and physically, they were unable to provide useful counsel and supervision, and they had no time to provide the dramatic interventions often needed to break youths away from delinquent friends.

Juvenile courts would make better use of time, money, and talents if probation officers supervised an adult in the life of each probationer, an adult who has agreed to act as counselor and mentor for the probationer, and who has agreed to take responsibility for the future of her/his probationer. Court social workers could be given the task of finding the right person to serve as informal probation officer, and together with probation officers, could be given the task of training and supporting these informal probation officers. This process would have the actual

intervening, counseling, supervising, and reintegrating occurring within the social network of the youth, where the success rate is likely to be much higher.

In addition to decentralizing rehabilitation efforts and placing them within the social networks of offenders, the courts need to foster and support specific actions which shelter youths from delinquent influences. Among the youths in this study, greatest success in promoting desistance came from interventions which separated youths from their delinquent friends. The courts need to suggest, encourage, and support intervention efforts, such as moving to new neighborhoods, changing the schools youths attend, or sending youths to live with relatives in other communities. As with most youths in this study, delinquents are not likely to voluntarily give up delinquent friends, yet, when they are separated from these friends, they will often make new friends who are far more conventional. Courts can also help youths avoid the delinquent influences from delinquent peers through providing sheltering experiences like conventional social clubs, athletics, church youth groups, family, or employment.

Juvenile courts should not stop, though, at providing interventions to separate youths from delinquent peers. Courts should get actively involved directly and indirectly in promoting the replacement of delinquent friends with conventional associates. The findings of this research

demonstrate that youths who are not integrated into conventional relationships, preferably with parents or adults they respect as parents, are highly likely to return to the delinquents friends they know and with whom they feel comfortable. Here again, courts can be of service not by attempting to force a relationship between offenders and some distant professional. Rather, the courts should assist in finding the most suitable individuals within the offender's social network, then encourage, train, and support these individuals in efforts to reintegrate delinquents into conventional relationships. The courts can also assist by encouraging and supporting the involvement of delinquents in conventional activities such as sports, church, clubs, and other activities which can keep youths busy and limit time when they might be exposed to delinquent influences.

The stories of the subjects in this study indicate the need for early intervention. Most all youths who were influenced by delinquent friends knew these friends as children, before they and their friends acquired delinquent records. As the group entered adolescence, some members, usually older ones, began to engage in delinquent behavior, and they in turn encouraged others in the group to follow their lead. As the group became older, the group became increasingly delinquent and individuals became more attached to the group and more distant from parents and other conventional members of their social networks.

Interventions which occurred early in the transition of the peer group to a delinquent group succeeded, while interventions attempted after the delinquent nature of the group was well established failed. Courts should not hesitate to intervene as suggested at the earliest signs of influence by delinquent peers. Indication for such interventions must not be based on repeat offense or seriousness of delinquent act, but rather should be based on signs of delinquent peer influence.

One common early form of deviant behavior encouraged by delinquent peers is the skipping of school classes. Early school skipping among the subjects in this study was not primarily motivated by desire to avoid the pressures of failure experienced at school, and many who skipped were performing adequately or even well in school. These youths began skipping school at the encouragement of peers, desiring to fit in and not be stigmatized by these peers for not going along with the group. Most all began skipping school in middle school, though a few started as early as elementary school, grades four and five. Schools did little to discourage school skipping or to intervene to reduce the delinquent influences which promoted this unconventional behavior.

Based on the need to intervene early in the transition to delinquent, the courts are not usually the best institution for the tasks of recognizing this transition, and it

may not be wise to rely solely upon the courts to act as the institution of rehabilitation. With school skipping serving as an early sign of delinquent, or at least unconventional, influence upon individual teens, schools may be better suited to detecting early transition to delinquent influence. Schools should be encouraged to identify youths in such early transition, and they should be encouraged to intervene as suggested of the courts above. Tolerance of early school skipping passively supports the strengthening and maintenance of delinquent relationships. Instead, the schools should take an early and strong stand against school skipping. Schools should intervene in such cases to support dissociations from delinquent peers, to recruit, train and support informal counselors and mentors within the social networks of these youths, and to provide conventional relationships and activities to replace delinquent relationships and shelter from delinquent influences.

On a more general note, the findings of this research indicate the need to increase moral education against violence as a means of solving disputes. The one delinquent act commonly committed without influence from delinquent peers was battery. In most cases the fights were very minor and rather typical of youthful behavior, yet some fights were grudge fights, territorial fights, fights to prove toughness, and fights to put an end to harassment. Some fights involved the use of weapons, and some fights were

attempts to find permanent solutions to temporary problems. There was a common lack of sense of wrongness in solving disputes in physical and violent manners. The youths in this study generally did not find fighting to be an illegal or immoral form of behavior. This clearly points out a strong need for various institutions within society to improve efforts to teach the moral incorrectness of use of violence in solving disputes. Judges, teachers and principals, ministers, coaches, parents and all who serve as role models for youths need to speak out in words and actions against the use of violence as a means of solving problems. Such words and actions, though, will have little effect upon those whose conventional values and influences are neutralized by the delinquent influences from delinquent peers. Therefore, moral education must be accompanied by the more aggressive interventions and reintegrations to replace delinquent influences with conventional supports and influences.

Much is often made of the negative peer pressure spoken of in this dissertation, but little is often said of the tremendous power of positive peer pressure. Just as delinquent peers often shame associates into engaging in delinquent behavior, so too can conventional peers shame youths into conventional behavior. MO was so shamed by his conventional friend until he lost this friend and replaced him with delinquent friends. Efforts must be made to

strengthen conventional relationships, for it is possible that these can be replaced by delinquent relationships if conventional friendships are split up by moves or changes in school.

It is also necessary for role models, parents, teachers, and administrators to promote conventional groups and activities and to shame delinquent groups and activities. Whenever possible, such conventional individuals of influence need to shame against delinquent youth culture and its values. Care should be taken not to focus upon youth culture, but rather upon delinquent values such as the skipping of classes, drinking and taking drugs, shoplifting, and striving for a "bad" reputation. Censoring pop cultural music, television, and books which provide delinquent influence may be counterproductive, but conventional role models need to address these improper messages and counter them with conventional messages. Tolerance and timidity only allow these delinquent messages to flourish and affect large numbers of youths. Strong countervailing influence and efforts to provide receptive environments for such messages must be made.

Questions for Further Research

Good research recognizes that as many questions are raised as are answered. This study has pointed out clear

differences between the desisters and persisters studied, and it asserts that such differences are true for youths in general. To test the applicability of these results to the general youth population, this study should be replicated using a larger representative sample of persistent and desistent youths. Such research should test the conclusions that reintegration and stigmatization are not necessarily related to shaming, that shaming is terribly under utilized by formal systems of control, that stigmatization does not lead to joining delinquent peer groups, that persisters maintain delinquent ties while desisters dissociate from delinquent friends, and that being reintegrated into a conventional group is essential to lasting desistence. Such research of these conclusions might well be incorporated into testing as part of pilot programs based on the conclusions and suggestions made in this study.

The descriptive sections of this research should be of value to testing these conclusions. Statements by subjects point out that shaming varied within sanctions more than it did between types of sanctions. Measurements of shaming would have to be made through self-reports of delinquents and/or reports of intentions made by sanctioners - probation officers, judges, social workers, treatment counselors, parents, teachers, and others. Such questioning would need to ask about intention to make one aware of the moral incorrectness of illegal behavior. Shaming should not be

necessarily equated with discipline, for some discipline, or punishment, is administered for revenge and not for the purpose of moral education.

Since the youths in this study did not drift towards delinquent peers after stigmatizing shaming, as predicted by Braithwaite's theory, but rather were members of delinquent peer groups prior to their first offenses, research is needed to learn more about the transformation of peer groups into delinquent peer groups as they enter adolescence. The results of this study hint that the process of becoming a delinquent peer group involves overlap between the younger conventional peer group and an older delinquent peer group. One or several older members of a conventional peer group also associate with members from an already delinquent group and learn delinquent behavior and values from these others, then take the new values and behavior back to the other group and influence the younger members of this group. Contacts with older siblings in delinquent peer groups may provide the overlap which introduces delinquency to the younger conventional group of friends. Research is needed to test this contagion theory of delinquency transference.

Such research should also explore the possible relationships between informal shaming early in one's life and drift towards delinquent peers. It is possible that Braithwaite is correct that stigmatizing shaming leads to drift into delinquent peer groups, but that the shaming

occurs informally and occurs over non-criminal deviant behavior in early childhood. This explanation of drift towards delinquent peers should be tested against the contagion theory described above. The utility of other concepts in Braithwaite's theory deserve empirical exploration, as well. Braithwaite's focus upon moral education and the process of shaming to accomplish such education are fresh ideas in the field of criminology and should be considered in theory and policy. Braithwaite's contention that it is possible to rehabilitate offenders is supported in this research, as is his argument that early interventions are crucial to the success of such rehabilitation. If the explanation found to account for persistence and desistence and for membership in delinquent peer groups are supported in larger studies, Braithwaite's theory should be altered to reflect these findings.

The policy recommendations made earlier in this chapter are supported by the findings of this small study, and since there is so little research on promoting desistence, some caution ought to be taken in implementing the suggested policies. It is well documented that current practices of the courts and other helping agencies have not improved the likelihood of desistence among juvenile offenders. Therefore, it is reasonable to advocate the taking of limited risks to develop more successful means of increasing the percentages of offenders who desist early in their

delinquent careers. A prudent measure in developing such procedures would be the use of pilot project tests of policies recommended above. Carefully designed pilot programs could implement these policies and monitor their progress and success over time. Those changes proving to assist desistence at early stages of delinquent behavior could then be expanded to serve all juveniles. Since there is little chance that the recommended changes would provide less supervision of youths than currently provided through probation, the use of experimental interventions poses little risk to society. Care would have to be taken to minimize risks to the youths involved in these experimental projects, and local jurisdiction would need to determine if there were too many risks to juveniles to justify the experiments. Still, the value of data collected from these pilot projects, and their potential to improve desistence rates among delinquents calls for their serious consideration. If the goal of reduction of juvenile crime is to be achieved, some changes will have to be made, and controlled and tested change recommended by research findings is preferable to change without design or measure of success based on fad or emotional reactions to juvenile crime.

Although this research has found flaw with Braithwaite's causal sequence and the relationship between shaming and stigmatization and reintegration, the study also found merit in several concepts introduced in his theory and

support for several of his arguments. Having delinquent peers was found to be causally related to persistent delinquent behavior, while giving up these friends was also found to be causally related to desistence. The data showed that these youths could be rehabilitated, and most were rehabilitated. Shaming was also supported as an important process for providing moral education, and some delinquent behavior was traced to a lack of sufficient moral education. Reintegration into conventional relationships was supported as crucial to desistence, though stigmatization was not found to lead to drift towards delinquent peer groups. Based on these findings, further research and theoretical development of Braithwaite's Reintegrative Shaming Theory should be conducted.

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Ronald Gulotta entered Doctoral studies in sociology at Loyola University of Chicago in 1989. His studies focused on subjects of deviance/criminology and social control, youth and the family, poverty and social welfare, and social movements and social change. Ronald Gulotta's dissertation research involves a search for causes of desistence from delinquent behavior. Mr. Gulotta was accepted into candidacy for the Doctor of Philosophy degree from the Graduate School of Loyola University of Chicago in March of 1992, and successfully defended his dissertation in November of 1993. He shall receive his Ph.D. in January of 1994.

APPROVAL SHEET

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

12/7/93

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