A. Introductions, Class Survey, and Defining Delinquency
[anonymous survey]

Notecards

- Name (spell phonetically if necessary)
- Contact
  - Phone or email you check frequently
- Hometown
- Courses
  - Major/minor and related courses
- Experience
  - Work or internship (especially in criminal or juvenile justice systems)
- Future
  - Long-term career goals?
- Motivation
  - Why are you here?
- Interests (Optional)
  - Ever visited a prison or detention center? Any suggestions for projects, trips, or speakers?
- Identification (Optional)
  - Physical description and seating tendencies
Background

• Team
  – Uggen: “Who I am and how you can be too” Professional and personal
  – Stephen Wulff

Time: Historical context (23 years)
• Crime rates? Punishment?

• Space: MN context
  • University
  • Community

Syllabus and Logic of Course

• Extent and distribution of juvenile delinquency
  – Know this by next week; we will later argue about what the numbers mean, but arrests and survey results are “social facts” we must consider
  – Statistics give one view of delinquency while monographs give others
  – Mainly a lecture format; descriptive statistics
  – Cut through (media-fed) preconceptions about juvenile delinquency

Sociological Theories

• Delinquency as group or collective action
  – But rational choice/juvenile justice system is individualized and not geared for group behavior

• You’ve heard theories, now learn the evidence: Cullen, Wright, Blevins
  – Tough reading! From the best sources
  – Recommended: Agnew text for theory basics

• Format: Lecture, discussion, and application (in exams)
Application to Case Studies
Groups of “Data”

• Victor Rios
  – Familiar and unfamiliar subcultures (high school examples)
  – Relation of culture and subculture to social position
• Urban gangs
• Format: Questions and Discussion

Juvenile Delinquency Policy

• What have we tried?
• What “works”?
• Evidence?
• Format: Lecture, book, discussion, some video – ARTICLES
  – Saved money and time by assigning articles, but you need to read them
  – Articles available online are as important as two books you purchased

Course Requirements and Expectations

• Reading varies from quick to difficult
  – Readings on coursepage
    - http://www.soc.umn.edu/~jorgen/4141.htm
    - Or go to chrisuggen.com and hit 4141:
• Grades
  – 20% Active Participation (10% contribution and 10% group/individual exercises)
  – 25% Midterm
    • Know extent and distribution; work with theories
    • Vote on format
  – 25% Working Paper or Service Learning Option
    • OR: bigger research project/proposal for grad students and ambitious undergrads
  – 30% Final Exam – format TBA
Defining and Measuring Delinquency

Purpose

• Define juvenile delinquency legally and sociologically
  – What do “delinquents” have in common?
  – Why make a distinction between crimes committed by juveniles and those committed by adults?
• Social creation of “childhood” as a distinct state in the life course
  – Kids gain: more humane, less exploited
  – Kids lose: economically and emotionally dependent
• Definitions are changing social constructions – texts differ
Defining delinquency

• A juvenile is someone who has not reached the “age of majority”
  – Juvenile status is defined by age, but varies by jurisdiction
  – Upper bound (“age of majority”) is usually 17, but sometimes 16 or 15.
    – Minnesota is 17 (Minn. Stat. § 260B.007)
  – Lower bound (“age of reason”) was 7 in English Common Law.
    • Many states do not have a lower limit (age 10 in Minn.).

Legal Definitions

• Juvenile Court Jurisdiction
  – Children who violate the (adult) criminal law
  – Status offenders: children who violate laws prohibiting conduct for children (e.g., truancy, runaway)
  – PINS/CHIPS: “persons in need of supervision”/“children in need of protection or services” (MN)
    • These children do not have to have violated the law to be within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court
  – Juveniles can be waived to adult court or excluded from the juvenile court based on age and offense criteria – move to “blended sentencing” in most states

• Juvenile delinquency
  – Law violation by persons who have not yet reached the age of majority
Sociological Definitions

- Concept of childhood
  - Childhood in middle ages? (5th to 15th c)
    - Infanticide, abandonment, wet nurses, swaddling, communal life
  - Recent creation of concept (17th c)
    - Economically and emotionally dependent for 2 decades
    - Denied pleasures and responsibilities of adulthood

- Rules of age-appropriate behavior
  - Ideal: supervised, disciplined, modest, diligent, obedient

- Formal institutional reaction to violation
  - 1899 Juvenile Court: less formal, civil, fewer due process rights

3 Pictures:

(1) The “Police Picture” of Juvenile Crime

(Uniform Crime Reports)

Data reduction: let’s “bullet-point” the evidence

US Distribution of Juvenile Arrests for Index Crimes, 2014 (total of 804,104 arrests)
Percent Distribution of US Juvenile Arrests by Crime Category, 2011

- Non-Index: 577,160 (72%)
- Property: 184,821 (23%)
- Violent: 42,123 (5%)

Juvenile Violent Arrest Rate per 100,000 juveniles Age 10-17, 1980-2014

Percentage of Juvenile Arrests involving Violent Index Crimes, 1960-2014

- United States
- Minnesota
Age Distribution of Index Crime Arrests, 2011
(peak age 18 property, 19 violent)

Sex Distribution of Juvenile Arrests, 2014

Arrests for Index Crimes by Age, 2014
(peak at 18 property, but 21 violent – getting older)
3 “pictures”

- General trends (refer to UCR figures in last lecture):
  - Most youth crime is property crime
  - Overall rise since 1960s; violent rise in 80s-90s, decline since late 1990s
  - Big recent decline in juvenile arrests, especially for less serious offenses

“bivariate correlates” of youth crime

1. **Age**: property peak at 16 violent later at 17-18
2. **Sex**: males are 85% of violent index; 75% total
3. **Race**: African-Americans about 52% of all violent index in 2014
   - Interaction of age, sex, and race: One 2008 study reports African-American males aged 14-24 made up 16% of homicide victims and 27% of offenders. This group is about 1% of the population
4. **Ethnicity**: Latino overrepresentation in murder
5. **Class**: kids from low-income census tracts most arrested
6. **Chronics**: 6% of male population responsible for 50% of arrests
7. **Local trends**: fewer violent as percent of total; but percent violent increased until mid-90s

problems with police picture

1. “Dark Figure” or tip of the iceberg—most youth crime is concealed (e.g., drug use) or unreported (e.g., theft)
   - Systematic versus random error
2. Changing norms and expectations (marijuana, prostitution)
3. Changes in police priorities or “crackdowns”
4. Police professionalization as emergent process
5. No information on group offending
6. Local biases, misclassifications;
7. UCRs stop at arrest stage (cases dropped)
8. If multiple crimes by same offender, only most serious reported
9. No federal crimes in UCR (comparatively minor flaw)
Extent and Nature of Delinquency

- self-reports and victimization
- Rios + big picture on crime drop & policy