

# Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology

---

Volume 34 | Issue 6

Article 4

---

1944

## A Study of Adolescent Felony Offenders

Herman R. Weiss

Robert Sampliner

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc>

 Part of the [Criminal Law Commons](#), [Criminology Commons](#), and the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Herman R. Weiss, Robert Sampliner, A Study of Adolescent Felony Offenders, 34 J. Crim. L. & Criminology 377 (1943-1944)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology by an authorized editor of Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons.

# A STUDY OF ADOLESCENT FELONY OFFENDERS

Herman R. Weiss and Robert Sampliner

This study represents a survey of a group of unselected first offender adolescent delinquents between ages 16 to 21 at the Psychiatric Clinic (1) of the Court of General Sessions. This Clinic examines all New York County felony cases that come to Court of General Sessions. After psychiatric and psychological examines all New York County felony cases that come to the Court to aid in his disposition.

## *Reason for the Study*

Too frequently in the past, research has been directed for the most part either to juvenile delinquents under 16, or to adult criminals over 21 years of age. Unfortunately, too little attention has been given to delinquents within the adolescent age-range—16 to 21. This has been pointed out by Brill and Payne (1), Bromberg (2), Harrison and Grant (3). The problem is significant not only because of the early age at which we find this group in conflict with the law, but also because of the large number of cases involved. Brill and Payne (1) say that "one of the unexplainable and curious inconsistencies in the law is the difference it creates in legal responsibility." For example, in New York State, a child under 16 years of age has the paternalistic protection of the Children's Court Act. According to this act, children under 16 are not branded as criminals at all, but are called juvenile delinquents, and are treated according to the best scientific knowledge, with sympathy and understanding, aimed at correction and reform.

But under the civil law in New York State, the individual is considered a child and a minor until he is twenty-one. Although he has reached the age of 16, he cannot vote, nor be held responsible for contracts. In other words, the civil law courts treat persons under 21 with a marked paternalistic attitude, but the criminal courts treat them in this way only until they have reached the age of 16. Under criminal law in New York City, a youth over 16 who has violated any one of the thousands of penal laws and codes of the state is held fully responsible for his act, and is treated according to the same legal procedure as are adults. This line of demarcation between the juvenile and adolescent offender seems to have been settled arbitrarily, without any logical or scientific foundation for its existence, and it is in sharp contrast to the policy of civil law, wherein persons under the age of 21 years are protected against the exercise of their immature judgment.

This arbitrary age line, creating a legal distinction between infants, who are not held strictly responsible for their acts, and adults (those over sixteen years of age) has been responsible for

what we have called "the forgotten group" of offenders—those adolescents between the ages of 16 and 21. "No other delinquent or criminal group so challenges the ingenuity and social conscience of mankind. The challenge issues not alone because of the early age at which the youth finds himself in conflict with the law, but also because of the large number of cases involved, for, approximately out of every five persons arrested, one is under twenty years of age" (1).

That this problem is coming more and more to the foreground is apparent from the recent literature in the field, as well as from the actions and movements of certain social and legal agencies and institutions. Thus the excellent study made of youthful delinquents by Harrison and Grant (3), the work of the National Probation Association in their annual report (4), the proposed Youth Correction Authority presented by the American Law Institute (5), and newspaper reports of a proposed adolescent court in New York County, as well as the legislative committee (Young Committee) set up by the New York State Legislature for 1941 and 1942, all indicate a growing awareness of the problem and the need for additional study and clarification of the issues involved so as to arrive at a sound scientific and humane solution.<sup>2</sup>

The present study is an effort to determine the characteristics of this group as far as is possible within a limited clinical set-up. It is hoped that it will open new lines of inquiry.

#### *Population Used in the Study*

Although a tentative sampling of 100 first offender delinquents was considered as the subject for this study, inasmuch as the problem covered all those first offenders between the ages of 16 and 21 seen at the Clinic from October 1, 1940, to March 31, 1941, the final population used constituted a group which totaled 189.

The group was entirely unselected and the two criteria considered were: that they must have passed their 16th but not have reached their 21st birthday; and, the offense for which they were at present arrested and came to the attention of the Court and the Clinic shall have been their only offense. Thus any 16 to 21 year olds who had had previous convictions were not considered for inclusion in the study. While this excludes any arrests or convictions for misdemeanors or felonies, it does not exclude those brought to the attention of the Children's Court, since technically

---

<sup>1</sup>Herman R. Weiss, M.A., is the Psychologist in the Psychiatric Clinic, Court of General Sessions, New York City. He is now in the Maritime Service.

Robert Sampliner, M.D., was Resident Psychiatrist in the Out-Patient Court Clinic of Bellevue Hospital when this paper was being written. He is now in the Psychiatric Service in the U. S. Army.

Figures in parentheses refer to the bibliography at the end of the article.

<sup>2</sup>Since the above was written State Senator Desmond has introduced a bill for a Youth Correction Authority in the New York State Legislature.

any such appearance would not be valid for this group. Thus every individual comprising the group shall be considered a first offender and shall not have had any known previous conviction from a purely legal standpoint. By unselected population is meant any such first offender, irrespective of criminal offense, plea, race, religion, creed or any other factors.

In considering the time element—from October through March—it was found that such arbitrary selection was necessary because during this period the full Court is in session. Although a whole year sampling of the population is desirable the group used for the study is as reliable as could possibly be obtained. This is especially pertinent in view of the procedure begun at the General Sessions Court in the fall of 1940, when, with the approval of the District Attorney's office, adolescents were selected by the Court and examined as pre-pleading cases; that is, those adolescents who were arrested on a minor charge were placed in the custody of a parent or a responsible member of the community rather than remanded to the Tombs to await trial.

During this time, from arrest to date of trial, the defendants' homes, social, educational and industrial backgrounds are investigated by a probation officer and a psychiatric and psychological examination is made by the Psychiatric Clinic. On the basis of this information about the individual, the seriousness of the offense and the judicial interpretation by the court, the judge, with the approval of the district attorney decides whether to accept a lesser plea. In cases where he feels it advisable, he steps off the bench as a felony judge and acting as a magistrate, drops the criminal charge and substitutes for this a charge of wayward minor. This procedure removes the attendant criminal and social stigma from the individual.

Thus a considerable part of the population used in the study consists of these pre-pleading cases. The remainder are other first offender delinquents who are not considered eligible for pre-pleading investigation by the court.

#### RESULTS

Data were gathered on the population study with respect to the following points: Color; Chronological Age; Length of residence in New York City; Nativity (Rural or Urban); Occupational Level; Educational Level; Intelligence Rating; Intelligence Quotient on Random Sampling; Personality Rating; Physical Condition; Offense Committed; Disposition; Treatment needed.

#### *Female Offenders*

Before considering the statistical data accumulated let us consider the makeup of the 189 subjects surveyed in this study. Of this group only five or 2.2 per cent, were females, whereas the total

percentage of female offenders seen at the Clinic during the year 1940 (Annual Psychiatric Clinic Report) shows 2626 persons examined during the year, 121 of whom—4.6 per cent— were women. That is, 4.6 per cent of the total population of all ages are females as contrasted with our 2.2 per cent who fall within the 16 to 21 year age group of first offenders. This might indicate that the female offenders seen at the Court Clinic are usually above 21 years of age, or are those persons who have been convicted of more than one offense in the past.

The Annual Report of the Clinic indicates that in the year 1940 approximately 21 per cent of the total population fell within the 16 to 21 year age level. If we should arbitrarily double the figure of our population, 189, so as hypothetically to get a year's sampling of first offenders between 16 and 21, we would only get 14 per cent. The 7 per cent difference between the Clinic figure and that obtained by doubling the size of our population could be considered as recidivists: i. e., those individuals who have been convicted of more than one crime in the past.

The above conclusions are merely offered as hypotheses and should not be considered as factual until such time as a future study may prove or disproves them. However, in view of the small number of female offenders found in our entire group of 189, it was considered advisable to include them in the population, as statistically such a number would be considered of slight significance and would not offset any general group results, whereas if they were considered by themselves they could not indicate any positive trends in view of the relative smallness of such a group. In passing, it should be of interest to note how slight the incidence is of crime among female adolescents as contrasted with their male counterparts. Simmonds and Bromberg on Female Offenders in an unpublished study have found similar results among adults.

TABLE I

FEMALE OFFENDERS					
Nativity	Age	No.	Education	Color	
Rural .....	4	18	3	1 yr. H. S. 1	Black 2
Urban .....	1	19	2	2 yrs. H. S. 3	White 3
			3 yrs. H. S. 1		
<i>Personality</i>		<i>Intelligence Rating</i>		<i>Physical</i>	
Immature Adolescent..	2	Dull Normal.....	1	Negative .....	4
Maladjusted		Low Average.....	2	Hypothyroid .....	1
Adolescent .....	2	Average .....	2		
Aggressive .....	1				
<i>Occupation</i>		<i>Offenses</i>		<i>Disposition</i>	
Domestic .....	4	Assault & Burglary...	1	S. S. plus Probation...	3
Factory Work.....	1	Assault & Robbery....	1	Westfield State Prison.	1
		Grand Larceny.....	2	House of Good	
		Forgery .....	1	Shepherd .....	1

*Ethnic Groups*

In the entre group, as s expected, the percentage of white offenders outnumbers that of any other ethnic group. However, the percentage of the Negro group is considerably higher than for the general estimated percentage of this race within the population. No reliable index could be obtained by the writers at the time of this study in regard to the percentage of Negro adolescents in the New York County population; but contact with various authorities in the field (in probation and penal work), as well as the work of Tulchin<sup>3</sup> and Sutherland<sup>4</sup> tend to confirm our high percentage of adolescent Negro offenders as much greater than that of Negroes within the general population and the greater incidence of Negroes arrested and convicted than should be expected on the basis of proportion to the population as a whole. It is of interest to notice that there was only one Chinese boy found in the study and this agrees fairly closely with the Clinic's total yearly figures which finds an unusually low percentage of crime among the Chinese.

The total group of 189 was made up of whites, 115 (61%); Negroes, 73 (38.4%); Mongolian, 1 (.06%).

*Chronological Age*

In respect to chronological age, there is not much discrepancy among the percentages obtained from one year level to another. The highest percentage was found within the 18-19 year level (38.3%). This is slightly below the annual figures released by the New York State Department of Correction. However, since this department includes only those individuals placed under its jurisdiction, we must take into account the fact that a considerable part of our population is placed on probation and thus does not come within the scope of the department's figures. However, the Citizens' Crime Commission asserts that the age level of convicted criminals is constantly decreasing and that where the greatest number had previously fallen within the 21-22 and then 20-21 year groups there is a trend at present for this age level to decrease, thus indicating that our figures, which show that the greatest incidence of crime occurs within the 18-19 year group, are fairly valid. The age composition of our 189 is as follows: 20-21 years, 55 or 29.1 per cent; 18-19 years, 69 or 38.3 per cent; 16-17, 65 or 32.6 per cent.

The following table indicates that a considerable percentage of the group studied are not native born New Yorkers. Over 40% of our population was born in a rural community. Analyzing our data we find that several of our cases had been in New York City for only a brief period of time before becoming involved in some illegal activity and, in fact, we had two cases that were in the City less than a month. The clinical impression gained by the writers

and their associates is that many of these adolescent delinquents drifted to New York City in the hope of finding employment and, failing in this, became involved in some illegal activity. In addition, there is the situation of the rural Negro, coming from the south, who frequently found it difficult to make a satisfactory social adjustment in a highly complex urban community. It will be noted that Table II includes one non-resident; this case is that of an adolescent who lives in a neighboring state and was arrested on his first day in New York City while searching for employment.

TABLE II

LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN NEW YORK CITY		No.	Per Cent
Above 16 years.....	111	58.73	
14-15 years .....	7	3.70	
12-13 years .....	7	3.70	
10-11 years .....	12	6.35	
8-9 years .....	5	2.64	
6-7 years .....	9	4.76	
4-5 years .....	11	5.82	
2-3 years .....	6	3.17	
1-2 years .....	9	4.76	
1 Mo.-11 Mos.....	11	5.82	
	188		
Non-resident .....	1		
Total .....	189		

Those of rural origin in this group number 76, or 40.2 per cent of the total; 112, or 59.25 per cent are from urban sources and one, or 0.55 per cent is of institutional origin—reared in an orphanage.

#### *Occupational Level*

As to the occupational level of the group studied, the clinical impression of the writers was at variance with the figures in the table below. The members of the group claimed to follow the occupations that are listed but some doubt was raised as to the actual validity of the figures. In some cases where an individual stated that he was employed as an auto mechanic, closer examination frequently revealed that he may have been a mechanic's helper or gas station attendant and was trying to "put his best foot forward" in order to impress the examiner with his occupational ability. Thus, the category of skilled occupation is not as valid as it might be; what is of value here is the relatively high percentages within the unskilled and semi-skilled occupational groups. It is possible, though, that many individuals in the unskilled class will acquire training and move into the class of skilled labor. Two other categories of importance in which a high percentage of our population falls are those who had never worked, even after leav-

ing school, as contrasted with those who were still attending school at the time of the commission of their criminal offenses. The percentage within the clerical occupation is not of much significance as this might include anything from an office boy to a grocery clerk and no fine distinctions could be made other than the broad categories that were arbitrarily established on the basis of clinical reports, and reports of the New York State and the United States Employment Services.

TABLE III  
OCCUPATIONS

	No.	Per Cent
Skilled .....	13	6.87
Semi-skilled .....	18	9.52
Unskilled Labor .....	56	29.62
Kitchen work .....	8	4.23
Clerical work .....	19	10.05
Personal Service .....	15	7.93
Errand Boy .....	14	7.40
Student .....	26	13.75
Never Worked .....	13	6.87
Agricultural .....	1	.52
Military .....	2	1.06
Seaman .....	2	1.06
Entertainment .....	2	1.06
Total .....	189	

*Educational Level*

An analysis of the educational level attained, as claimed by the delinquent, is presented in Table IV. The number and percentage of the entire group within the various grade levels is presented, along with a contrast between the white and Negro subjects. Here, too, the validity of the actual grade attainment is questionable as this is likewise based on the individual's own statement. However, despite the attempts of the individual to present the best view of himself, we do notice several significant trends; there were no Negro high school graduates as contrasted with ten white boys who claimed to have completed the high school level. In addition, it is interesting to notice that the percentage of white boys who reached the eighth grade was about three times that of Negro boys. What is difficult to explain, if the figures are accepted at face value, is that a slightly greater percentage of Negro delinquents are found in the third or fourth terms of high school as contrasted with white delinquents and are likewise found in greater numbers below the sixth grade of elementary school.

Taking the percentages of the group as a whole, we notice that

<sup>2</sup>Tulchin, S. H. *Intelligence and Crime.*

<sup>4</sup>Sutherland, E. H. *Principles of Criminology.*



the greatest percentage of adolescent delinquents falls between the first and second terms of high school, the next highest between the third and fourth terms of high school, and the third highest percentage between the 8A and 8B grades of elementary school. It is important to point out that approximately 4 per cent of our group have not reached the sixth grade of elementary school.

TABLE IV

	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL					
	Total		No.		Per Cent	
	No.	Per Cent	W.	B.	W.	B.
Above High School Graduation.....	10	5.29	10	0	8.62	0
7th-8th Grade H. S.....	4	2.11	3	1	2.58	1.36
5th-6th Grade H. S.....	23	12.16	14	9	12.06	12.32
3rd-4th Grade H. S.....	47	24.86	23	24	19.82	32.89
1st-2nd Grade H. S.....	56	29.62	35	21	30.17	28.90
8A-8B .....	27	14.27	22	5	18.96	6.85
7A-7B .....	5	2.64	3	2	2.58	2.74
6A-6B .....	6	3.17	0	6	00.00	8.22
5A-5B .....	3	1.58	1	2	.86	2.72
4A-4B .....	3	1.58	2	1	1.72	1.37
3A-3B .....	2	1.06	1	1	.86	1.37
2A-2B .....	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.00
1A-1B .....	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.00
Special Class (Opportunity or Ungraded) .....	3	1.58	2	1	1.72	1.37
Total .....	189		116	73		

Intelligence ratings of our population indicate these ratings are based, for the most part, on psychiatric judgment. Although, to a considerable extent these judgments may correlate highly with actual objective measurements, the questions of halo effect, personality influences, pressure of examination under such conditions of emotional stress, and other intangible factors, should be considered. There might be a shift in one direction or the other were objective psychological tests used for each case. Thus, when we consider the distribution of percentages within the various intelligence rating categories we find a very high weighting on the average range of intelligence with a general descending percentage. This does not approximate the normal distribution curve, and if we should theoretically consider our group as a typically normally distributed group, the percentage of ratings as indicated by the psychiatrist appears to be skewed.

The question may be raised at this point as to the reason why each case was not seen by the psychologist for formal psychological examination. The makeup of the clinical personnel (only one psychologist serving three psychiatrists) makes it possible for highly selected cases only to be seen by the psychologist in the short amount of time allotted for examination. The psychiatrists

consider selective cases to be those involving mental defect, mental retardation, severe educational or emotional difficulties, or unusual personality problems in which it is difficult to obtain an estimate of the individuals intellectual functioning merely by subjective impressions. In such cases specialized psychological measurements are needed.

TABLE V  
INTELLIGENCE RATINGS

	No.	Percentage
Superior .....	2	1.06
High Average .....	2	1.06
Average .....	84	44.44
Low Average .....	52	27.51
Dull Normal .....	34	18.00
Borderline .....	14	7.40
Defective .....	1	.52
Total .....	189	

#### *Intelligence Quotients*

To substantiate the points made in the preceding section Table VI is included to show those 57 cases, or 30 per cent, of the entire group of 189 who were examined by the psychologist. There is a variation in the percentages among the intelligence ratings as contrasted with Table V. Roughly, the intelligence ratings found on the basis of objective psychological tests approximates the usual normal distribution as well as the figures generally found in reports of various agencies dealing with delinquents. While this group is not a true sampling of the general population, since many of these cases were referred for psychological testing in view of the special problem, we may consider this as an approximate sampling of the entire group included in this study. It is interesting to note that there are more defective cases found in Table VI than in Table V and that where no fine measuring instrument is used, there may be fine errors in individual classifications which become more apparent than on group study.

#### *Personality Rating*

The personality rating made for each individual seen at the clinic follows the clinic classification. However, in analysis of the group results, it was interesting to notice that the percentage of maladjusted adolescents exceeded the percentage of adjusted delinquents by only 1.58 per cent; the maladjusted comprised 18.51 per cent of the total, whereas the adjusted comprised 16.93 per cent. Of considerable significance was the rating of immature adolescents in which were over 25 per cent of the subjects; another high percentage of cases was the group classified as adjusted to a low cultural and economic level who comprised 10.58 per cent of the total.

TABLE VI

INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT LEVELS			
Ratings	I.Q.	No.	Per Cent
Superior	120 plus.....	0	0
High Average	110-119.....	3	5.26
Average	90-109.....	25	43.85
Dull Normal	80-89.....	16	28.07
Borderline	70-79.....	10	17.54
Defective	60-69.....	3	5.26
Below	60.....	0	0
Total	.....	57	

TABLE VII

PERSONALITY RATING		
	No.	Per Cent
Immature Adolescent.....	48	25.37
Maladjusted Adolescent.....	35	18.51
Adjusted.....	32	16.93
Adjusted to low Cultural and Economic Level.....	20	10.58
Aggression through Alcohol.....	11	5.82
Aggressive.....	10	5.29
Suggestible.....	7	3.70
Hedonistic.....	5	2.64
Neurotic.....	4	2.11
Inadequate.....	3	1.58
Psychopath.....	3	1.58
Egocentric.....	3	1.58
Impulsive.....	3	1.58
Adynamic, Shiftless.....	3	1.58
Primitive.....	1	.52
Homosexual.....	1	.52
Total.....	189	

### *Physical Makeup*

Approximately 84 per cent, or 160, of the group had a physically negative rating; i. e., on routine medical examination, no physical defect was found which required medical attention. In the 29 cases, or 16 per cent, there was one case of cardiac disease, one of rheumatic fever, and two of amauroses. One case of syphilis and four of gonorrhoea were found. All other findings were of minor significance.

### *Offenses*

The next topic considered was the various types of offenses committed. Table VIII shows that the greatest percentage of cases falls within the category of burglary, 23.57 per cent, while the next largest percentage of crimes committed, 27 per cent, are of grand larceny. Examination of our records indicates that the most frequent type of grand larceny was the theft of automobiles,

one of the most frequent of all adolescent offences.

Third highest percentage of crimes was that of robbery, 12.17 per cent. The classification of all crimes committed generally follows the pattern of former studies committed by various segments of the population with the exception that there appears to be only a slight incidence of sex offenders, whose age we have found to be usually above the 40-45 year age level.

TABLE VIII

## OFFENSES COMMITTED

	No.	Per Cent
Forgery .....	3	1.58
Grand Larceny .....	52	27.00
Robbery .....	23	12.17
Robbery and Assault.....	13	6.87
Assault .....	11	5.82
Rape .....	8	4.23
Violation of Probation.....	4	2.12
Burglary and Assault .....	3	1.58
Burglary .....	55	28.57
Grand Larceny & Burglary.....	2	1.06
Violation of Sullivan Law.....	2	1.06
Petit Larceny .....	2	1.06
Sodomy .....	2	1.06
Burglary and Arson .....	2	1.06
Murder .....	2	1.06
Impairing Morals of Minor.....	1	.52
Assault and Rape.....	1	.52
Possession of Stolen Goods.....	1	.52
Rape and Robbery.....	1	.52
Possession of Drugs.....	1	.52
Total .....	189	

*Disposition*

Table IX shows that the majority of the cases received a suspended sentence and were placed on probation. Only three received a penitentiary sentence but the execution of sentence was deferred indefinitely as long as they did not become involved in additional criminal activity. Notice that 40.26 per cent of our cases were considered sufficiently anti-social in their conduct and behavior, as well as in the seriousness of their offense, to warrant imprisonment in a state institution. Only 1.58 per cent of this group were considered sufficiently serious to be sent to State Prison while the remainder were sent to some type of juvenile institution such as the New York City Reformatory, the New York State Vocational School or the Elmira Reformatory.

In respect to the treatment needs of these individuals, there are two major subdivisions: first, those who should be placed on probation or sent to prison, and, secondly, those who require some

TABLE IX

DISPOSITION		No.	Per Cent
Suspended Sentence and Probation.....	102	53.96	
N. Y. City Reformatory.....	16	8.46	
N. Y. State Vocational School.....	18	9.52	
N. Y. City Penitentiary.....	9	4.76	
Workhouse .....	3	1.58	
Elmira .....	22	11.64	
State Prison .....	3	1.58	
Discharged .....	8	4.23	
Penitentiary—(Stay of Execution).....	3	1.58	
Transferred to Children's Court.....	1	.52	
Westfield State Prison.....	1	.52	
For Trial .....	2	1.06	
House of Good Shepherd.....	1	.52	
Total .....	189		

specific type of treatment. In some cases we found that either probation or imprisonment were the only recommendations that could be made, whereas others were individuals who might be in need of all seven types of broad treatment that were set up excluding probation or imprisonment.

It is of interest to compare the disposition of the court in respect to the treatment needs of the group as regards imprisonment or probation; the court found 53.96 per cent of the cases fit for probation, whereas we considered that there were 68.25 per cent whose interests would best be served by probation rather than by imprisonment. This indicates that 14.29 per cent who, we felt, should be placed on probation but were sentenced to prison. However, if we take into account those who were discharged by the Court and those whose execution of sentence was deferred, we see that this difference amounts to only about 9 instead of 14 per cent. This shows a rather high degree of consistency between the views of the clinic and of the Court as regards probation or imprisonment.

#### *Specific Treatment Needs*

At this point it should be added that the various recommendations and the broad group of treatment needs were formulated by the psychologist and the junior psychiatrist of the clinic. Considering the specific treatment needs, we find that 43.91 per cent of our group are in need of some habit training to correct specific vices such as gambling, alcoholism or unwise sex indulgence. Another considerable treatment need was for satisfactory vocational guidance and placement; our data shows 46.02 per cent of the group in need of such treatment. The absolute lack of elementary vocational concepts or plans, the complete bewilderment in plan-

ning for the future, and the lack of information, or the considerable amount of misinformation that this group exhibited in regard to vocational interests and needs was amazing.

Despite the splendid work of such services as the Vocational Guidance Service for Juniors, the various guidance departments in the high schools of the city, and other similar agencies, there yet do not appear to be sufficient services available in the community to meet the needs of those who most require them. In addition there appears to be a lack of knowledge on the part of this group as to how to reach the available services that do exist. Their confusion is readily understandable when we consider how many of our professionals who do guidance work appear to have little or no information as to available services within the community.

The need for continued education, utilization of various types of medical and dental service as well as some type of additional psychiatric and psychological treatment and counselling, are indicated also within the treatment needs. Finally, the need for additional financial assistance whether in the form of home relief, work relief, or other, likewise appears to be a major need.

TABLE X

## TREATMENT NEEDS

	No.	Per Cent
Physical (Medical & Dental).....	38	20.10
Psychiatric & Psychological.....	34	17.98
Educational .....	70	37.03
Habit Training .....	83	43.91
Legal Aid .....	4	2.11
Financial Aid .....	28	14.81
Vocational Guidance & Placement.....	87	46.02
Probation .....	129	68.25
Imprisonment .....	60	31.21

## CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the results of this study the following conclusions may be drawn:

1) That women offenders, especially on the adolescent level, constitute a very slight percentage of the criminal population that reaches the Felony Courts of New York City.<sup>5</sup>

2) That Negro adolescents, despite their relatively small percentage within the general population, constitute a large percentage of the cases brought to Felony Court such percentage apparently being out of proportion to their rate within the general population.

3) The age at which there is the greatest incidence of crime for this group this is within the 18-19 year level.

4) Between 40 to 45 per cent of the population studied are not native to New York City and most of these have their origin in

small rural communities.

5) A considerable number of our population were still attending school at the time of their arrest and conviction, and of those not in school, many have never been gainfully employed or have been employed in an unskilled or semi-skilled occupation.

6) There is a considerable amount of educational retardation that was found to exist within this group and when this is compared with the treatment needs as seen in Table X, we see that there is a definite need for the majority of the group to continue receiving education whether it be of the academic or vocational kind.

7) No unusual facts were brought out regarding the intelligence rating of the group studied, except that to a great extent these ratings approximate results found within the general population.

8) There are almost as many cases found within the adjusted personality classification as within the maladjusted personality classification. A considerable percentage were found to fall within the classification of immature adolescent and a significant percentage within the classification of aggression released through alcohol.

9) The greater number of this group did not reveal any physical defects, but in the 16 per cent who were in need of medical attention the most common treatment needed was either for syphilis or gonorrhoea.

10) Burglary, grand larceny and robbery appeared to be the most predominant types of offenses committed within this group. There was a noticeable lack of sex offenses.

11) A significant percentage were considered to be sufficiently amenable to treatment to be placed on probation, while of the number committed to prison the greater percentage were sent to a reformatory type of institution.

12) The Clinic personnel was slightly more lenient in respect to recommendation for probation than was the Court in final disposition, but in general there appears to be a strong relationship between the scientific or psychiatric judgment and the judicial dispositions. The greatest percentages of treatment that this group is considered to be in need of are vocational guidance and placement, habit training for correction of vices, medical and dental treatment, psychiatric and psychological follow-up, financial aid, and continued education, with competent educational guidance.

#### SUMMARY

A group of 189 delinquents,<sup>2</sup> first offenders between the ages

---

<sup>2</sup>While there has been a considerable increase in delinquency of female adolescents since this report was completed, they would not be considered, since they are under 16 years of age.

of 16 to 21 were seen at the Psychiatric Clinic of the Court of General Sessions. All had been arrested on a felony charge although many had been convicted on a lesser charge after a plea had been accepted by the District Attorney's office. Some 12 factors relating to this group had been studied and findings tabulated. The results tended to show many of the problems that face adolescent delinquents and indicate the need for increased social services for individual treatment as well as for closer coordination of existing community resources. Many lacks in the present study had been pointed out but it is hoped that a follow-up work to the present study will be able to gather up all the loose threads and, at that time, offer interpretations of all results that had been collected.

The viewpoint of Brill and Payne was quoted at the beginning of this study and we would like to conclude with the following quotation taken from their book:

"Today there is a surprising lack of interest in the adolescent offender and a concentration of attention on the juvenile delinquent. It is not to be understood that there is any argument with this procedure. Many of the most noted scientists in the field of criminology have pointed out quite forcefully that the seeds of criminal careers are sown in the unguided years of early childhood. But the fact remains startlingly clear that the absence of social and legal facilities for the rehabilitation of the adolescent offender leads one to believe that society is not yet aware of the special problems of adolescence. This point of view—that the status quo is satisfactory—is preposterous, for there is every reason to believe, and every proof, that law itself is no deterrent of crime, with either the adolescent or the adult offender. It is hoped, however, and it seems reasonably certain, that with the socialization and humanization of legal procedures, predicted upon the thorough study of the problems of adolescents, it will be possible to save many youths from a misadventure into the folly of crime."

There is every reason to believe that the proper use of a combination of such techniques as the sociological, psychiatric, psychological and medical in the socialized treatment of the adolescent offender will be able to prevent the human wreckage caused by treating adolescents as adults.

#### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup>Brill and Payne—*Adolescent Court and Crime Prevention*, 1938.
  - <sup>2</sup>Bromberg and Thompson—*Relation of Psychoses, Mental Defects and Personality Types of Crime*. This Journal, XXVIII, May 1937.
  - <sup>3</sup>Harrison and Grant—*Youth in the Toils*, 1938.
  - <sup>4</sup>Annual Reports of the National Probation Association, New York City.
  - <sup>5</sup>Plan for a Youth Correction Authority, American Law Institute, Law School, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
-