

JUVENILES ARRESTS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 1995-2004: PATTERNS OF RE-ARRESTS, AND DESISTANCE

INTRODUCTION

Juvenile Crime and Victimization: National and Local Perspectives

Nationally, juveniles commit violent and property crimes by the millions. Not a day goes by that we do not see, hear, or read the detailed descriptions of children participating in these anti-social activities. Roberts (2003) estimates that the number of juvenile delinquent acts committed annually could be between 13 and 15 million. Snyder (2002), referencing data from the FBI and the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), reported more than 2.4 million juvenile arrests across the country in the year 2000.

An issue presented by the above data is the difference between the number of delinquent acts committed and the number of juveniles arrested. If both Snyder and Roberts are correct, there is between a 5:1 to 6:1 ratio between number of crimes committed and number of juveniles arrested. This may mean that juveniles are committing delinquent acts and not being caught. It may also mean that the same individuals have been arrested multiple times for multiple offenses, indicating that some of these juvenile offenders' are repeat, or chronic (Roberts 2003). The greatest fear of juvenile justice advocates is that one day the number of arrest will rise to match the number of delinquent acts.

However, it is not all bad news. The Bureau of Justice Statistics, in a release (NCJ-209468) dated August 2005, reported that juveniles experienced a decline in serious and violent crime victimizations from 1993 through 2003. While the rates of serious and violent crimes have dropped precipitously, over the last ten years, we still find that 38 percent of all serious and violent victimizations (in which age could be estimated), involved juveniles as victims or offenders.

Nationally, among juvenile violence victims, age 12-14, about half reported that the violence they experienced occurred at their schools. Similarly, one third of 15-17 year olds identified their school as the location of their victimization (U.S.

Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005).

These statistics suggest that a place once considered a safe haven for children might now have become a site where violence and fear thrive. The impact of anxiety on a child's education may be immeasurable. In the District of Columbia, students at the same high school killed two students over the course of three months. Thus, the possibility of violence became a reality for those who were harmed, knew the people harmed, witnessed, and/or were otherwise touched by the event.

A number of students from this school were quoted or seen in the media expressing their fear of returning to school as a result, of these acts. Student apprehension about attending school can manifest itself as truant behavior, a status offense. It is known that technical violations such as truancy are entry points to the public social service system and contact with law enforcement agencies.

Researchers have found that serious crime and violence has an adverse affect on the quality of life for anyone who witnesses it, feels threatened by it, has had a friend or family member victimized or has been victimized themselves. For juveniles the impact of these events may be life altering. For those under 18 years of age, being a victim of violent crime increases the likelihood that they themselves will later commit acts of violence against others (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2005).

Regrettably, problems of serious and violent crime are much more acute for juveniles than it is for adults and worse for minority juveniles. Nationally, between 1993-2003, youth ages 12-17 years were twice as likely (100%) to be victims of violent crime than were individuals 18 years and older. While African Americans/Blacks between 12-17 years were five times (500%) more likely to be victims than were Whites above the age of 18 (Bureau of Justice Statistics: Violent Crime Rate Trends, 2005).

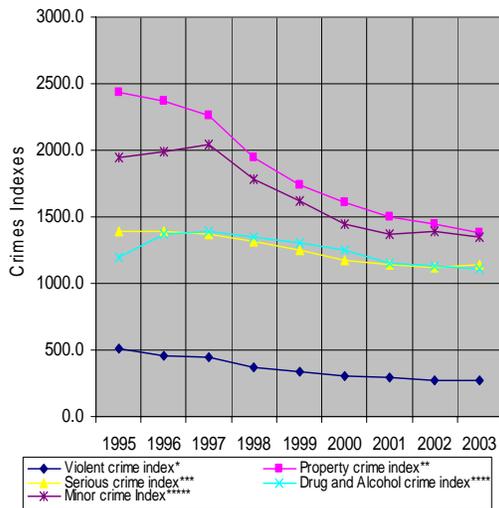
Serious and violent crimes are not the only delinquent acts perpetrated by juveniles. The majority of juvenile criminal activities are acts against property, drug, or alcohol related, and /or

other minor offenses (such as, running away, disorderly conduct, curfew, and loitering law violations).

National data shows a five to one ratio between the index of property crimes and the index of violent crimes committed by persons under the age of 18 years. Property crime appears to be the crime of choice among juveniles. After property crimes, the most frequently committed delinquent acts are minor violations, drug or alcohol offenses, and serious crimes as seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

National Crime Rates¹: Juveniles Ages 10-17



Although we have experienced many years of decline across the board in the national juvenile crime indexes, we are still keenly aware of the many issues associated with juvenile arrests rates. Among the most commonly identified problems associated with juvenile arrest nationally is the disproportionately high percentage of minorities who come in contact with law enforcement agencies, are arrested and detained and eventually committed.

¹ * Violent crime index includes murder & non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. ** Property crime index includes burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. *** Serious crime index includes other assaults, vandalism, weapons carrying, possessing, etc. **** Drug and alcohol crime index include drug abuse violations, DUI, liquor laws, drunkenness. ***** Minor crime index include disorderly conduct, curfew and loitering law violations and runaways.

Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)

The JJDP Act of 2002 (see section 223(a)(22)), required that States address juvenile delinquency prevention efforts and system improvement efforts designed to reduce, the disproportionate number of juvenile members of minority groups, who come into contact with the juvenile justice system. OJJDP defined minority populations as American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention', 2005).

Status Offenses or Juvenile Delinquency

Juveniles' anti-social behaviors that result in their coming into contact with or being arrested by law enforcement agencies take multiple forms. One cause is a status offense. Status offenses are activities that except for age, an individual would not be arrested. Examples of status offenses include truancy, running away from home, curfew violations, and incorrigible behavior. These acts of defiance are often a precursor to more serious behavior, as the child grows older.

Juvenile delinquent behaviors are violations of the law committed by a person under the age of 18 that would be considered a crime if they were committed by a person 18 or older. These activities are defined as delinquent as opposed to criminal because of the presumption that a youth may be rehabilitated. Common examples of these violations are burglary, larceny-theft, and motor-vehicle theft, destruction of property, robbery, assaults, and disorderly conduct. Too often, these activities escalate to charges of weapons possession, stabbings, shootings, drug possession and distribution, rape, and homicides.

Juveniles At Risk: Age As A Factor

The Office of Juvenile Justices and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) identify the group of young people at greatest risk as being those between the ages of ten (10) and seventeen (17). The rationale for focusing on this age group is that, rarely does a child under the age of 10 become involved in serious criminal activities. By example, toddlers and the very young are mostly unable to commit serious delinquent acts like steal a car, break into a property, commit a rape,

or a homicide². By including the youngest children (nine years of age or less) in this analysis we would under estimate or distort the absolute rate and percentage of delinquency occurring among the total population of juveniles. This is due to the large number of children in the population under the age of ten and the relatively small number of crimes that can be attributed to them

The reason for not including youth older than 17 years is that most states consider those older than 17 years of age to be an adult. Acknowledging that skewed data would be a result from including children under age ten, variation in state laws and the consistency of the Juvenile Justice literature identifying 10-17 year olds as critical or most at risk, this report focuses on youth between the ages of 10 and 17 years .

Juvenile Pathways to the First Arrests

Some researchers have maintained that the pathway to juvenile delinquency and the first arrests begins at home when children receive minimal supervision and/or experience parental neglect.

It is said that problem gets worse as these children grow up in communities that lack the minimal resources, alternatives, safe places and the type of organizations that would help them the most (i.e., recreation center, clubs, after school activities). These factors often exacerbated by economic difficulty and the need of the juvenile to be part of something more than what they have at home, frequently lead to violence and crime among individual youth and between youth groups in the form of gangs and crews (Majors, 1999;).

A number of factors have been identified as predictive of future juvenile delinquency, and ultimately the arrest and incarceration of these children. Among these are poverty, exposure to violence, hopelessness, lack of direction, delinquent peers, unstable family structures and violence within the family (Futrell & Powell, 1996). Stealing behavior in youth is also significantly related to multiple arrests, and other subsequent charges as the individual moves into adolescence and through adulthood.

² There have been cases, although very rare, of individuals below the age of ten committing homicides.

In urban areas and the inner city, community groups, voice their suspicions that the public support systems have failed their children. Anecdotally, there is no lack of qualitative data describing youth thrust into public systems. These public systems made up of the social, income-maintenance, mental health, courts, and law enforcement agencies among others are often referred to by community groups as the portals of entry into the justice system.

These juveniles now having the state act as their guardian, primary caregiver, parental surrogate or foster parent often find themselves abused, mistreated, neglected or worse (Majors, 1999; Patterson, 2005;).

In a recent study researchers asserted that the pathway from delinquent behavior to juvenile offending and arrests begins in the public schools, and moves through the courts, often ending in a correctional institution. These authors posit that the public schools are a feeder institution for the prison system.

“Youth are finding themselves at risk of falling into the school-to-prison pipeline through push-outs... such as suspensions, expulsions, discouragements and high stakes testing”

Education on Lockdown: The Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track, March 2005

Significantly, the literature shows that suspensions and expulsions from school are closely correlated with truancy and dropping out of school. The effects of this social isolation often are a precursor to substance abuse, teen pregnancy, predictive of other social problems and later involvement in crime as an adult (OJJDP, Truancy Reduction: Keeping Youth in School and Out of Trouble, January/February 2004). Among 55 juveniles convicted of murder in New York State between 1978 and 1986 for which attendance records were available, 89% had a record of suspension, expulsion, truancy, and dropping out (Juveniles Who Murder, Grant, and et.al. 2002).

The root causes of the juvenile arrest problem may be bad parenting, poor and inadequate schools, disconnected and under organized communities, or the public support system. Whether it is, all of the above or simply the increasingly nihilistic attitudes among our young people today, the void in solutions to the crisis have all

interested parties including researchers, administrators, practitioners, and the community, troubled.

Juvenile Arrest Data

An actual accounting of juvenile arrests is often unobtainable in many jurisdictions. Delinquent acts perpetrated by juveniles frequently go undetected, unreported, and/or unrecorded. Countless times juveniles picked-up for delinquent activity are diverted. Sometimes juveniles are diverted by the police officer who picked them up before ever getting to the station (i.e., taken home to their parents or turned over to their schools), sometimes at the station. Other times diversion or release takes place at intake after the child is brought in by police. Intake screeners (typically from the court social services function) and/or Prosecutors using analytical tools or their own judgment may call parents to pick up a child before officially documenting the child as having been seized. On many occasions, evidence of a juvenile's contact with law enforcement agencies is not included in files or registers, making it impossible to determine the real extent of the problem (Roberts, 2003, Snyder 2002).

What we do know is that the number of juveniles arrested, and, or picked-up for delinquent behavior by law enforcement agencies is too high each year. It is also evident that the increasingly early ages at which these youth are in contact with the law enforcement system is much too young. These startling numbers and issues, when taken together, point out the importance of establishing an improved system for tracking juvenile arrest and recording data about those arrested and the circumstances surrounding the arrests.

Examining patterns and trends in youth arrests for violent crimes are an essential component of recent criminology research. In 2002, juveniles accounted for fifteen percent of offenders arrested for violent crimes and thirty percent of those arrested for property crimes actually decreased. Further, the National Center for Juvenile Justice found that this declining trend has been without an up-tick for four years straight. Juvenile arrests decreased by 3% between 2001 and 2004.

Snyder (2004) suggests that the decline in juvenile offenses is in large part a direct reflection of the reduction in school crime. Nationally, school crime decreased by 50%, between 1995 and 2003 (see Figure 1). The reduction in number of

youth arrested for school crimes has been attributed to increased efforts set forth by the local criminal justice systems and the school systems. These efforts have included, regular locker searches, canine sweeps, surveillance technologies, and improved school policing.

In the publication Education on Lockdown: The Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track (2005), the authors suggest that these changes are more attributable to an increase in suspensions and expulsions of those students whose behaviors are seen as problematic. In essence, these policies simply move the problem from the schools to the streets.

Juvenile Recidivism and Re-Arrest

Importantly, for most juveniles after one arrests or serious brush with law enforcement, they discontinue their delinquent ways; however, this is not true for all. Not all juveniles discontinue their criminal or delinquent behaviors after being arrested. A sizeable percentage of these youth continue to commit delinquent acts and are arrested and re-arrested by law enforcement agencies throughout their teen years.

Taylor, Kelly, Valescu, and Reynolds, et.al, (2001), having conducted a review of the literature suggests that the principal predictor of juvenile re-arrest is prior criminal activities, whether the criminal activity was recognized, and punished or not. Although this finding appears to be circular in logic, it suggests that a greater effort must be placed on programs geared to desistance after the first status offense, sign of delinquent behavior and certainly after the first arrest. It has also been found that there is a significant correlation between stealing in early youth (under 12) and future arrests for assault.

Juvenile Desistance

After being arrested multiple times, the vast majority of juvenile offenders desist in their delinquent activities. These individuals do not go on to become adult offenders. Researchers have attributed this desistance to recognition of mistakes made, fear, social development, investment by others of human capital in the form of mentors or coaches, evolving peer groups, social change, improved environment, and or increased organization in the juveniles life (Farrall, Stephen, Maruna, & Shadd 2004; Laub, & Sampson 2001)

Desistance often occurs when the individual is able to make better decisions. Whether this improved decision-making is a result of increased maturity, reduced negative peer pressure, positive role models, or the guidance of others, the outcome is that the criminal delinquent behaviors stop (Maruna, 1997; 1999; Laub, & Sampson, 2001).

Importantly, the most robust and often cited theory of juvenile desistance is the *Age-Crime-Curve*. Researches have found what they described as the undeniable relationship between age and criminal activity. Rex (1999) provides evidence that life course transitions brought on by age and maturity alter the relationship young offenders may have with delinquent peers.

Thus, no longer pressured or influenced by immature peers, the anti-social behavior changes. Others have written about the importance of job stability, while Warr (1998) proffers that marriage and romances are the factors with redemptive power.

That the majority of juvenile offenders do desist from criminality before adulthood is very important and helpful to know; understanding the reasons why some do desist and some do not may be more difficult to determine.

METHODS AND POPULATION

Data Sources

The source for the primary data used in this report is the District of Columbia, Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), Juvenile Arrest, and Charge records. A ten-year period was selected for analysis, beginning in 1995 and extending through 2004. Variables in the study database were pre-determined by MPD to address their purposes and provided for this research as an Excel file. These logs identify individuals who have been arrested by law enforcement agencies in the District of Columbia and brought to the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) for intake³. The individuals included in this study are those individuals who upon being arrested and booked/papered with initial charges assigned and

³ Not all of the over 20 plus police forces in the District with arrest powers bring those juveniles arrested by their officers to MPD for intake. As a consequence these individuals are not assigned arrests numbers and are not included as part of this data set.

for delinquent behavior in the District of Columbia⁴.

In some cases, after a juvenile is arrested charges assigned by the arresting officer may be dropped or a decision made not petition/paper the case.

Issues of adjudication are not a focus in this analysis. We will only examine arrests and initial charges as identified by the Metropolitan Police Department (DC MPD) officers and staff.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel were the primary tools for analysis. Other significant secondary data sources include the U.S. Census, The D.C. Government Office of Planning, and the Office of Juvenile Justice Programs web sites.

Population of the District

The total population of the District was reported at over 572,000 in the 2000 U.S. Census Survey. A further analysis of this data shows the total number of youth under the age of 17 to be approximately 115,000 or 20%, of the Districts total population. The number of juveniles in the district between the ages of 10-17, is nearly 48,000 or 8.5% of the Districts population.

Population Characteristics

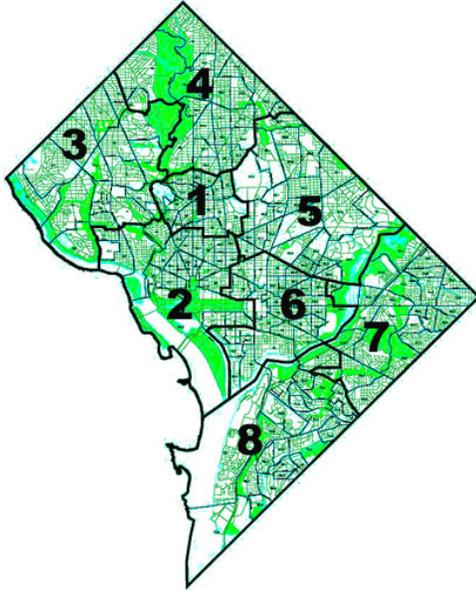
Demographic characteristics most often examined in studies of juvenile delinquent and criminal behaviors include gender, age, race/ethnicity, community, education/ school involvement, economic conditions, family status, peer groups and stability. Later in this paper, an analysis of these constructs will be provided as each idea relates to youth in the District of Columbia.

Geographic Distribution

Geographically, the District's political divisions are called wards. There are eight wards in the District of Columbia. As depicted in figure 2. Wards 2 and 3 are the least populated overall and the least populated by the juveniles targeted in our study. Nearly 70% of the District's population under the age of 17 years, reside in wards 4, 5, 7, and 8.

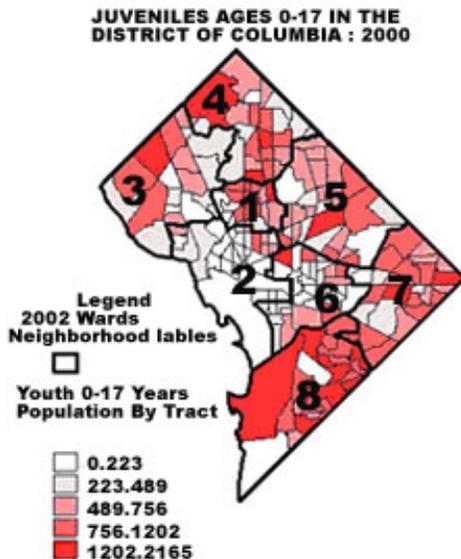
⁴ In some instances, these charges may be later dropped by prosecutors.

Figure 2⁵.
District of Columbia by Ward



Illustrated in figure 3, is the distribution of the 0-17 year old population by ward. There are four geographic boundaries or quadrants of the city: Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast.

Figure 3.
Geographic Distribution of Juveniles
by Ward



⁵ Source of All Maps: DC Government Website

Concentrated around the perimeter of the city in the southeastern and northwestern quadrant(s) are the largest pockets of juveniles.

There is some additional density of this population through the upper center sections of the city.

Housing in the District

The housing in wards 2 and 3 are predominantly apartments, condominiums, multi-unit dwellings, and row houses. Residents are predominantly single adults, older families, roommates, or renters of single rooms. The largest group of District households (46%) is made up of individuals living as families (married couples and other). People living alone represent a similarly large group of citizens (45%). Non-family households (roommates, boarders, etc.) at nine percent (9%) represent the smallest group.

Of the approximately 242,000 occupied housing units in the District of Columbia 35% were owner occupied, 53% renter occupied, and 11% vacant.

Illustrated in Figure 3, is the distribution of the 0-17 year old population by ward.

Table 1.
Tenure of Housing Stock in the
District of Columbia 2002

Housing Tenure	Units	Percentage
Owner Occupied	96,632	35.40%
Renter Occupied	145,463	53.40%
Vacant Housing	30,541	11.20%
Total Housing Units	272,636	100.00%

Source of Data: U. S. Census Bureau, 2002
American Community Survey Profile

The average household has 2.21 residents. Eighty-five percent (85.1%) of district residence were living at the same address one year earlier and 93.5% of those who moved, relocated to another housing unit within the District.

In 2002, the median monthly housing cost for mortgaged owners was \$1,549, for non-mortgaged owners \$325 and renters \$693. Two

percent of the households did not have telephone service and 36 percent did not have access to a car, truck, or van for private use (2002, American Community Survey Profile, U.S. Census).

DC Police Districts

For purposes of management and reporting, the District of Columbia is divided into seven police districts. The seven districts formed in 2005 do not directly align with the political or sectional geographic boundaries as described above.

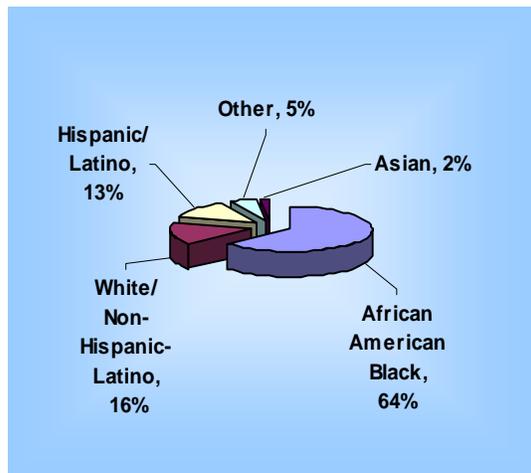
Over the last 10 years, juvenile crime has historically been highest east of the river, which roughly corresponds to the current police districts 5D, 6D, and 7D.

Race/Ethnicity

The Black, 10-17 year old population in the district is approximately four times

Figure 4.

Juveniles 10-17 by Race/Ethnicity



Source: Population Division U.S. Census Bureau 2002

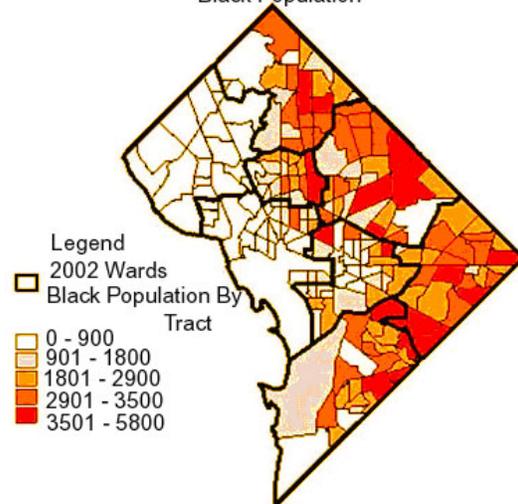
the size of the White Non-Hispanic/ Latino population, five times the size of the Hispanic/Latino population and ten times the size of the Asian/Other populations combined.

Sixty-four percent (64%) of all juveniles in the district are African-American or Black. The next largest racial/ethnic group is White Non-Hispanics/Latinos representing 16% of the districts population. Hispanics/Latinos place third among racial ethnic groups representing 13% of the population. Asians are 2% of the population

and all other groups combined equal five percent⁶ (see Figure 4 above).

Figure 5.

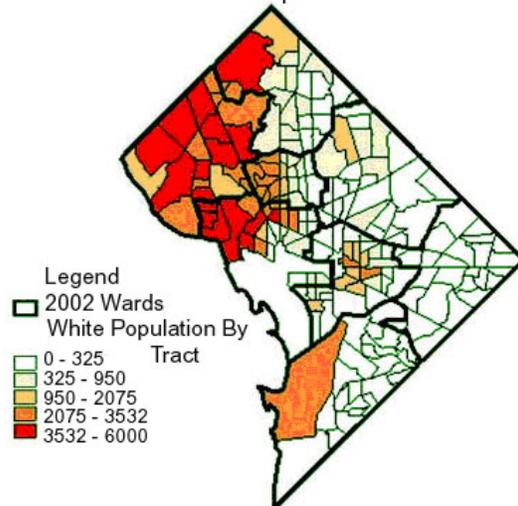
Distribution of the African American/ Black Population in the District of Columbia



Either most African-Americans/Blacks live east of the river in the southeast or northeast quadrants, geographically corresponding to wards 4, 6, 7, and 8, with few in the center of the city or in the west (see Figure 5). Most Whites live west and north of the city's center (see Figures 6).

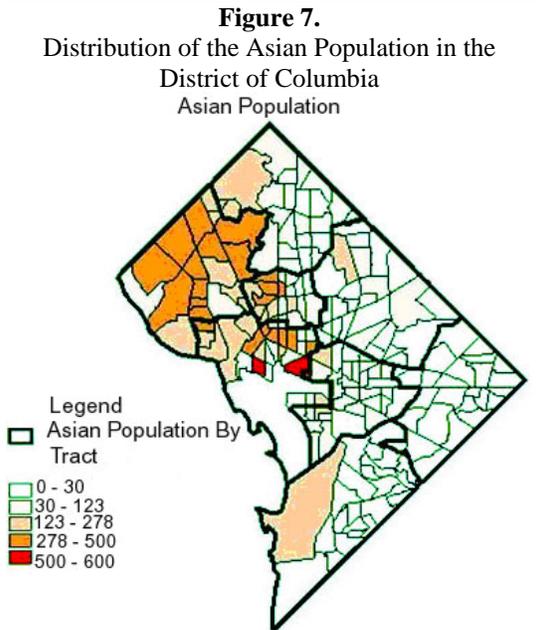
Figure 6.

Distribution of the White Population in the District of Columbia



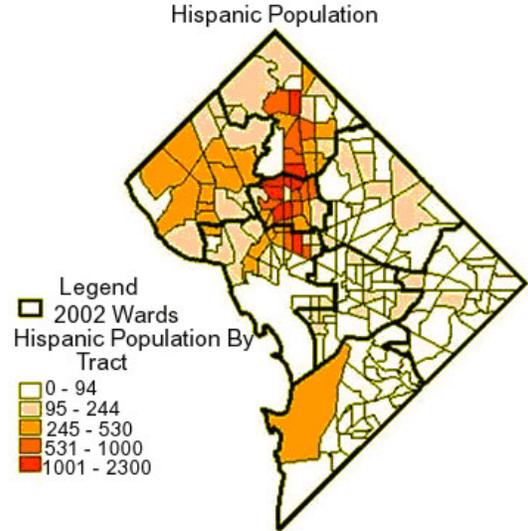
⁶ Because of rounding the total exceeds 100%

A look at the other predominant populations geographically shows the Asian population is concentrated most heavily in the center of the district in a small section of ward 1, described by residents as China Town, and marked by street-posts and transportation signs written in Chinese. There is some additional disbursement of the Asian population throughout Ward 2 spilling over onto the western boarder of Ward 4.



The Hispanic/Latino population is the districts' most diverse geographically. This ethnic/racial group is heavily concentrated across a tight band in Wards 1, 2, and 4. This population can be found throughout the city in lower levels of concentration. The western sections of northwest and Ward 2 and the western boarders of southeast are other areas of concentration.

Figure 8.
Distribution of the Hispanic Population in the District of Columbia



Summary

The African American/Black population is “notably scarce” in wards 1, 2 and 3. While the White population is, similarly absent from Wards 6, 7, and 8. Wards 3 and 4 to some limited degree represent the only geographic areas in which each of the race/ethnic groups reside together.

Education

In the Kids Count 2004 Data Book On-line produced for the US Census Statistics show that elementary (4th Graders) and junior high (8th Graders) school students in the District of Columbia scored far lower than the national average on both basic math and reading level tests.

Table 2.
Level of Education of the District of Columbia's School Children in 2003

Education level	D.C.	U.S.
Percent 4th grade students scoring below basic reading level	69%	38%
4th grade students who scored below basic math level	64%	24%
8th grade students who scored below basic reading level	53%	28%

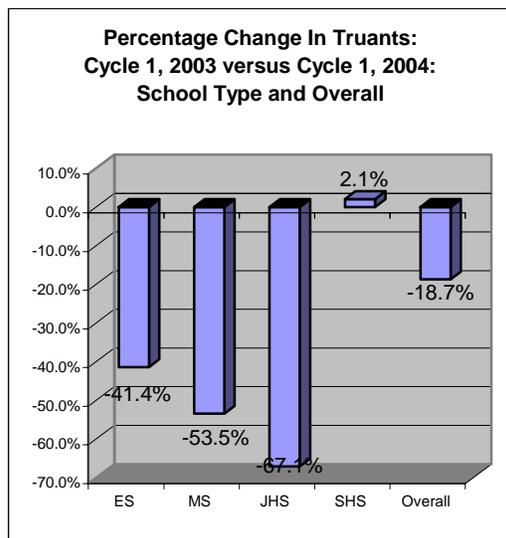
8th grade student who scored below basic math level	71%	33%
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Source: Kids Count 2004 Data Book Online

Unfortunately, this may become a larger problem for DC youth as poor performance in the classroom often leads to anti-social behavior, truancy and dropping out of school; all of which are linked to juvenile delinquency and juvenile crime. A number of studies have identified truancy as a gateway or entry behavior to a later life of crime.

Figure 9.

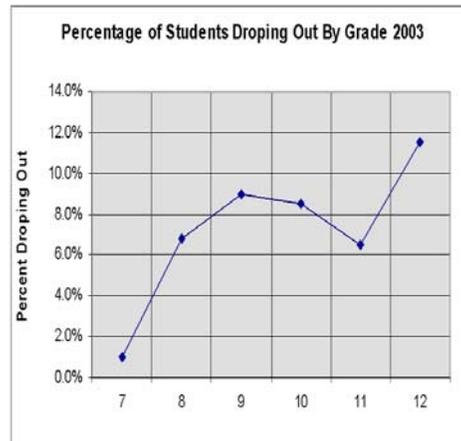
Percentage Change in Truants by School Type 2003 versus 2004



Positively, a recent look at truancy in the district shows an overall decline of nearly 19% in 2004 when compared to the same period in 2003. Only among senior high school students did truancy increase. A look at students dropping out by

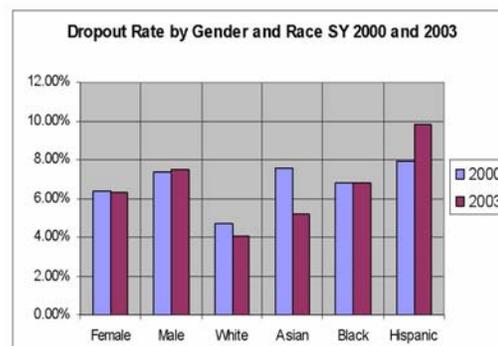
grade shows a nearly 50% increase in the number of students that drop out of school in the eleventh grade versus the twelfth grade.

Figure 10.
Student Dropouts by Grade



It seems counter intuitive that a student would reach the 11th grade and then drop out of school. This is especially hard to accept given the life implications for earnings and the correlations between dropping out and future involvement with the justice system and law enforcement agencies.

Figure 11.



However, this is indeed a phenomenon that is occurring within the District of Columbia Public School System, which suggests the need for policies and programs that address this issue. Further analysis of the data by race shows the higher drop out rate among Hispanics/Latinos versus all other groups. This group is the only one in which the percentage of drop outs increased between the two measured periods

Income

In 2003, 19.9 percent of the District’s population was living below the poverty level. This situation was even more difficult among youth, where over thirty-five percent (35.2%) of children living in family households under the age of 18 were subsisting below the poverty level.

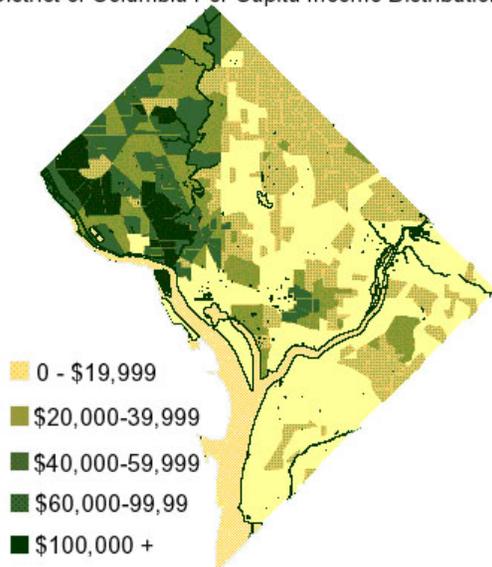
The map in figure 12 illustrates the per capita income distribution across the District of Columbia. As can be seen from the map the most affluent areas, those with the highest per capita income are located in the northwest quadrant and the least affluent are located in the southeast. Only a very few homes outside of the northwest were reported to have a per capita income above \$40,000 in the 2003 estimates and projections.

The vast majority of the households in the southeast and northeast are depicted on the map as existing below the poverty level.

From figures 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8, it can be seen demographically and geographically that in those areas with the highest per capita incomes the population is predominantly White, non Hispanics or Latinos with a higher percentage of residents 18 years of age or older. In those areas in which the per-capita income clusters around the poverty level the population is mostly Black/African American with a higher concentration of individuals 17 years of age or younger.

Figure 12.

District of Columbia Per Capita Income Distribution



Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions, 2003 Estimates & Projections

Well Being

Table 3 identifies key indicators of child well-being. In this table, data was used to compare District of Columbia (DC) statistics to national statistics on ten indicators of “Child Well-Being”.

These numbers identify some of the systemic and institutional issues often associated with the onset of juvenile delinquent behavior and early criminal activity. The data shows that over half (57%) of the households in the District of Columbia were made up of children in single family homes; 40% of the city’s children live in households where no parent had full time year-round employment and 26% lived in poverty. Another issue relating to child well-being is problems within the family structure.

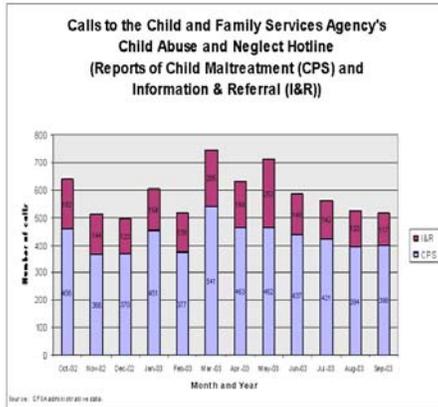
Table 3.
Indicators of Child Well Being

Indicator	D.C.	U.S.
Percent of families with Children headed by a single parent	57%	28%
Rates of teen deaths by accident, homicide, and suicide (deaths per 100,000 teens aged 15 to 19)	33	22
Percent of teens who are high school dropouts (teens aged 16 to 19)	11%	9%
Percent of teens not attending school and not working (teens aged 16 to 19)	14%	8%
Percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment	40%	25%
Percent of children in poverty	26%	16%

Source: Kids Count 2004 Data Book Online

Figure 11, depicts levels of abuse, neglect and maltreatment experienced by children in the district and measured by calls to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA).

Figure 11.



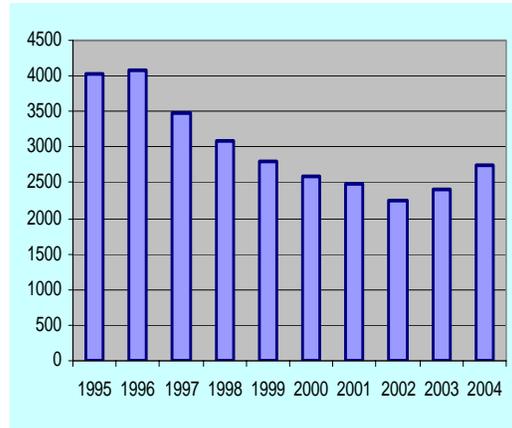
These factors in combination show the large number of households that may currently be incubators for later juvenile delinquent behaviors and criminal activity.

JUVENILE ARRESTS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 1995-2004

Number of Juvenile Arrests

Between 1995 and 2004, the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) made 29,951 arrests of juveniles between the ages of 10 and 17. The number of arrest made each year ranged from a high of 4,089 in 1996 to a low of 2,258 in the year 2002. The average number of arrest made each year during the 10-year study period was approximately 2,950.

Figure 12.
Juvenile Arrests Ages 10-17
1995-2004



Source: MPD Arrests and Charge Data

The number of juvenile arrests peaked in 1996 then declined for six consecutive years through 2002. This period of decline has now been followed by an increase in juvenile arrests in both 2003 and 2004.

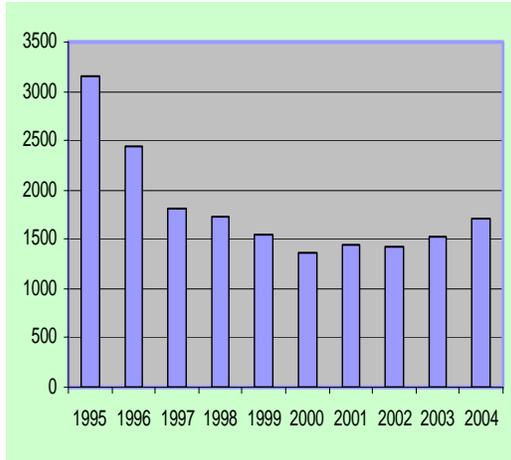
Number of Juveniles Arrested

Although MPD made nearly 30,000 juvenile arrests in the ten-year period 1995-2004, the total number of juveniles arrested was actually 18,214.

The total number of juvenile arrests made is the product of adding the number of first time juvenile arrest to the number of repeat juvenile arrests.

Figure 13 depicts the number of juveniles arrested for the first time in each year between 1995 and 2004.

Figure 13.
Juveniles 10-17 Arrested for the First Time
1995-2004



Source: MPD Arrests and Charge Data

In 1995⁷, the number of new offenders, or those arrested for the first time was at its highest point (3,161) over the 10-year period. Thereafter, the number of new offender arrests decreased for five consecutive years to reach its low (1,373) in the year 2000. This 5-year decrease represented a fifty-seven percent decline over the period. However, beginning in 2001 the number of new or first time juvenile arrest exceeded the 2000 level in each of the next four years.

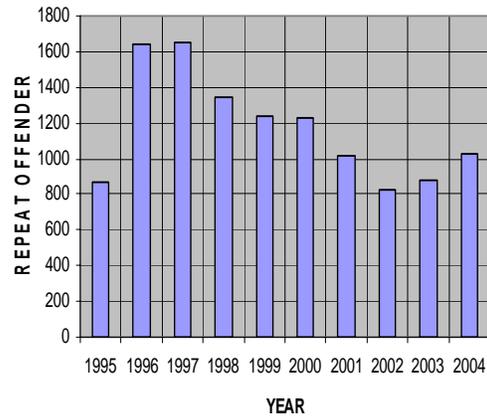
Arrests of Repeat Offenders

As indicated above the difference between the total numbers of juvenile arrests made and the number of juveniles arrested, illustrates the level of repeat offending. Figure 14 shows the number of juveniles arrested each year during the study period for a repeat offense.

The number of repeat offenders either decreased or held level for five consecutive years (1998-2002) after reaching its peak in 1997. Over the last two years, 2003-2004 the numbers of repeat juvenile offenders has increased. Thirty-nine percent, of the juveniles arrested between 1995 and 2004 were repeat offenders. In a study conducted by (xxcx) the researchers found that chronic or repeat offenders accounted for more than 50% of all serious crimes committed by juveniles nationwide. Among juveniles in the study population that are repeat offenders, the average number of arrests was 3.18, with a range

of 12, a low of two, and a high of 14 arrests over the ten-year period.

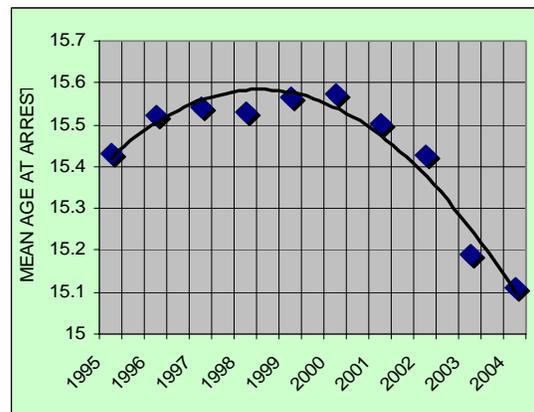
Figure 14.
Repeat Offenders Ages 10-17
1995-2004



Arrested Juveniles by Age

Between 1995 and 2004, law enforcement agencies arrested 18,214 juveniles between the ages of 10 to 17 years. The median age of the arrested juvenile population was 16 years and the average age was 15.28 years.

Figure 15.
Juveniles First Arrests by Average Age
1995-2004



As can be seen in figure 15 the average age for first arrests among juveniles 10 17 years of age has decreased over the last 5-years. While for repeat offenders, the average age at arrest increased at each event from the mean age of 15.28 at the first occurrence to 17.2 years at the last identified incident.

⁷ Some juveniles in the study population may have been arrested prior to 1995 the first year of the study data.

Figure 16 provides a trend line showing the relationship between age and repeated occurrences of arrest. Also illustrated by this figure are the short time frames in terms of age between each occurrence of arrest.

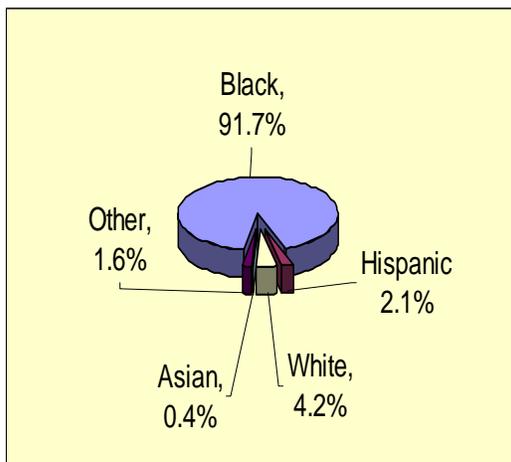
Figure 16.
Average Age at Arrests by Arrest Number 1995-2004



Juvenile Arrest by Race/Ethnicity

Between 1994 and 2005, African-Americans/Blacks were arrested at a rate 23 times greater than any other racial or ethnic group. Nearly 92% of all juvenile arrest over the ten-year period was African-Americans/Blacks.

Figure 17.
Juvenile Arrests by Race/Ethnicity 1995-2004



Among those arrested from other racial/ethnic groups, 4.2% were White's, 2.1% Hispanics, 0.4% Asians and 1.6% other/unknown.

Table 3.

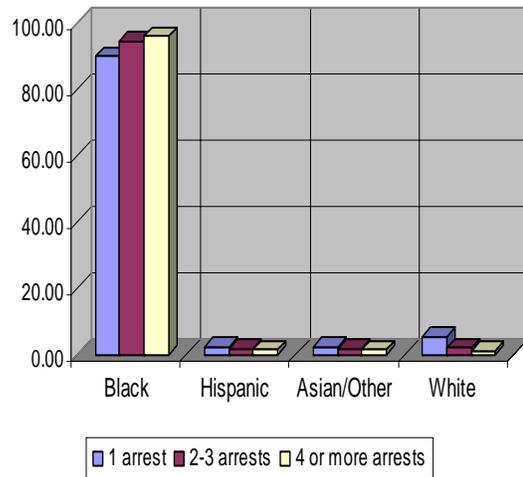
Percentage of Juveniles in the Districts Population versus Percentage Arrested by Race/Ethnicity 1995-2004

Race/Ethnicity	% In Population	% Juveniles Arrested
AA-Black	64	91.7
White	16	4.2
Hispanic/Latino	13	2.1
Asian	5	0.4
Other/Unknown	2	1.6
	100%	100%

Among the study, population African Americans/Blacks were most likely to be re-arrested multiple times compared to other racial/ethnic groups, while Whites were least likely to have continued arrests.

Figure 18.

Incident of Repeat Arrests by Race/Ethnicity 1995-2004

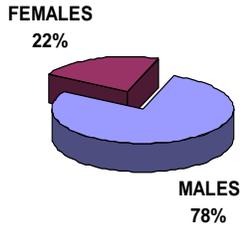


Juvenile Arrests by Gender

In national studies, arrests rates for males are much greater than they are for females. Among juveniles arrested between 1995 and 2004, in the District of Columbia, 78% were male and 22% were female. This represents a male female arrest rate of nearly 4:1. Among juveniles arrested

between 1995 and 2004, in the District of Columbia, 78% were male and 22% were female. This represents a male female arrest rate of nearly 4:1.

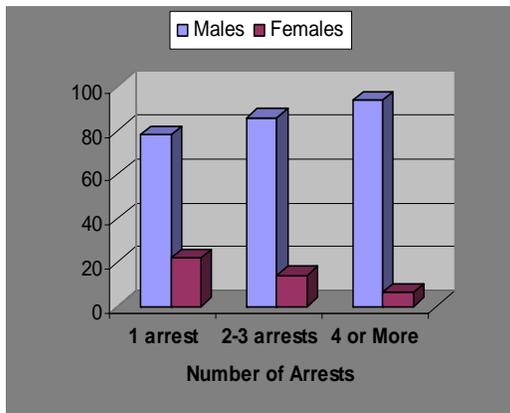
Figure 19.
All Arrests by Gender 1995-2004



An examination of those arrested multiple times shows that as frequency of arrest increased so did the disparity between males and females in terms of rate of arrest or ratio. Among juveniles arrested, 2-3 times the male/female ratio increased to 6:1, and for those arrested four times or more the male/female ratio increases to 15:1.

This indicates that among juvenile offenders females are more likely than males to desist in their delinquent behavior after their first arrest and are much less likely to become chronic offenders, arrested more than three times.

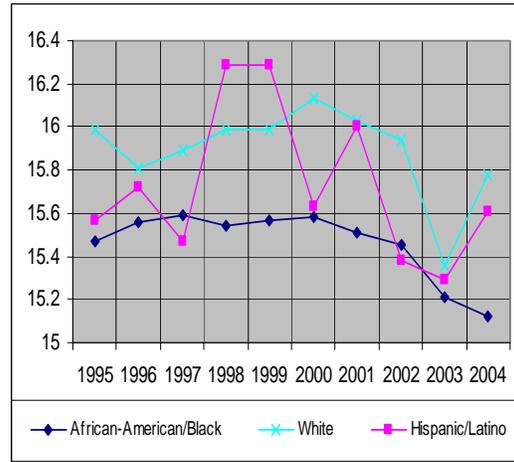
Figure 20.
Repeat Arrests by Gender 1995-2004



Age, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity

A look at the population of juveniles arrested as a cross section of age, gender and race/ethnicity provides some additional insight into this population group.

Figure 21.
Average Age of Male Juvenile Arrestees by Race/Ethnicity 1995-2004



Among male juveniles, the average age of arrests (15.47 years) for Blacks/African Americans is nearly six months younger than it is for Whites (15.92 years) and several months younger than for Hispanic/Latino's (15.70 years). Figure 21 illustrates how the average age for Black/African American youth continues to decline

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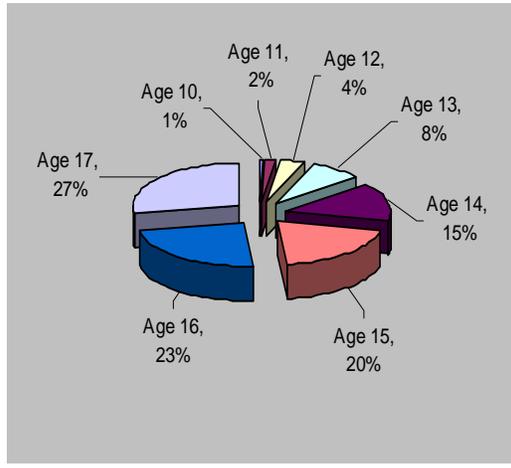
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Figure 15 shows the age of juveniles at first arrest as a percentage. The most frequent ages recorded at first arrest were 15 years (20%), 16 years (23%) and 17 years (27%).

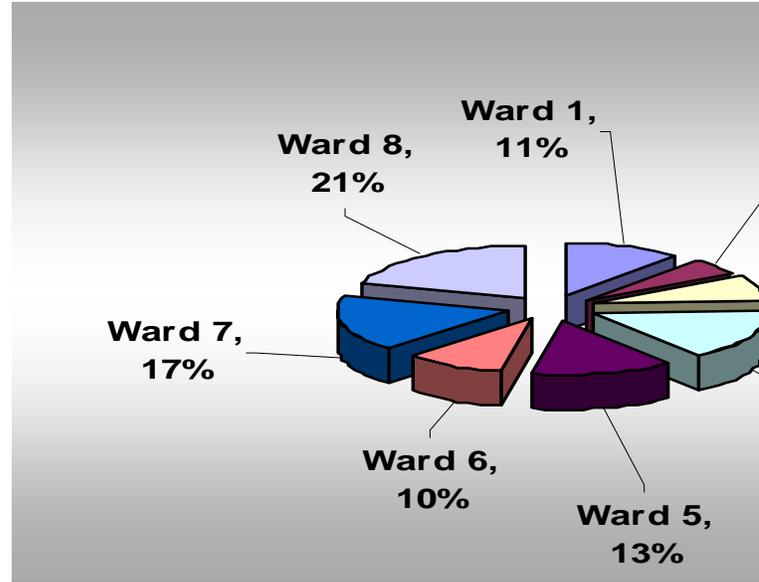
Figure 15.
Age of Offenders at First Arrest
1995-2004



A look at first time juvenile arrests as compared to total juvenile arrests by year shows that over the 10-year study period the percentage of all juvenile arrests that are new or first time is on average 60%, with repeat offenders being responsible for the remaining 40% of arrestees.

⁸ * Violent crime index includes murder & non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. ** Property crime index includes burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

⁸ Multi colored maps represent entire population groups by race/ethnicity without consideration of age. Assumption is made that 10-17 year old juveniles live with family members or extended family members and thus, with others from their racial/ethnic group.



Status offenses, and delinquent activities committed by juveniles range from truancy, and running away, to destruction of property, assaults robberies, and car thefts. If one followed the local and national media, it would appear that these behaviors are common in towns and cities across America.

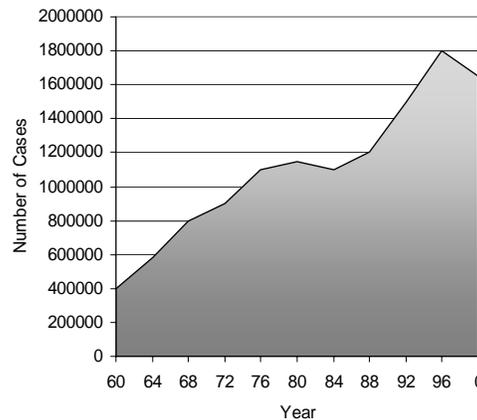


Figure 1.
Delinquency Cases Handled by Juvenile Courts
1960 – 2000
Source: