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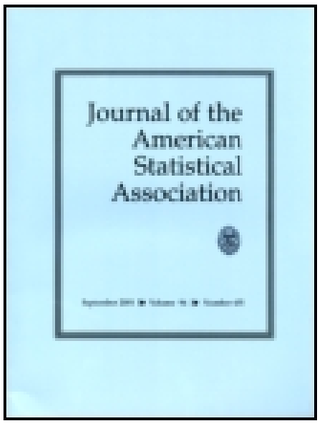

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An Explicit Estimation of the Prevalence of Commitment to a Training School, to Age 18, by Race and by Sex

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An Explicit Estimation of the Prevalence of Commitment to a Training School, to Age 18, by Race and by Sex

ROBERT A. GORDON *

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Estimates of the race and sex specific prevalence to age 18 of commitment to a training school are derived. The obtained relative prevalence rates are found to be similar to another set for a different criterion, a different time, and a different, smaller jurisdiction. It is concluded that differences in relative rates of three to one make it impossible to interpret differences in absolute rates without taking into account the racial composition of the population. This viewpoint is in direct opposition to current proposals to suppress the use of racial and other ethnic identifications in the collection of social data.

1. INTRODUCTION

A small number of estimates of the prevalence of official juvenile delinquency for different segments of the general population, employing various criteria, now exist [1, 5, 7, 14]. Of these, only two provide data for both blacks and whites. Monahan's estimate [7, Table 2], based on having a juvenile court experience by age 18, for Philadelphia, as corrected by Gordon and Gleser [4, Table 3], showed the following percentages delinquent: Negro boys, 50.9; white boys, 17.9; all juveniles, 15.6; Negro girls, 15.8; and white girls, 3.3.[1] Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin [14, p. 54] showed arrest rates to age 18 in Philadelphia of 50.2 percent for nonwhite boys and 28.6 percent for white boys. Of these two estimates, Monahan's employs the more severe criterion and is derived from a lengthier series of data, covering a span of six years.

Quite clearly, these data indicate that unless the racial composition of such rates is taken into account, it would be difficult to compare one set of rates with another, since they are apt to consist of different linear combinations of the specific rates for each race at different times and places. Sex is also important, but local composition presents less of a problem because the sex ratio is practically constant everywhere.

No prevalence estimate at all exists employing the extremely severe criterion of confinement in a training school. Because of the severity of this criterion—greater than any other so far—prevalence rates of confinement should be especially informative, not to mention their potential value to planners concerned with training schools, where the average cost per inmate for one year was $3,020 during fiscal 1964 [9, p. 2].[2]

This article is the second in a series [4] reviewing available prevalence data. The concept of prevalence itself is discussed more generally in the earlier article, which also gives reasons for preferring the term "prevalence" to the term "incidence" for the rate of interest here. Between them, these two articles bracket the points on a continuum of severity for delinquency that should be of most practical interest, since the first deals with delinquents who come to the broad notice of the juvenile court, and this one deals with the smaller fraction who are incarcerated in training schools. In a monograph to follow, it will be shown that for assessing the prevalence of offenders whose severity is worthy of institutionalized social attention, data such as these that are based on actions of official agencies are truly adequate, much criticism of official crime statistics notwithstanding [8].

As will be seen in the course of the present attempt to generate prevalence rates for confinement in a training school, the precise statistics required are often nonexistent, so that any estimate must be founded on at least a few assumptions whose certainty is not *precisely* known. Especially surprising is that this lack of important information prevails despite the energetic production of a great deal of tabulated statistics on juvenile delinquency in general [6] and on training school inmates in particular [6, 9], and despite the current concern, in the age of the computer, with developing "social indicators." It would appear that much governmental effort is expended in producing information that is of little value, while opportunities to generate especially meaningful information with little additional effort are completely overlooked. Why, for example, are age-specific first-occasion rates [4], and base populations, by race and by sex, not routinely a part of the statistical output of

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[1] Monahan's [7, Table 2] original rates were as follows: Negro boys, 40.8; white boys, 16.5; Negro girls, 14.8; and white girls, 3.3 percent.

[2] For example, we know from a study in Flint, Michigan by Gold [3, Table 7] that only 12 percent of a group of 93 white boys having records of committing at least two fairly serious crimes within the previous three years were institutionalized. None of the boys who had committed but one serious crime had been sent away. Statistics showing that more serious offenses carry a higher probability of commitment when brought before the juvenile court have been presented by Lunden [6, Table 121].

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governmental agencies concerned with adult crime and juvenile delinquency? Valuable prevalence rates [1, 4, 14] could easily be derived from such materials using the actuarial methods illustrated here, and especially in [4].

It must be noted that the intent to publish crime statistics by race and by sex flies in the face of recent expressions of sentiment against the production of exactly this sort of information [2]. One sociologist [13] has even gone so far as to regard the request for racial identification in the U.S. Census as "profoundly immoral." One of the obstacles that had to be surmounted in deriving the prevalence rates for 1964 in this article was the absence of a breakdown by race for that year in the reported data [9]. Consequently, an earlier year's breakdown had to be substituted. Monahan's [7] series too had been abruptly terminated by an embargo on race specific data. It is hard to believe that the legitimate interests of anybody are served by this avoidance of full awareness of all the facts concerning any serious social problem. Hopefully, the results obtained here will help to dramatize the need for more rather than less information, and thereby contribute to the reversal of a trend that in the long run can only hinder the achievement of a correct diagnosis of social problems. A profession that campaigns to conceal information from the general public, not to mention from its own researchers, will only discredit itself in the long run.

2. ESTIMATING THE PREVALENCE OF COMMITMENT TO A TRAINING SCHOOL

2.1 Determination of the Number of Inmates Committed for the First Time During Fiscal 1964

The rate of children in public training schools per 100,000 child population (10 through 17 years of age), on June 20, 1964 was 171.9 for the entire country [9, Table 1]. Some idea of the short-range stability of this crude rate is afforded by knowing that although it was up from 150.0 in 1963 [9, p. 3], and also from nearly the same figure, of 149.8, in 1958 [6, Table 126], the increase resulted mainly from the inclusion in 1964 of new kinds of facilities, and is therefore regarded as "more apparent than real" [9, p. 3].[3]

In 1964, the rates for nine major geographic divisions of the United States ranged from 94.8 to 296.2. However,

> . . . it should not be inferred that such differences exist in the rates of delinquency. To a considerable extent the rates for children in training schools reflect differences among the individual States in their community resources and services for children, and the choices available to the court when it reaches a decision regarding the child who has come in conflict with the law.
>
> Many local courts have no well-developed probation services or public or voluntary agencies available in the community to which they can refer children for help. In such instances, the court must refer children to the public training school, since it is the only resource available. In some States children may be committed to voluntary institutions for delinquent children with provision for paying for their care out of public funds, and this is not reflected in this report of public training schools [9. p. 3].

Presumably, regional differences in racial composition and urbanization contribute greatly to this variation, but they are not mentioned here. Forestry camps, reception and diagnostic centers (for the first time in 1964), as well as training schools proper are included.

Of 274 such public institutions, 88.85 percent of those concerned with boys and 90.99 percent of those concerned with girls, reported; hence, the data were slightly incomplete at the start [9, p. vi]. However, the standing populations in the nonreporting institutions have been estimated by the official compiler on a basis that makes the adjustment in numbers for each sex proportional to the number of missing institutions [9, Table F]. The average capacity of the nonreporting institutions appears to be close to that of those reporting [9, Table E], so this adjustment seems quite reasonable—when necessary, I shall follow the same rationale.

The official compiler has also made available the number of children committed by the court to each reporting institution in the course of the fiscal year. However, this includes a substantial number who had been committed previously. Since the criterion employed in this article is "first commitment" or in other words "commitment at least once," it is necessary to correct for these repeaters in order to arrive at a prevalence figure based on age-specific rates for first-time inmates.

Fortunately, the same tables [9, Tables A, B, and C] give the numbers returned to each institution for "violation of aftercare" (the conditions of their prior release), and we are informed that these constitute "more than 7 out of 10" of all *returnees*, the remaining returnees consisting of these recommitted by the court [9, p. 4]. Accordingly, I have employed this information to correct for the recommitted court cases by deducting 3/7ths of the furnished number of aftercare violators returned, from the number committed by the court, for each institution. The sum of all the numbers that result, adjusted for the proportion of inmates of each sex in nonreporting institutions, represents an excellent estimate of the number committed to training school type institutions for the first time.[4] Our calculation of prevalence will begin with these sums, one for each sex.

[3] The increase from 1963 reflects the "inclusion of reception and diagnostic centers, the opening of several new forestry camps, and the inclusion of several additional local schools" [9, p. 1], which had not been counted in prior years. "Detention homes, which provide short-term care for children pending court decisions, are not included." These additions, which help explain the increase, indicate that the fundamental rate is fairly stable.

[4] Since 74 percent of the boys and 65 percent of the girls were in single-sex institutions, these corrections for the number of children recommitted by the courts, based on the known average proportional relation between the number of children recommitted by the court and the published number of aftercare violaters, should reflect whatever slight differences there may be between the sexes in returnee rates for the majority of our inmates. In the case of the remaining children, who were in coeducational institutions, the single returnee rate for the entire institution had to be applied to *both* sexes. Only 28 percent of the standing inmate population in fiscal 1964 were returnees (aftercare violators plus recommitted cases), however. Thus, only a small fraction of a small fraction would even be subject to this ambiguity [9, p. 4]. That is, only about 30 percent of 28 percent, or 8.4 percent of all inmates, would be cases recommitted by the court, and we were unable to distinguish returnee rates by sex for only 26 percent of first-committed boys and 35 percent of first-committed girls. Since in the single-sex institutions the ratio of estimated cases recommitted by the court to total cases committed by the court was practically identical for both sexes—.1077 for boys, and .0900 for girls—we know that this amount of ambiguity can be dismissed as inconsequential.

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Following the adjustments just described, we get 43,339.8 boys and 9,429.3 girls committed to institutions for the first time during fiscal 1964, for the entire United States, including Alaska and Hawaii (which together contributed only 113.9 inmates), but excluding Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. However, by this time it was official policy not to report these statistics by race. The nearest year for which a racial breakdown for these statistics is available is 1956. In 1956, before Alaska and Hawaii became states, 66.7 percent of the boys and 68.0 percent of the girls in training schools were white, whereas in the general population in 1950, 88 percent of the boys and 86 percent of the girls under 21 years of age were white [6, Table 130]. Virtually all of the nonwhite inmates would be Negro. Over an eight-year period, 1946-53, in Philadelphia, Monahan's [7, Table 3] sex and race specific prevalence rates for juvenile court appearance show great stability; in fact, their standard deviations are never higher than 2.25 percentage points (our calculation). It seems reasonable to assume that the inmate racial differential would also be fairly stable over an eight-year period, and that the rates in 1964 would therefore be about the same as those in 1956. Using this assumption, we can obtain totals for first-committed inmates that control for race as well as sex. Since the trend during this period was toward a relative increase in the black population, if anything we would expect the 1956 proportions to understate slightly the proportion of black inmates in 1964. Those who object to this small transfer of information over an eight-year period may find it more acceptable to view the ensuing race specific rates as applying to a data structure synthesized from information for both 1956 and 1964. Certainly, our interest is in the rates during this general period, and not in the year 1964 per se. The new totals for first-committed juveniles, controlling for race and sex, are obtained as follows:

White boys:	(.667)	43,339.8 = 28,907.6
Negro boys:	(.333)	43,339.8 = 14,432.2
White girls:	(.680)	9,429.3 = 6,411.9
Negro girls:	(.320)	9,429.3 = 3,017.4

2.2 Determination of the Age Distribution of Inmates

Although the base population for which the national crude rate of 171.9 was given is for the years 10 through 17, most but not all the inmates were between these ages [9, p. 2]. Data for 1956 [6, Table 132] or eight years earlier, compiled by the same agency, show that 0.5 percent of the boys and no girls were under 10; and 6.9 percent of the boys and 7.0 percent of the girls were 18 or over (see Table 1). As of 1964, 18 states had age limits on juvenile court jurisdiction below 18 (9 at 16 and 9 at 17) and only three beyond 18 (to 21, but one of these was populous California) [6, p. 25]. Since all the inmates must be confined for acts committed while the juvenile court still has original jurisdiction, and the age limit is over 18 in only three states, we know that most of the inmates over 18 nationally ought to be so as the result of aging between the time of the offense for which they were confined and the time these statistics were compiled. In view of the length of confinement, it is clear that a more desirable notion of prevalence would be based on age at the *beginning* of first confinement, rather than on age on a random day when the typical inmate is halfway through his term.

A still better statistic, and the one we would recommend, would be based on the age of an inmate at the time he committed the offense for which he was subsequently confined for the first time. Age at apprehension would probably serve as well and might be more convenient to obtain. This is the prevalence statistic that would be most consistent with other prevalence rates based on police contact or juvenile court experience, because in the case of these other rates age is necessarily recorded much closer to the time of the precipitating offense. If a statistic that is continuous with other prevalence rates, in the sense of applying to the same population up to the age of 18, is desired, this would be the one to use.

Fortunately, it is possible to correct the observed statistics in order to approximate more closely the estimate of the prevalence of first confinement with respect to age at the time of offense or apprehension. To do this, we must assume that the average inmate was halfway through his period of confinement—which was 8.2 months for boys and 10.7 months for girls on the average[5] and we must designate an average for the amount of time that elapses between offense or apprehension and commitment.

The age distribution for inmates of each sex is known for the year 1956 [6, Table 132]. This is again eight years earlier than we would like. However, there is little reason to believe that delinquency as a function of age during the adolescent period is not a fairly stable phenomenon. It would require radical changes in age-specific rates to produce much of a change in final prevalence, because most shifts of cases across age category boundaries simply transfer cases from one age cohort to another of about the same size as that of the one they left, where they continue to contribute to the cumulative rate. Even the age-specific rates are resistant to minor changes, because cases shifted out on one side of an age category tend to be compensated by cases shifted in on the other side.

On the basis of casual observation, I have assigned two months as the estimated average for the time from offense to commitment. This allows time for investigation by police, and by probation officers, and for the delay in holding a court hearing that might accompany a relatively serious offense. Although this figure is mainly a guess, its impact on the final result is so negligible that its role in the computations is mainly formal—to provide a model for the desired procedure in the future. Some such correction is clearly in order. The principal effect of using two months here will be to transfer an additional 2/12ths of the seven percent or so of all inmates who are

[5] The average lengths of stay for boys and girls, respectively, were 9.3 months and 12.0 months in 1958, and 9.2 months and 10.8 months in 1962 [6, pp. 258–59]. These figures indicate fair stability for these parameters, and that part of the variation is due to a real trend toward decreasing lengths of stay, perhaps under pressure of overcrowding [6, pp. 259–60].

over 18 to the next lower age category, where they will add about 1.0 percent more to the total number of inmates figuring in the prevalence rate to age 18. Ultimately, this will affect the second decimal place of the final prevalence rate, expressed as a percentage (in Table 2). Movement of cases across other age category boundaries by this correction would have little effect on the overall prevalence for the same reasons as given in connection with possible errors in the age distribution resulting from using information from 1956.

To accomplish the revision that adjusts the prevalence for age at time of offense, we add two months to half the average period of confinement for each sex, and divide by twelve (months). This yields the approximate proportion of inmates in each year of age who must have committed their offense in their previous year of age. These proportions are .5084 for boys and .6125 for girls.

The initial age distributions, along with the calculations to obtain the revised distributions, are shown in Table 1. It might be noted here that as presented by Lunden [6], the percentage distribution for boys in Column (1) of Table 1 added only to 99.9 percent. To avoid an artifactual shortage in later computations, the percentages for boys have been divided therefore by 99.9 so that they now add to 100 percent. This step, as well as the extra decimal places carried in the tables, makes it possible to follow the calculations without their being obscured by rounding errors, and without any rate appearing to be zero simply because of rounding. Since most of the age categories span a two-year interval, the deducted proportions in Column (2) of Table 1 are halved for all but the last category. Although three states in 1964 had an upper age limit of 21 on juvenile court jurisdiction, it can be assumed, since there were only three, that most of the cases in the over 18 category occurred in other states, and that they arrived at this age of "over 18" while confined. Even in the states with an age limit of 21, many of the first-confinement cases would be expected to fall in the eighteenth year. For these reasons, this open-ended last age category is treated here as being only one year wide.

1. REVISION OF AGE DISTRIBUTION OF INMATES TO REFLECT AGE AT APPREHENSION

Age category	1956 distribution (1)	Deducted proportion (2)	Amount deducted (3)	Amount remaining (4)	Amount added (5)	Revised distribution (6)
Boys:						
Under 10	.50%	----	----	.5000	.6355	1.1355%
10-11.99	2.50	.2542	.6355	1.8645	3.1800	5.0445
12-13.99	12.51	.2542	3.1800	9.3300	10.3053	19.6353
14-15.99	40.54	.2542	10.3053	30.2347	9.4156	39.6503
16-17.99	37.04	.2542	9.4156	27.6244	3.5130	31.1374
18+	6.91	.5084	3.5130	3.3970	----	3.3970
	100.00					100.0000
Girls:						
Under 10	0.00	----	----	0.0000	.1531	.1531
10-11.99	.50	.3062	.1531	.3469	2.9089	3.2558
12-13.99	9.50	.3062	2.9089	6.5911	13.0747	19.6658
14-15.99	42.70	.3062	13.0747	29.6253	12.3399	41.9652
16-17.99	40.30	.3062	12.3399	27.9601	4.2875	32.2476
18+	7.00	.6125	4.2875	2.7125	----	2.7125
	100.00					100.0000

2.3 Determination of the Base Populations

In Table 2, the revised percentage distributions according to age from Table 1 have been applied to the numbers of first-committed juveniles by race and sex that were obtained earlier. This step yields the inmate frequency distributions by age appearing in Column (2) of Table 2.

The base populations, in Column (3), were taken from the 1960 census figures for the same age cohorts four years younger [11, Table 155]. Slight effects of mortality over this four-year period in these age groups are ignored. The sex ratios for whites reflect the actual white post-infancy sex ratio within this age-range of almost exactly 51 males to 49 females; the sex ratios for Negroes reflect their typical sex ratio within this age-range, which is almost exactly 50 males per 100 individuals [11, Table 158]. These ratios have been imposed on the age-specific frequencies for both sexes given in the census tables [11, Table 155], to produce the frequencies for each sex in Column (3) of Table 2, for ages between 7 and 15.99. The frequencies in the age category 16 to 17.99 were obtained in basically the same manner, except that the numbers of males and females in states with juvenile court age limits of 16 or 17, as these applied to each sex, were deducted as appropriate to get the final figures [10, Table 94]. The frequencies for the age category 18–20.99 were obtained by summing the numbers of relevant males and females in the three states which extended juvenile court jurisdiction to age 21, and in the District of Columbia.

Census tables give detailed age-specific frequencies for native nonwhites rather than Negroes. However, it is possible to determine from other census tables [12, Table 1] the number of blacks under five years of age, between 5–9, and between 10–14, in the conterminous United States, and to add to these frequencies the number of "other" nonwhites (i.e., mainly Negroes) in Alaska and Hawaii of the same ages in 1960 [12, Tables 60 and 61], to obtain the total number of U.S. blacks in these age ranges. Dividing these frequencies by the total number of U.S. native "nonwhites" in the same age ranges shows that in 1960 92.50 percent of the native nonwhites under five were Negroes. Similar percentages for ages 5–9 and 10–14 were 92.80 and 92.96. Accordingly, I have used these percentages to convert the age-specific frequencies for U.S. native nonwhites to age-specific frequencies for U.S. Negroes within each age-range as appropriate. These age groupings, of course, would be four years older in 1964. Similar adjustments were made for the three states and the District of Columbia involved in the uppermost age category; here, however, the percentages for converting the frequencies of native nonwhites to frequencies for Negroes were calculated specifically for these jurisdictions, and applied accordingly.

It will be recalled that the two end categories for age were unbounded in Table 1, but are now shown as bounded in Table 2. This requires some explanation. The earliest category, previously "under 10," presents no

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2. CALCULATION OF PREVALENCE AT AGE OF APPREHENSION LEADING TO FIRST-CONFINEMENT, BY AGE, RACE AND SEX

Age category	Revised distribution (1)	Inmate frequency (2)	Base population (3)	Age-specific first-time rate per 100,000 (2) ÷ (3)	Cumulative rate, per 100,000	Cumulative rate, in per cent
White boys:						
7- 9.99	1.1355%	328.2	5,176,035	6.3408	6.3408	.0063
10-11.99	5.0445	1,458.2	3,311,939	44.0286	50.3694	.0504
12-13.99	19.6353	5,676.1	3,089,340	183.7318	234.1012	.2341
14-15.99	39.6503	11,462.0	3,034,965	377.6650	611.7662	.6118
16-17.99	31.1374	9,001.1	2,182,656	412.3921	1,024.1583	1.0242
18-20.99	3.3970	982.0	367,128	267.4816	1,291.6399	----
	100.0000	28,907.6				
Negro boys:						
7- 9.99	1.1355%	163.9	788,244	20.7931	20.7931	.0208
10-11.99	5.0445	728.0	486,766	149.5585	170.3516	.1704
12-13.99	19.6353	2,833.8	449,336	630.6639	801.0155	.8010
14-15.99	39.6503	5,722.4	433,336	1,320.5457	2,121.5612	2.1216
16-17.99	31.1374	4,493.8	252,142	1,782.2497	3,903.8109	3.9038
18-20.99	3.3970	490.3	38,987	1,257.5987	5,161.4096	----
	100.0000	14,432.2				
White girls:						
7- 9.99	.1531%	9.8	4,973,053	.1971	.1971	.0002
10-11.99	3.2558	208.8	3,182,059	6.5618	6.7589	.0068
12-13.99	19.6658	1,261.0	2,968,189	42.4838	49.2427	.0492
14-15.99	41.9652	2,690.8	2,915,947	92.2788	141.5215	.1415
16-17.99	32.2476	2,067.7	2,339,637	88.3770	229.8985	.2299
18-20.99	2.7125	173.9	348,781	49.8594	279.7579	----
	100.0000	6,411.9				
Negro girls:						
7- 9.99	.1531%	4.6	788,244	.5836	.5836	.0006
10-11.99	3.2558	98.2	486,766	20.1740	20.7576	.0208
12-13.99	19.6658	593.4	449,336	132.0615	152.8191	.1528
14-15.99	41.9652	1,266.3	433,336	292.2213	445.0404	.4450
16-17.99	32.2476	973.0	277,078	351.1647	796.2051	.7962
18-20.99	2.7125	81.8	38,130	214.5292	1,010.7343	----
	100.0000	3,017.4				

difficulty in assigning a bound, for most states employ seven years of age as the lower limit of juvenile court jurisdiction, and cases under 10 committed to training schools are so few as to have little impact on the final rates in any case. The base population, in Column (3), is therefore taken for this entire three-year interval, of ages 7–9.99. (It should be noted that the category intervals are not all two years wide.) The last category has been bounded at 20.99, whereas before it was "over 18." However, the revised percentage distribution in Table 2 was calculated so as to reflect age at apprehension. In theory, this should move all of the delinquents in states where juvenile court jurisdiction ends at 18, who were over 18 when observed in confinement, back into the next lower age category, since if they had not been apprehended for a delinquency committed *before* age 18, they would not have been tried in juvenile court. Left in the "over 18" category should be only some of the delinquents from the three states where the juvenile court has jurisdiction to age 20.99; and from two Federal institutions in Washington, D.C., with a total inmate population of 652 [9, Table A]. The base population in Column (3) of Table 2 for this oldest category reflects this line of reasoning by giving the appropriate population figure just for these three states and for Washington, D.C., for each race and sex. Although the calculations for "18–20.99" are carried through most of the rest of Table 2 despite these difficulties, because they may be of interest, the result for the very last column has been omitted intentionally, in order to emphasize that the objective of this article is to estimate prevalence "to 18." The additional ambiguity surrounding this uppermost age category, therefore, does not actually figure in the main results of the article, which appear in the final column of Table 2.

2.4 Comments on the Prevalence Rates Obtained

Some youthful offenders, at various other ages, are confined in institutions for adults. Sometimes this is because the juvenile court waives jurisdiction when the offense is especially serious. Apparently, however, the number of such cases is small. According to Lunden [6, Table 77], only 0.9 percent of the juveniles in police custody were sent to criminal court in 1961, covering 1,498 cities with a total of 50 million inhabitants. In comparison, 48.9 percent were sent to juvenile court. Only 0.4 percent of the boys and 0.1 percent of the girls appearing in juvenile court in Philadelphia in 1961 [6, Table 114] were then sent on to criminal court. Since the crimes in these cases are more serious, the commitment rate from criminal court is apt to be higher than from juvenile court. To the extent that youths who are never confined in training schools are at some point confined in adult prisons, our prevalence would be a slight understatement of the more comprehensive rate. Older

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categories, particularly "over 18," are apt to be most affected by diversion to criminal court. However, if it should prove true that most of the youths sentenced by criminal courts to adult prisons have at some time (usually prior) in their lives been sent to a training school, then they would contribute to our rates in any case.

Another reason that youthful offenders are confined in adult prisons is that some states have age limits of 16 or 17, instead of 18 or 21, on juvenile court jurisdiction, and in a few cases the limits are lower for boys than for girls, [6, p. 25]. But this has already been taken into account, by using census figures [10, Table 94] for individual states, to adjust the base populations for each race and sex for the category "16–17.99," so that they apply to the correct states at risk for the correct period at risk, in Column (3) of Table 2. The rates that result from this adjustment can be construed as estimates of those that would be observed if all states had an upper age limit of at least 18. Somewhat less exactly, they could be construed as including those cases committed to adult prisons in states with lower age limits that would have been committed to training schools had the age limit been higher—the two judicial decisions being not completely comparable.

The adjustments described, that have been made to the base populations, seem to produce sensible results. Except for white girls, who are not far out of line, the 16–17.99 category proves to contain the peak age-specific rate. This would not have been true without adjusting the base population to take into account the differing age limits among states, yet one might well expect these older juveniles to have committed the more serious crimes, and to have accumulated the longest records of incorrigibility, and therefore to be committed at the highest rate. One can also see at a glance that without our adjustment of the base population for the "18–20.99" group, the rates would have been hopelessly out of line, since the inmate frequencies would have been divided by base populations approximately seven times larger in every case. As they now stand, the age-specific rates for "18–20.99" appear to be part of the same distributions of rates as the others, distributions that peak around age 16–17.99 and fall off approximately symmetrically immediately above and below.

The prevalence rates to 18 indicate that 1.02 percent of white males and 3.90 percent of Negro males, and 0.23 percent of white girls and 0.80 percent of Negro girls, nationwide, get committed to a training school for an event taking place before age 18 (see Table 2).

3. COMPARISON WITH OTHER PREVALENCE RATES

It is especially informative to compare the race and sex ratios for these rates with the corresponding ones generated by Monahan's Philadelphia prevalences based on juvenile court experience, as corrected by Gordon and Gleser [4]. These ratios are presented in Table 3. We see that for equal-sized populations, it is estimated that

3. A COMPARISON OF PREVALENCE RATIOS FOR TRAINING SCHOOL COMMITMENT, NATION-WIDE, WITH THOSE FOR JUVENILE COURT APPEARANCE IN PHILADELPHIA

Comparison	Training school	Philadelphia[a] (corrected rates)
Negroes to whites:		
Boys:	3.81	2.85
Girls:	3.46	4.72
Boys to girls:		
Whites:	4.45	5.33
Negroes:	4.90	3.21

[a] Based on Gordon and Gleser [4, Table 2], as modified from Monahan [7].

3.81 Negro boys are committed for each white boy, and 3.46 Negro girls for each white girl; among whites 4.45 boys are committed for each girl, and among Negroes, 4.90 boys per girl. There is, of course, no expectation that these ratios should correspond exactly with those from Philadelphia, which apply on the average to less severe forms of delinquency. However, it might be said that they are certainly not conspicuously inconsistent with each other, and this is reassuring. The confinement ratios, in comparison with the juvenile court appearance ratios for Negroes in Philadelphia, show that Negro boys are somewhat overrepresented, while Negro girls are somewhat underrepresented. In combination, these facts yield a somewhat higher first-confinement sex ratio for Negroes than the sex ratio for Philadelphia Negroes based on first juvenile court appearance. The sex ratio for whites is somewhat lower than the one for Philadelphia whites.

It should be emphasized again, perhaps, that the prevalences presented here are defined in terms of approximate age at apprehension (which is approximately equivalent to age at time of offense, but easier to operationalize), because this seems more useful than other possibilities. The nature of this definition leads to the conclusion that the juvenile court (and, to be more comprehensive, the criminal court) is the strategic point for amassing properly tabulated prevalence data concerning the first-confinement of juveniles, and not the training schools themselves. Since this is also the point at which the prevalence data concerning juvenile court contact are gathered, it would follow that the production of these statistics ought to be integrated into a single, rational operation. Once set in motion, such a system should be capable of generating higher-order prevalence statistics with little additional trouble, such as prevalence of second-confinement, etc.

Finally, it should be obvious from the relative prevalence rates in Table 3 that it is impossible to interpret changes in crime rates over time, or differences in crime rates between one locality and another, without taking account of the composition of the population. It is by no means intended that the relevant groupings are restricted

to those displayed in Table 3—indeed, the richer the information, the better the chance of explanation.

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