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YOUTH CRIME AND EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS  
IN THREE BROOKLYN NEIGHBORHOODS

by

Mercer L. Sullivan

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Vera Institute of Justice  
377 Broadway  
New York, N.Y. 10013

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Since the early 1960s, the Vera Institute of Justice has engaged in action programs and research designed to improve the operation of the criminal justice system and the services provided to those involved with it. A number of those programs have utilized employment and vocational services of various kinds to facilitate pretrial release, to divert selected persons from criminal adjudication, to ease the transition from incarceration to independent living in the community, or to assist ex-offenders and ex-addicts in their efforts to live stable, non-criminal lives in the community. By the late 1970s, Vera's experience with such programs suggested that the assumptions which these programs made about the employment experience of their clients, the kinds of efforts needed to increase and stabilize their employment, and the anticipated impact of employment on their criminal activities were too simplistic and in need of sounder theoretical and empirical grounding.

In 1977, the National Institute of Justice made funds available for Vera to take a reflective, in-depth look at the relationships between employment and crime in all their complexity. The long-term research agenda agreed upon with NIJ for the Employment and Crime Project involved Vera in exploring these relationships through two distinct, but related, research strategies -- a survey of over 900 Brooklyn defendants and an ethnographic study of youth in three high-risk Brooklyn neighborhoods. Each of these efforts and the findings it yielded is described in separate reports available through Vera. This document presents the results of the ethnographic study.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the Employment and Crime Project's ethnographic studies of the relationships between work and crime involvements among a sample of "high-risk" youths in three different neighborhoods of Brooklyn, New York. The decision to conduct these ethnographic studies grew out of earlier research efforts by the Project, including a literature review (Thompson, Sviridoff, McElroy, et al.), 1981), a pilot study conducted among inmates in New York City correctional facilities (Sviridoff and Thompson, 1983), and a research design.

The literature review had revealed deep gaps in the knowledge regarding employment and crime relationships. Economists, sociologists and others were divided among themselves on both theory and findings. Very little research data on individual-level relationships between employment and crime existed and what there was produced conflicting or ambiguous findings. The pilot study's open-ended interviews with inmates revealed a number of possible qualitative linkages between employment and crimes for economic gain, including simultaneous involvements in both as well as the anticipated cases of tradeoffs between legal and illegal ways of making money. The research design called for the collection and analysis of two individual-level data sets on employment and crime involvements, with particular emphasis on the changes with age of such involvements among

"high-risk" inner-city youth. The ethnographic data presented and analyzed here represent one-half of that effort. The results of a survey of defendants in Brooklyn, New York are reported separately (Thompson, Cataldo and Loewenstein, 1984), and a third report compares the results of the two research efforts (Sviridoff with McElroy, 1984).

The theoretical aim of the present study is to clarify the social process by which high-risk youths decide to engage in employment and/or crime. The original and comparative ethnographic data collected during the Project are employed to expand and specify knowledge of the different qualitative linkages between employment and crime, particularly as they are patterned by age and neighborhood of residence. The analysis focuses on changes in patterns of work and crime that occur among high-risk youth and compares that process among three separate inner-city neighborhoods. The Project collected data on the experiences of a core group of about a dozen interacting individuals in each neighborhood by means of participant-observation and life-history interviewing. These data provide reasonably good records of the lives of these individuals from their early teens to the beginning of their twenties and are analyzed here for continuities and variations within and among the three groups in quantities, types, sequences, and combinations of work and crime involvements. Because schooling competes with work and crime for time allocation throughout this age range, school involvements are also analyzed for their inter-relationships with work and crime involvements over this part of the life-cycle.

The choice of this research method grew out of several problems encountered in the review of existing literature. Some of these problems are described here briefly in order to place in context the intended contributions to knowledge of the present study.

Existing knowledge of the relationships between work and crime among high-risk youth is hampered by disciplinary specialization and by theoretical splits in emphasis on individual and structural levels of explanation. Numerous empirical disputes have focused on the relative contributions of age, education, family background, social class, race/ethnicity, neighborhood, the adolescent peer group, and the structure of the economy to the incidence, severity, frequency, and career patterning of juvenile delinquency and youth crime.

Strictly psychodynamic explanations of delinquency were challenged by the seminal studies of Shaw and McKay (1931) and other sociologists who demonstrated high rates of correlation between officially recorded delinquency and residence in inner-city neighborhoods. Both the general poverty of these neighborhoods as well as their purported "social disorganization" were accorded causal importance, though individual-level correlations of poverty, employment, and recorded or reported delinquency were never undertaken. The demonstrated correlations between rates of official delinquency and ecological zones within the urban area were sufficiently, strong, however, to shift the attention of scholars and policy-makers away from their previously exclusive concern with psychological processes and family dynamics.

Sociologists also held other factors responsible for high rates of official delinquency in the inner city, including the schools, as the strain-producing arena where the lower-class culture of the inner-city adolescent collided with the middle-class culture of the school (Cohen, 1955) and the stigmatizing labelling resulting from differential processing by criminal justice and other official agencies (Tannenbaum, 1938; Becker, 1963). Throughout these studies, there was an implied connection between general poverty and disadvantage in dealing with official institutions. Much attention was devoted to processes of social learning and the transmission of delinquency values and behaviors through specifically delinquent "sub-cultures" (Sutherland, 1937; Cohen, 1955; Miller, 1958). The data on which these theories were based, however, came largely from scattered life-histories and unsystematically collected ethnographic data. Most of this data also was focused on inner-city areas, to such an extent that there was little understanding of delinquency in other areas.

The theoretical work of Cloward and Ohlin (1960) extended the subcultural tradition but marked a transition from emphasis on processes of cultural transmission to a new concern with structural influences on the types and amounts of delinquency occurring in different areas. Their theory synthesized elements from Shaw and McKay's (1931) theory of cultural transmission, Merton's theory of anomie (1938), and Cohen's (1955) theory of delinquent subcultures. Influenced also by Whyte's seminal and systematic ethnography (1943) which suggested to

them a variety of career pathways available in different inner-city neighborhoods, they speculated that legal and illegal economic opportunities form neighborhood-specific "structures of opportunity" conducive either to conformity, drug use, stealing, or fighting. Field researchers dutifully went in search of such places and found the elegance of the theory belied by the complexity of neighborhood variation (Short and Strodtbeck, 1965). A theoretical bridge had been built between processes of social learning and the structures of economic opportunity, however, that would remain influential and which is at the heart of the present research strategy.

During this same period, the theoretical sufficiency of the concept of "subculture" was called into question by the work of David Matza (1964). Matza noted the sharp decline in criminality with age, a decline which could not be predicted from subcultural theories. If subculture is so determining of behavior, there is no way to explain why behavior changes so drastically with age. Though Matza himself did not pursue this line of questioning, his influential work did raise the possibility of changing economic circumstances as a major reason for the "aging out" of crime.

As more various and systematically collected kinds of data on juvenile delinquency became available, many of the long-standing assumptions about the distribution of delinquency were cast in doubt. Self-report surveys by Short and Nye (1958) and subsequently by many others indicated that delinquency was more widely distributed throughout the class structure than had been

realized previously. This conflict between official statistics and self-report provoked intensive consideration of several possible explanations: either the police were arresting inner-city youths disproportionately to their level of offense, or official statistics or self-reports were unreliable. Though some truth has been found in each of these propositions, none were found to account adequately for the noted discrepancies. Some controversy remains, but the current consensus is that, while the incidence of delinquency is indeed much wider than had previously been known, frequent and severe delinquencies are concentrated in poor, minority, inner-city neighborhoods (Empey, 1978; Wolfgang, Figlio and Sellin, 1972).

The introduction of modern survey techniques to the study of delinquency also led to new theories designed to explain the broader spectrum of delinquent behavior now in view. Social control theory (Hirschi, 1969) proposed that delinquents were different from non-delinquents primarily because of differences in their attachments to parents, school, and peers. This approach brought renewed understanding of family influences, in particular, though a new focus on the quality of family ties replaced the previous, discredited focus exclusively on broken homes as associated with delinquency (Wilkinson, 1974). Control theory did not so much challenge as complement earlier sociological theories, however, and the most recent work in constructing models to explain the result of self-report surveys has integrated hypotheses from social learning, strain, and control theories for greatest explanatory effect (Elliot,

Huizinga, and Ageton, 1982). Some survey researchers have studied ecological differences among sampled populations from different socio-economic areas (Clark and Wenninger, 1962), but in general self-report studies have tended to minimize the importance of social class and poverty (Hirschi, 1969). This tendency may well be a result of the method, however, since self-reports have been shown to be far more reliable with respect to the relatively trivial offenses reported by many samples drawn from student populations than with respect to inner-city populations in areas where severe and frequent delinquencies are reported.

The often tangled thicket of sociological explanations of crime and delinquency cited above called forth a response from across disciplinary boundaries. Economists expressed dissatisfaction with the ambiguous role of economic factors in sociological theories. Becker's statement of this problem (1968) promised that empirical economic analysis would demonstrate that an individual's decision to commit a crime could be modelled and studied as a profit/loss calculation like any other. This approach stimulated a great deal of research on "the economic model of crime" which differed greatly in its methods from previous criminological work. These economists studied the relationship not between relative or general poverty and crime rates in ecological areas but the longitudinal correlations of aggregate statistics on crime, unemployment, and labor force participation.

Research on the economic model of crime soon encountered serious empirical and theoretical problems. Gillespie's (1975) review of a series of studies found a striking lack of anticipated results. Aggregate employment and crime statistics did not move together as expected and even seemed to move in opposite the expected direction at times. The use of aggregate statistics to measure the presumed rational choices of individual decision-makers simply did not yield the expected results. The question of whether these aggregate patterns concealed different patterns for subgroups could not be answered using this method. The lack of individual-level data proved as confounding for these studies as it had been for Shaw and McKay's ecological correlations of crime and poverty (Orsagh and Witte, 1980).

Theoretically, the economic model foundered on the indeterminacy of tradeoffs among work, crime, and leisure. The fact that leisure can be substituted for either work or crime makes it impossible to predict tradeoffs between the two. In addition, the inherent "noxiousness" of crime may be such an important exogenous taste variable that the willingness to engage in crime cannot meaningfully be incorporated into standard labor market models of the utility of different ways of gaining income (Block and Heineke, 1975). These are not merely abstract theoretical problems with respect to high rates of crime and delinquency among young people generally and among inner-city youths in particular. "Leisure" is distributed quite unevenly by age. Youths generally speaking have more of



it, whether voluntarily, as seen in volatile labor force participation rates, or involuntarily, as seen in high youth unemployment rates, particularly in high-crime, inner-city neighborhoods. The "noxiousness" of certain acts may also be seen quite differently in poor and socially disorganized areas.

Researchers made specific efforts to account for patterns of youth crime using techniques associated with the economic model of crime, but the results of these inquiries were also ambiguous. Analysts agreed that rates of both youth crime and youth unemployment rose during the 1950s and 1960s but disagreed on the relative contributions of unemployment and labor force participation rates to rising crime rates (Phillips, Votey, and Maxwell, 1972; Leveson, 1976).

Another group of studies that have looked directly at employment and crime rates have been the controlled evaluations of employment programs designed in part to reduce criminal activity among participants. Evaluations of these programs have generally found that they succeeded neither in improving the long-term employment of participants nor in reducing their subsequent criminality. These problems have been particularly severe for high-risk youth as well as for ex-offenders (Manpower Development Research Corporation, 1982; Thompson, Sviridoff, McElroy, et al., Chapter Four, 1981). Given these programs' lack of intended effects on employment, their lack of effect on crime rates is hardly surprising. Thus, it is not clear what these experiments contribute to our knowledge of relationships between employment and crime.

The rapid movements of young people in and out of the labor force associated with their reliance on summer and part-time employment proved difficult to model even apart from the question of crime causation. The causes of youth unemployment have also been controversial. Labor economists sharing the micro-economic assumptions of the economic model of crime attributed rising youth unemployment to youths' lack of human capital, in the form of education and work experience, which would make them sufficiently productive to be attractive to employers (Feldstein and Ellwood, 1978). Other economists, however, have increasingly stressed the structural nature of youth unemployment (Clark and Summers, 1979; Freeman, 1980).

These latter studies are but part of an effort by a number of economists dissenting from micro-economic orthodoxy to show the influence of structural as well as individual factors in the operation of labor markets. Harrison (1972) showed, for example, that labor market returns to education are less for black and inner-city residents than for suburban whites. Other economists have described dual and segmented labor markets in which human capital varies in importance (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Gordon, 1971).

These and other economic studies which admit structural factors usually incorporate sociological and social psychological factors. Though they are forced to abandon some of the elegance of micro-economic models in the process, the yield in understanding of the actual workings of the labor market has been substantial. Particularly noteworthy is the work of

Osterman (1980) whose eclectic work has shown the progression of youths with age from a "moratorium" period during which "leisure" is highly valued through a period in which they first "explore" different jobs and eventually "settle" into an occupation, usually in a different sector of the labor market from that of their earlier employment experiences. Osterman suggests that joblessness during the "exploration" period of the late teens and early twenties has much more severe long-term labor market consequences than joblessness during the "moratorium" period when schooling and "leisure" are more fundamental to social identity.

The tension between structural and individual levels of explanation can be seen throughout the literature on youth crime and employment in both sociology and economics. Both the earlier psychodynamic theories and, to a certain extent, the later social control theories in sociology emphasize individual factors and minimize the structural effects of poverty and discrimination which are more prominently featured in theories of strain and the structure of opportunity. The current debate over the age structure of criminality questions whether the striking patterns of age and crime are the result of a socio-culturally invariant developmental process or, alternatively, of the structure of the modern economy (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983; Greenberg, 1977). Human capital theory in economics sees the individual decision-maker as responsible for his own involvement in education, crime, and/or employment while segmented labor market theory sees the individual as adapting to a discontinuous structure of opportunities.

The fact that the different theories have been tested with diverse methods has made resolution of these problems difficult. Surveys of atomized individuals have obscured structural effects. Correlations of aggregate statistics have obscured subgroup and individual patterns. Ethnographic studies have been unable to generalize the social processes they document beyond the boundaries of a small local area.

Despite these difficulties, a number of more recent studies have attempted to address the gap posed by the longstanding neglect of economic factors by sociologists and the newer difficulties encountered by economists attempting to model youth crime and employment patterns without recourse to sociological factors. In contrast to the cross-sectional, point-in-time measurements of the economic model of crime studies, these studies have examined career patterns in both work and crime. Meticulous longitudinal studies have shown that high percentages of a given youth cohort are involved in delinquency but that few delinquents go on to acquire adult criminal records (Wolfgang, Figlio and Sellin, 1972; West, 1974). Studies of the youth labor market have demonstrated the volatile labor market behavior of youth of all social classes as well as the severe labor market disadvantages of inner-city minority youth (Kalachek, 1969; Adams and Mangum, 1978; Osterman, 1980). Surveys, including this Project's (Thompson, Cataldo and Loewenstein, 1984; Sviridoff with McElroy, 1984) and others (Crowley, 1984), have begun to look directly at employment and crime relationships with individual-level data.

These surveys suggest that tradeoffs between work and crime may be more likely for individuals who are beyond the age of formal schooling.

Recent ethnographic work has also begun to explore directly questions of economic causation and career patterning in crime and delinquency. West (1974) has described "serious theft" as a "short-term career" for some youths. Sharff (1981) has shown how drug selling by youths can be an integral part of household economies in poor areas. Moore (1978) has produced a comparative ethnography of the parts played by gang membership, drug addiction, and drug selling in the careers of residents of three different inner-city neighborhoods in one urban area. Ianni (1974), in a study on which the author of the present report worked, showed that emerging organized crime rings among blacks relied far more on youth gangs as a source for new recruits than had older, Italian-American crime groups which relied almost exclusively on kinship as a basis for recruitment.

The present study also seeks to ask questions of economic causation and career patterning of comparative ethnographic data. The comparative aspect of this work is its most unique contribution to the literature. By systematically investigating the continuities and variations in patterns of youth crime and work both within and among three separate neighborhoods, this study offers one kind of solution to existing gaps in knowledge produced by the theoretical and methodological problems described above.

Methodologically, the simultaneous examination of differences within and between groups allows the analysis to reveal both individual abilities and tastes as well as different local structures of opportunity. The facts sought in this data are those the labor economist might seek, such as the various rates of return to allocation of time to crime, work, or education and training. The data allow such comparison, but they also allow these economic processes to be described, at the level of individuals and at the level of small groups, as they interact with other kinds of social processes that are not so easily reduced to economic models. Ethnographic data, because they are holistic in their descriptions of social reality, are traditionally employed in this manner for the description and analysis of social process. The perceived value of human capital and the perceived noxiousness of crime are described within the same framework. Similarly, the inter-relationships of variables such as age, race/ethnicity, neighborhood, social class, and family characteristics with patterns of work and crime are described empirically and processually, not as projections from aggregate figures or as correlations of attributes among unrelated members of a survey population.

The forty or so cases divided among three neighborhoods that are described here are, of course, too few to admit of statistical inferences to a larger population, nor are they so employed here. Frequency distributions of such quantifiable data as number completing high school, number working, and number receiving criminal convictions are documented in several

places in order that individual and group differences may be compared. The interest of this study, however, lies not in the representativeness of the three groups studied but in the fact that they are distinct, naturally existing, interacting groups among whom the social processes inter-relating work and crime vary systematically.

The theoretical aim of this analysis is to describe and compare the interrelationship of economic and social processes among the three neighborhood groups, particularly as these processes eventuate in distinctive career patterns. Rather than seeking to vindicate a purely economic or sociological interpretation of the data, this study seeks to describe the interaction of economic rationality with the social organization of age-grades and communities. The assumption throughout is that economic behavior in either legitimate or illegitimate spheres cannot be sustained over time unless it both competes favorably with perceived income alternatives and is defined through socialization as some sort of social and occupational identity (Becker and Carper, 1970; Hughes, 1971). The qualification of "over time" is crucial, given the volatile and exploratory nature of youths' involvements in both work and crime. Cross-sectional aggregations of youths' economic decisions without regard to how they change over time can be quite misleading. Both "utility maximization" and "identity formation" take time.

The community-comparison aspect of this research design has frequently been recommended as a way of counteracting the

difficulties of generalizing from community studies (Bell and Newby, 1973; Arensberg and Kimball, 1967). Steward's (1950) specific recommendation in this regard was for "area studies" comparing different communities within one local area, as is done here. This analytic strategy resembles that of Cloward and Ohlin (1960), yet the findings presented here differ in important ways from the speculative findings offered in their seminal work. The theoretical importance of their work for the study of youth crime and employment relationships lies in their model's integration of economic and sociological perspectives. Their dual emphasis on legal and illegal opportunities as part of one continuous structure of opportunities and on local communities as presenting their residents with specific subsets of those opportunities is very much at the heart of the present study.

### Data Collection

The ethnographic data reported here were collected between the fall of 1979 and the winter of 1983. The data collected were primarily of two kinds: participant-observation field notes and taped, transcribed life-history interviews. The data were collected by the author of this report along with field assistants in each of the study neighborhoods who were trained and supervised by the author. Antonio Valderama worked in "La Barriada." His separate analysis of the field data is included as a separate report of the Project. Pharoah Russ worked in "Projectville" and Richard Curtis worked in "Hamilton Park." The author engaged in participant-observation in "La Barriada"



and "Projectville" and conducted all of the life-history interviews with respondents from those two neighborhoods as well as the interviews with four of the respondents from "Hamilton Park." Richard Curtis was responsible for all of the participant-observation and most of the life-history interviewing in "Hamilton Park." The period of participant-observation lasted for about a year in each neighborhood, beginning first in "La Barriada," next in "Projectville" and last in "Hamilton Park." Contacts and regular life-history interviews were maintained throughout the data collection period. Stipends ranging from five to twenty dollars were paid to respondents for their participation in the life-history interviews.

All the data presented here were obtained after notifying respondents that they were being studied and that no information identifying them as individuals would be officially recorded. (See the Appendix for the full statement of notification and a discussion of the issues of notification in an ethnographic study of this kind.) Most contacts were made through social workers already known in the communities.

The neighborhoods for study were chosen on the basis of official statistics and extensive field trips through Brooklyn. The studies were confined to Brooklyn in order to provide some comparability with the companion survey research on a sample of Brooklyn defendants. The criteria for choosing study neighborhoods were that they be relatively low-income, yet otherwise vary as much as possible in social and organizational characteristics. These selection criteria limit the

generalizability of this study beyond inner-city populations but do provide a range of inner-city sites within which to study variation in social process.

### Plan of This Report

The organization of this report reflects the theoretical aims of the analysis. The material is presented and analyzed in three major chapters, each chapter addressing the comparative experiences over time of each of the three neighborhood groups in turn. The major chapters are devoted to schooling, employment, and crime. The material is organized in this way because there is a certain autonomy to the progression of experiences in each of these domains. Schooling is but one of several "third factors" mediating between employment and crime but receives separate treatment here because of its particular importance in the careers of young people. Family and neighborhood are also important "third factors" and, though they do not receive separate chapters, they are continually present throughout the report. Neighborhood factors are highlighted by the separate descriptions of each group's experience with schooling, employment, and crime. Family factors are discussed within each chapter as crucial to the neighborhood-specific characteristics of each group's experiences. Each chapter concludes with an analysis of the continuities and variations in experiences within and among the three groups. The final chapter summarizes the continuities and variations within and among the groups in patterns of schooling, work, and crime.

### The Neighborhoods

"La Barriada" is a mixed Hispanic and white neighborhood, though all the youths contacted here were Hispanic, either first- or second-generation migrants from Puerto Rico. They were all bilingual. They were all around eighteen years of age when contacted. They lived near a heavy concentration of factories and warehouses, in an area where most of the viable housing burned down during the research period. Their parents either received public assistance or worked at unskilled jobs. Average family income levels in this group were the lowest among the three groups studied. The housing that burned consisted of old but otherwise sound brick tenement houses. The neighborhood was served by a variety of government and church-sponsored social programs. Crime rates in this section of the neighborhood were high, particularly those for auto theft.

"Projectville" is a predominantly black neighborhood in which there is a large concentration of public housing. The neighborhood is physically distant from major centers of employment. What remained of a once busy commercial section continued to dwindle as a result of fires during the research period. Most of the youths contacted here were around the age of sixteen when first contacted. Three individuals in their early twenties were also contacted. Projectville respondents came from families representing a broader range of income and occupational levels than the families from "La Barriada." Some of the Projectville families also were very poor and relied primarily on public assistance, but others were supported by

government, health, and clerical jobs. Relatively few social programs with services for young people reached this group, with the exception of summer youth employment programs. Crime rates were high, especially for crimes of personal violence.

"Hamilton Park" is a predominantly white neighborhood in which most families are supported by relatively high-paying, blue-collar jobs. None of the youths contacted here lived in households supported by public assistance. Residents are third and fourth generation descendants of European immigrants and retain a certain amount of ethnic identity. Catholic churches and schools provide much of the organizational infrastructure of the neighborhood. This neighborhood is also located near a heavy concentration of factories and warehouses. In addition, it contains a thriving retail section serving local residents. The housing consists of old attached framehouses which are often owner-occupied. Official crime rates in the neighborhood are much lower than in the other two neighborhoods, particularly with respect to robbery.

## CHAPTER II

### SCHOOLING

#### Introduction

The Project's model and research design assume that school experiences during adolescence are an important "third factor" mediating employment and crime choices. The decision to leave or remain in school during this period is closely intertwined with decisions to seek work or to engage in property crime. Since most street crimes are committed by school-aged youths, the linkages among school, family, labor market, and criminal justice system during the teenage years are of particular interest. The model posits school-leaving during these years as a crucial event in the careers of high-risk youth which constrains their future options for both crime and employment.

The consequences of adolescent school experiences and school-leaving can be seen differently from the Project's two broad theoretical vantage points, the economic and the socio-cultural. Micro-economic theorists treat schooling as a source of "human capital" (Becker, 1975) which determines subsequent labor market position by setting the level of a worker's productivity. School achievement, particularly for younger people, constitutes the largest component of their human capital when they enter the labor market. The fact that a large proportion of urban poor and minority youth do not complete high school thus marks them early on for low-paying and insecure jobs.

Economists of the secondary labor market school, however, dispute this view in part by claiming that structural factors such as discrimination distort this process. Bennett Harrison (1972) has shown, for example, that the labor market returns to schooling are less for minority and inner-city youth than for majority and suburban youth.

Socio-cultural theories treat schooling as a multi-functional process which not only prepares young people for later work but also performs custodial and socialization functions. Writers like Cohen (1955), Hirschi (1969), and Elliot and Voss (1974) focus on such matters as the conflict between the norms of school organizations and the norms of life in lower-class neighborhoods in order to investigate the origins of delinquency. In this view, schools shape attitudes towards authority and adaptations to life in organizations as much as they imbue individuals with productive skills.

The comparative ethnographic data presented in this chapter trace neighborhood-specific patterns of schooling for each of three local cliques of youths in order to examine the ways in which schooling affected each local group's experience with employment and crime. For each neighborhood group, this chapter examines the specific ways in which schooling provided both "human capital" and socialization that affected their short-term and long-term involvements in employment and crime. The aim of the comparative analysis of these neighborhood-specific patterns is to show the similarities and differences among the neighborhoods in the ways that schooling serves as a develop-

mental link between these youths' family backgrounds and their eventual entry into the labor market, including the criminal labor market.

### Regional Schooling Trends

Before describing the neighborhood-specific schooling patterns, it is necessary to describe selected aspects of the regional school system and how regional schooling patterns have changed in recent years. The neighborhood-specific patterns are then described and analyzed with reference to the encompassing regional trends.

Most of the youths contacted in the neighborhood studies attended or were attending public schools in Brooklyn. These schools are part of the New York City public school system. The New York City public school system is the largest in the country and it is also highly differentiated. The relation of New York's public schools to non-public schools, and the different kinds of schooling available within the public school high schools are discussed below.

New York City's public schools, like those of many large cities in the country, have seen the withdrawal of large numbers of white, middle-class students over the past generation. This "white flight" from the schools derives in part from the suburbanization of the middle class. Even within the city, however, the public school population has much larger concentrations of minority students than the general population. This disparity is partly the result of the fact that the minority population, having migrated more recently to the area, is

much younger than the general population. They are also poorer and must rely on public education. City-dwelling white middle-class families with school-aged children have turned increasingly to private schools, thus increasing further the concentration of minority children in the public schools. In addition, Catholic parochial schools have long served many middle- and working-class families.

As a result of these patterns, the public school system is now more than 50 percent black and Hispanic. The race/ethnic ratios within the system also vary markedly by school and by borough. Staten Island's public schools are more than 80 percent white; Queens' public schools are about 50 percent white; in Brooklyn, where the Project's studies were concentrated, the public schools are about 25 percent white compared to about half that for the remaining two boroughs, Manhattan and the Bronx. Within Brooklyn, however, there are great disparities between the largely minority schools in the north and central parts of the borough and the predominantly white schools in the more affluent southern half of the borough.

These race/ethnic ratios are often correlated with income levels, school attendance rates and school achievement. Schools with large minority enrollments are often also schools that serve poor families and schools in which attendance rates and achievement levels are low. Not only does the New York City school system now serve mostly poor black and Hispanic children, less than half of all students who enter high school leave school without receiving a high school diploma. The



individual schools discussed in this chapter are related to these overall patterns in terms of their race/ethnic ratios, school-leaving rates, and, as a proxy for income levels, the percentage of students who received free lunch.

### Types of High Schools and Programs

Because most students in the city and also most of those in the ethnographic sample reach the high school level and because high school leads them into a career path in one way or another, most of this chapter will concentrate on the different varieties of high schools serving each of the study neighborhoods and the different ways in which they provide developmental links between students' family backgrounds and their entry into the labor market.

The student about to enter public high school in New York City faces a bewildering set of alternatives. Students from a given locality are zoned to a particular "academic-comprehensive" high school, unless they apply for a specialized school or program. These specialized schools and programs are many and diverse. The major categories of schools and programs are described below in terms of the ways in which they are designed to prepare students for labor market entry. These distinctions have been blurred somewhat in recent years and none represent a rigid, exclusive "track." In theory, students who finish any of these schools or programs should be able to enter college or the job market. In practice, however, these different kinds of schooling are intended for very different kinds of labor market preparation.

Academic-comprehensive high schools, as their name implies, are supposed to offer a full array of college preparatory, business, and vocational programs. These are the most numerous schools in the system. They vary widely in quality and include a few nationally known honors schools which admit only by special examination as well as many schools which are disorganized, dangerous, and have very low achievement levels. Although they do include some vocational programs, most of their curricula are devoted to college preparatory and business courses.

Vocational-technical high schools generally admit students by special application. Vocational schools and programs are designed to produce skilled manual workers. Students completing these programs are supposed to be ready for entry-level manual jobs.

Business education courses constitute a large proportion of the curricula of many academic-comprehensive high schools and are also offered in the vocational-technical high schools. The standards, curricula, and intent of business education programs are quite different from those of the older and more established vocational programs. Students completing business education programs are supposed to be prepared for entry-level jobs as skilled clerical workers. Since the clerical labor market is so important in New York City, the business education programs now enroll more students than do either the college preparatory or vocational programs.

Independent alternative high schools offer smaller classes and individualized programs for students who, for various rea-

sons, do not like or cannot get along in the regular high schools.

Schools for the emotionally handicapped (or "600" schools) serve mainly students who are considered too dangerous to remain in the regular school population. These include both day schools for those who have not been deprived of their liberty by the courts and also schools within jails and training institutions. Though they are no longer officially so designated, these are often referred to as "600" schools.

Finally, many programs in the city, located both in the schools and in community organizations, offer preparation for the General Equivalency Diploma (GED). This diploma is technically the equivalent of the high school diploma but requires no set course of study and is awarded on the basis of passing a single examination. Many students who have interrupted their schooling or who are too old to remain in high school find themselves funnelled into GED courses.

The rest of this chapter describes the paths through the schools into the labor market which characterize each of the three study neighborhoods. The different kinds of contributions of schooling to labor market outcomes are compared among the neighborhoods. These contributions include the provision of basic skills, including literacy and computation, and job-specific skills, such as typing or auto repair. Besides providing skills, schools also provide credentialing by granting diplomas and other official certification which may be required for entrance to certain jobs whether the applicant has or does

not have particular skills. Schools may also provide direct job connections through their placement services and ties to local employers. Finally, schooling provides socialization into relations with authority and a daily work routine.

A. La Barriada

As a group, La Barriada youths were the earliest school-leavers and had the lowest levels of educational attainment among the three neighborhood groups studied. Although some of them sought out vocational programs in hopes of learning job-specific skills, most of them never finished high school. Schooling provided them with relatively few basic or job-specific skills, credentials, or direct connections to jobs. Despite their general lack of achievement in school, they did vary considerably in their ability to read and retained their involvement with schooling until their late teens.

Their troubles with school achievement derived initially from their status as recent migrants and members of a bilingual culture. Most of them were either born in New York or had arrived here from Puerto Rico with their parents when they were small children. Their parents, besides being non-native speakers of English, also had lower levels of education than the parents in the other two neighborhoods. Most of the parents were from rural areas of Puerto Rico where few people obtained more than an elementary education.

Despite their own low levels of education, the parents still expected their children to go through the mainland school system:

Mario Valdez: My father couldn't go to school 'cause he got kicked by a horse when he was young. In Puerto Rico, the school was far away and he couldn't walk it. But he always told me, "Go to school, try to be somebody." He always wanted me to be a doctor.

Most of the La Barriada youths went through the New York City public elementary schools with fairly regular attendance. Even though some did not learn to read, they were usually promoted every year. Some did well in elementary school including Mario Valdez, Octavio del Rio, Carlos Hernandez, and Arturo Morales. Morales did especially well:

Arturo Morales: I was supposed to be a little genius, according to one of my teachers in the third grade. He was talking to the Assistant Principal about me. They were going to put me in a special class, "IGC."

Int: "Intellectually Gifted Children?"

AM: Yeah, that's right. Thanks, I forgot what it was.

Despite the conventional aspirations of their parents and their relatively uneventful passage through elementary school, the youths from La Barriada began to leave school as early as the sixth grade and most never went past the tenth grade. Even when they were still officially enrolled in school, they often attended very irregularly. During this period of irregular attendance leading to withdrawal from school, they were struggling both with immediate financial need and with doubts that the schools were providing them with anything that would lead to later success in the labor market.

Two interrupted their schooling in order to earn household subsistence. Gaspar Cruz left his mother's apartment at the age of fifteen after a fight with his stepfather. He supported himself through stealing for a few months, went to jail for six months when he was sixteen, and combined work and crime there-

after throughout his teens. Mike Concepcion lived alone with his disabled mother and left school at sixteen for a year to work full-time loading trucks:

Mike Concepcion: I was out of school for a year; I was working. That was when things were real bad. We had a lot of money problems with the rent and food and all that. At that time the city was going bankrupt and they were cutting down a lot of financial aid to all the people on welfare.

All the others who left school during their mid-teens were still depending on their parents for basic subsistence, but still felt pressure to earn money. Miguel Tirado said that he felt ashamed to go to school because "my mother couldn't afford to buy me new clothes." During this period, he and his peers were all trying to earn enough to buy clothes and recreation which their parents could not provide. Sometimes they earned spending money through short-term jobs but more often they did so through crime. In addition to their short-term needs for income, these youths also doubted the schools' ability to lead them into desirable jobs when they were older. They specifically doubted the relevance of Fillmore High School, their zoned local academic-comprehensive high school, to their labor market futures. Fillmore High School's enrollment was about one-third white and two-thirds black and Hispanic. Daily attendance was under 60 percent of those enrolled. Nearly one-third of its students received free lunch and two-thirds never received their diploma. Several of them described the school as offering poor quality education:

Carlos Hernandez: Most of the classes are huge and everybody's always clowning around.

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Mario Valdez: I know a lot of people who went there . . . they pass you without teaching you nothing . . . when you're graduated out of there you don't know nothing.

Valdez and the others were also skeptical of the worth of a high school diploma, by itself, in helping a person to obtain a job:

Mario Valdez: I know this friend of mine. He graduated from Fillmore. He's working in a factory making \$3.10 an hour. A guy with a high school diploma he don't know nothing, so, what trade's he got?

Rather than go to Fillmore, as they were zoned to do, both Mario Valdez and Gaspar Cruz made special applications to and were accepted by Webster Vocational-Technical High School. Webster High School was reputed to be one of the best of the system's vocational/technical high schools. Its enrollment was nearly all black and Hispanic and four-fifths of the students received free lunch. Daily attendance, however, averaged over 80 percent and half the students received diplomas.

Int: Tell me why you didn't want to go to Fillmore?

Gaspar Cruz: They don't show you electrical installation, something you could have a future with. They show you little simple things like math, social studies. I don't wanna hear that, I just want electrical installation, something that could give me a career.

Mike Concepcion, when he returned to Fillmore after working for a year, also sought vocational training and enrolled in



Fillmore's auto mechanics program. Though they were dubious about the value of a high school diploma by itself, these youths did have hopes that a diploma plus training in a "trade" would lead them to good jobs. For most of them, desirable employment meant skilled blue-collar jobs. They had little interest in the college preparatory or business curricula at Fillmore, though they did think that the business courses offered more to females than to them:

Int: Is your girlfriend learning something at Fillmore or is she just going to get a diploma?

Gaspar Cruz: She's learning 'cause she's taking up secretary.

Int: So you think that Fillmore could teach a woman something she could make money from, but not a man?

GC: Not a man. Fillmore is for secretaries, book-keeping, stuff like that, that's what the school is really for. And they got automotives, but I'm not interested in automotives. I'm not gonna take up secretary or automotives.

Although most of these youths never finished high school, they were still involved in schooling for several years after they had begun to attend irregularly. Their parents still expected them to be in school and they concealed what at first was "hooky" and only later became official withdrawal from school. Although many were staying out of school in an attempt to make money, their opportunities for both crime and work during the mid-teens were often sporadic and they alternated frequently among work, crime, and school. Despite their skepticism over the value of schooling for getting them jobs, they did not totally discount the value of a high school diploma.

Many of those interviewed reported irregular attendance but also claimed that they would eventually return to school and finish.

School also offered them social rewards apart from training for jobs. Mike Concepcion and Arturo Morales, for example, were both stars on the Fillmore baseball team before they began to withdraw from school. Others hung out around the school even when they were not attending in order to be near females. Still others, like Mario Valdez's younger brother Esteban, maintained school enrollment in order to protect the family welfare budget:

Int: Are you going to school now?

Esteban Valdez: Well, I usually go the first few days to sign up.

Int: But you don't go to class after that?

EV: No.

Int: Why do you bother to sign up?

EV: Well, see, they might cut my mother off welfare, so she makes me go.

School and welfare records are systematically cross-checked in this manner to enforce school enrollment, if not attendance.

Their parents also exerted continuing, if often ineffective, pressure on them to do something productive, either to attend school or to find a job. Arturo Morales reported that his parents would buy clothing and provide spending money for his younger brother and sister who were attending school but not for him because he was not in school. In other cases,

parents had limited resources for supplying job connections or manipulating spending money and would not go so far as to throw their sons out of the house, but were quite clear in their expectations that they should either go to school or work.

It appears that the failure of parents to supervise their children's school attendance has less to do with the parents' values than with their resources. Arturo Morales and Mario Valdez from La Barriada, for example, both described to us how they kept their parents from finding out that they were not attending school. Mario Valdez started playing hooky very early, in the third grade:

Int: Third grade? Wow, your folks didn't know about this?

Mario Valdez: Nah, they [the school] used to send letters home, but I used to grab them out of the mailbox. I had books and I would pretend to do my homework. My father used to check my notebook every day.

Arturo Morales became a truant in the eighth grade:

Arturo Morales: When you become a truant, you say "let me take one day off," then you take another, then you go the whole week. . . . The mailman used to come, I'd sneak to the mailbox and take out the mail. Half the year in the eighth grade I was following the mailman.

The ease with which these youths could deceive their parents about their school attendance illustrates the lack of any contact between parents and school except through the mail.

After several years of irregular involvement with school, most La Barriada youths eventually found that they were too far

behind and withdrew completely. Those who withdrew earliest were those who had never learned to read, including Julian Acosta, Gaspar Cruz, and Jorge Padilla. They withdrew in junior high school. Those who could read fairly well, including Mario Valdez, Arturo Morales, and Octavio del Rio, maintained at least their enrollment through the tenth and eleventh grades.

In addition to their general lack of academic success, all of these youths' gradual estrangement from school was also hastened by their involvements with fighting and crime. Some reported getting into fights in school while others claimed that they had trouble attending school because they had to cross the territory of hostile youth gangs in order to get to school. Fighting, however, did not lead directly to expulsion from school and none of these youths reported having been in the "600" schools for violent students.

When they began to get arrested for serious income-motivated crimes, their school difficulties worsened still further. After finishing six months in jail Gaspar Cruz quit going to Webster Vocational-Technical High School:

Gaspar Cruz: When I came out of jail, the school thought I had just been playing hooky, and they didn't accept me. I didn't want anyone to know about that. I told my mother not to spread the word. So they discharged me.

Before terminating their school involvements once and for all, however, several of these youths went through one final effort to obtain educational certification. After one or more

years of being out of school, they began to reconsider their earlier skepticism about the value of the high school diploma and to enroll in programs designed to prepare them for the General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Arturo Morales enrolled in such a program while awaiting adjudication of his court cases when he was seventeen. Gaspar Cruz enrolled in a GED program and attended regularly for several months after he had been out of school for nearly three years. Chucho Rivera took part in a GED program while confined to a youth home by the Family Court. Octavio del Rio expressed his intention to sign up for a GED program that would also have paid him a stipend, though he never did so. Despite this last effort to obtain a diploma, none of them actually passed the GED examinations, although Gaspar Cruz did dramatically improve his reading.

Of the dozen youths we interviewed from La Barriada, only two eventually obtained high school diplomas, both from Fillmore High School. In both cases, this success came only after interruptions and difficulties. Mike Concepcion obtained a regular high school diploma at the age of twenty-one, shortly before he would have become too old to remain enrolled in a regular high school. At that point he had been in and out of school several times. During his periods of not attending school, he was variously engaged in work and crime. At one point, around the age of nineteen, he was also working full-time, going to school in a special night program, and also stealing cars with some frequency. He hoped that his high school diploma would help him to obtain work as a legitimate

auto mechanic, but he remained skeptical as to whether it actually would pay off. He stayed in school because he considered education intrinsically worthwhile:

Mike Concepcion: I wanna try to get the most of school, whatever I can. Even though I don't graduate, it still means something to me. I don't care what it means to anybody else.

The other youth from La Barriada who had finished high school was Carlos Hernandez. He was a few years older than the others but had grown up on the same block. He had finished college and was working for a master's degree in construction management. He considered himself to be quite unusual. All of his older brothers and sisters had left school and were involved in crime. He attributed his own success in school and his staying clear of crime to the fact that his parents started to make some money from a small business and that the whole family wanted their youngest to make good. He says he was also helped along by being put into a special College Bound program in Fillmore High School:

Int: Do you think you got better courses in high school because you were in College Bound?

Carlos Hernandez: I know I did.

Int: We've interviewed other guys from your neighborhood and they say there's a lot of fooling around in that school.

CH: Definitely.

Int: What was the main thing that made it better?

CH: Smaller classes.

Int: And did you have classes with the same people from one class to the other?

CH: Most of them, not all of them.

With the possible exception of Carlos Hernandez and Mike Concepcion none of the youths from La Barriada entered the labor market with job-specific skills, credentials, or direct connections provided through the schools. Even Mike Concepcion has worked mostly in low-level auto mechanic and maintenance jobs not requiring a high school diploma. Those who did remain in school longer and who were more literate did move into clerical jobs which required that they be able to handle documents. The rest moved eventually into unskilled manual jobs in factories, hotels, and auto repair shops. None of these manual jobs required educational credentials or even a high degree of literacy.

**B. Projectville**

The youths from the Projectville neighborhood sought high school diplomas primarily as general credentials for getting jobs or getting into college. None of them sought out or enrolled in vocational programs. They reported a great deal of interruption in their schooling. Like their counterparts in La Barriada, they began to attend school irregularly in junior high school or the first years of high school and most of them were not able to complete the regular high school curriculum. Unlike the Hispanic youths from La Barriada, however, the Projectville youths were more persistent in their efforts to gain educational credentialing and several of them managed to earn their equivalency diplomas after a period of interruption in their schooling.

The parents of the Projectville youths had higher levels of education than did the parents in La Barriada. Some of the Projectville parents had grown up in the New York area and had completed high school. Others had migrated to New York from the Southern states as adults and they had lower levels of education. In general, the Projectville parents all encouraged their children very strongly to pursue education, at least through high school and, if possible, to college. As reported both by the youths themselves and also by those of their parents whom we interviewed, the Projectville parents all stressed the need for a high school diploma in order to get jobs. Larry Jefferson's mother said, "I told my kids that without no education you can't scrub a floor around here."



Despite these parents' strong desire for their children to stay in school, they also lacked resources for keeping them there. The mother of Johnny and Tommy Singleton reported that her sons never got into trouble until they began junior high school. At that point she took a full-time job:

The Singletons' Mother: Before I worked in a way that I could always pick them up, until they got into junior high. Then I found they could go by themselves and that's when I started having problems.

Int: What about Tommy, has he been going to school every day?

The Singletons' Mother: Sometimes he goes, sometimes he doesn't. I can't make him go. I figure the best thing is to keep talking to him. He knows how I feel.

Zap Andrews reported that his father had tried to discipline him when he first began to stay out of school. His parents' attitude began to change, however, after their son began to get occasional spells of employment:

Zap Andrews: They used to be on my back hard, then they slacked up.

The Projectville youths themselves generally shared the attitudes of their parents, but the youths also expressed skepticism about the value of the high school diploma. Juice Baker, a respondent in his early twenties who was a few years older than the others at the time of the interview, had a high school diploma and some college credits but said:

Juice Baker: What do I need a high school diploma for? To mop a floor? Look in here [pointing to newspaper employment ads], you don't see anything there says high school grads. It's all college.

Baker's friend and contemporary Sky Whitney said that he had dropped out in the eleventh grade because "I couldn't see how it could help me."

As in La Barriada, this skepticism about the worth of a high school education was accompanied by a perception that females could benefit more than males because they could move directly from the high school business curriculum into secretarial jobs:

Juice Baker: [still pointing to newspaper ads]  
Everything in here is jokes, unless you happen to be a typing clerk or a bookkeeper.

Int: Did you ever think of learning how to type?

JB: Nah, I'm not into that. It's not . . . natural. It's something that's just not . . . a man's not gonna do that now.

Int: Do you think there are more jobs for women with high school diplomas than for men?

JB: Yeah, and with higher pay.

Ben Bivins, four years younger than Baker and Whitney, returned home from prison and sought work as a typist, having earned his GED and a thirty-five word per minute typing certificate in prison.

Despite their skepticism and the fact that most of them attended school irregularly during their middle teens, most of the Projectville youths retained their belief in the value of a high school diploma. Tommy Singleton aspired to go to college like his older brother. Zap Andrews wanted a diploma in order to get into the Navy. Jerry Barnes wanted a diploma because a

friend of his who had just returned from prison told him that without a diploma all he could get would be a factory job. Their belief in the value of the high school diploma came into conflict with their experience of schooling. Fights in school caused problems for some of them and almost all of them interrupted their schooling at some point in order to seek income.

For two of the Projectville youths, their troubles in school began with fighting in school during the earlier grades when they were still going to school with other students from their same neighborhood. Both Larry Jefferson and Johnny Singleton were transferred to "600" schools as a result of violent confrontations in school.

Int: Tell us something about the problems you say you've had in school.

Johnny Singleton: I got in trouble once . . . you know, once you get blamed for something, my mother told me, they always come to you for the next thing. I happened to be walking by and a whole bunch of dudes was acting crazy feeling up this girl. They pushed her down and she happened to be looking up at my face. The cops went to my friend's house and the girl was going to press charges, I don't know what finally happened, but they dismissed the case. I know I got blamed for something I didn't do and I got kicked outta school and I lost a lotta time. Then I got a reputation, everybody said, "Johnny did this, Johnny did that."

Int: Then you say you were accused of snatching a teacher's purse?

JS: Yeah, the teacher. She happened to be walking in the door and somebody bumped into her, and she said I tried to snatch her pocketbook, but she didn't have no proof and the courts wouldn't accept it. Then they had me taking tests to go to a 600 school, only I didn't know it was a 600 school.

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Int: When you were in fifth grade, they moved you to a 600 school?

Larry Jefferson: Yeah, 'cause I did something I wasn't supposed to do, so they transferred me to a 600 school and then after that I said I couldn't stand it with no girls and they saw I was trying my best so they transferred me back.

Int: Did you get in a fight or something?

LJ: No. It was really 'cause of the teacher. I got in a car accident and I hate for people to twist my ears.

Int: You hurt your ear in a car accident?

LJ: Yeah. And she twisted it, so I got mad, but I didn't really hurt her. I just pulled her wig off and that was it. And I started getting in trouble.

The rest of this group all managed to complete elementary and junior high school without failing a grade or getting into serious trouble.

None of the Projectville youths aspired to either skilled or unskilled manual work. When it came time for them to attend high school, none of them applied to vocational-technical schools or programs. They all went to the academic-comprehensive high schools to which they were zoned. The school zoning for their neighborhood, however, was peculiar and subjected these youths to a variety of stresses.

The New York City public school system has for some years tried to overcome racial segregation by moving students from poor minority neighborhoods into schools in more affluent white neighborhoods. With respect to Projectville, a poor, largely black neighborhood, this policy only affected high school zoning. As a result, Projectville youths attended very segregated and disorderly local elementary and junior high schools and

then were scattered among seven different high schools, six of which had student bodies that were more than 50 percent white. The schools with majority white student bodies also had attendance rates of about 75 percent and about 60 percent of their students received diplomas.

As when they entered high school, Projectville youths, found themselves separated from their friends and confronted with racial violence. Lucky Giles was the only one who was assigned to a predominantly minority school in a nearby minority neighborhood. The others went to schools which served predominantly white working-class families. They all reported racial confrontations:

Zap Andrews: I had so many fights there. Not because I started it 'cause if it was up to me, color, it don't make no difference, really. I had a lotta white boy friends. I had a lotta white friends, girls too, I never thought I was gonna touch a white girl until I went to that school. But I had a lot of fights, comin' outta gym, comin' down the hallway and a whole gang of them and I only had a couple of homeboys.

Tommy Singleton cited his troubles to the Family Court when he was arrested at fifteen for burglary:

Field Notes: Tommy Singleton then said, "The judge asked me if I was having any problems in school and I told him yes that I was having racial problems." He then said that he went to a school that was 90 percent white and that he had liked junior high school better because his friends were there. Now he has to cut school to see his friends and he considers that a terrible thing.

One female whom we interviewed, the wife of respondent Steve Johnson, told how she had gotten into trouble in high school:

Steve Johnson's wife: They used to bus us out there and that's the first time I ever saw anything like this. On Halloween white people came around the school with bats and things. All the blacks used to hang around in a gang, and that's when I first started getting in trouble.

Most of the Projectville youths began attending school irregularly during high school and all of them had seriously interrupted their schooling by the time they would have been in the eleventh grade. They left school in pursuit of short-term income even more than as a result of fights in school. Zap Andrews described his decision to leave school in the ninth grade:

Int: When you quit going to school, was this because of all the fights?

Zap Andrews: Not really. It was just the money problem. I didn't have the things I wanted, like new clothes and stuff like that.

Andrews sensed at the time he left school that he might be sacrificing long-term opportunities for short-term income:

Int: OK, you quit going to school because you wanted some money now, but did you ever think "If I quit going to school now, it's going to keep me from making more money when I get older?"

ZA: All my life I was thinkin' 'bout that. I had it good back then [when he was in school] 'cause my mother used to work in the hotel, my father had a good job, you know, but then she quit that, things went bad then. . . . My moms and pops wasn't uppin' no money you know. My father says, "All right, I'll give it to you next week." Later for it, I need some money now. Like, the girls, you know, I wasn't lookin' cool enough. But it's not the girls. If it wasn't no girls, I still would've did what I did.

Other Projectville youths left school because they were about to become fathers and wanted to find full-time jobs to support their new families. Stan Williams was one of these. He also regretted the necessity for leaving school:

Int: Did you decide that getting a high school diploma was not going to get you anywhere?

Stan Williams: Yeah, it would have gotten me somewhere but I just could not take the time off to sit around and wait for it. My old lady told me she was pregnant.

Another respondent, Steve Johnson, left a high school equivalency program when his girlfriend became pregnant. He was getting paid a small stipend as part of the program, but left when he found an opening for a factory job that paid more. After he had been out of school for two years, Zap Andrews also found himself facing impending paternity and cut short his thoughts of returning to school or of joining the military in hopes of completing his education there.

As they began to leave school, in reaction to trouble and in pursuit of income, the Projectville youths sought work without much success. Employment programs that recruited through their schools in fact supplied most of the employment available to youths in their mid-teens in this neighborhood. Separation from school thus partially cut them off from their chief source of jobs. Most of them were involved in crimes for money before they had much access to employment. Both participation in crime and the subsequent involvement with the criminal justice system interrupted their education further. During this

period, they all were cut off from the regular high schools. Johnny Singleton and Larry Jefferson had been placed in "600" schools early as a result of violent incidents in school before they reached high school. Both of them later entered residential institutions outside Brooklyn after they were arrested for stealing. Jerry Barnes, Lucky Giles, and Ben Bivins all spent time in jail before they were seventeen.

Even before they were convicted, they spent several months making frequent court appearances that made it impossible for them to attend school regularly. Tommy Singleton was never given any penalty by either the juvenile or adult courts, but his single arrest made it impossible for him to continue in his regular high school. He kept getting switched from one school to another for months after he was put into a special program for students with court cases:

Field Notes: Tommy Singleton said that his court case had caused all of his problems. "That's when they started assigning me to all these different schools." Most of the schools he was assigned to informed him that he was unqualified to go there before he even got there. At one point, he was assigned to a special program in a vocational school, but the program closed shortly after that.

The process by which the Projectville youths left school during their mid-teens partially resembled the experiences of youths from La Barriada. Both groups left school partly as a result of trouble, failure, and dislike. Most members of both groups left in pursuit of income. The processes differed between the neighborhoods in that La Barriada youths left more as a result of academic failure and dislike of school while the



Projectville youths left more as a result of getting into trouble.

A more striking difference between the two groups is that of the extent to which the Projectville youths managed to renew their schooling after these mid-teen interruptions. Like their counterparts in La Barriada, the Projectville youths still considered themselves "in school" as long as they were still of school age even when they were not attending regularly. They still enrolled each fall, in some cases to protect the family welfare budget, but also because they planned to resume schooling and in fact did attend school occasionally. They still hoped to finish and they were also drawn to school by social attractions like athletics and girls.

As they approached the age of graduation from high school, however, most of them realized that they would not be able to finish school in the conventional manner. Either they were distracted by the need to make money or they were too involved with court cases and jail or they were simply too far behind in their work to complete school on time. Some, including Stan Williams, Zap Andrews, Larry Jefferson, and Jerry Barnes withdrew from school completely at this point. Several of the others persisted.

Those who continued to seek education moved into educational programs outside the regular high school structure. These programs included the alternative high schools, residential institutions and several types of GED programs.

Tommy Singleton was finally assigned to an alternative high school which had opened very close to his neighborhood. Lucky Giles soon joined him there. Giles did not remain long since he was sentenced to prison shortly thereafter. Tommy Singleton continued in the alternative school for the next three years, attending steadily for periods of months and then not attending while he pursued short spells of both legitimate and underground employment. He received his GED at the age of twenty and has now enrolled in a local public college. His college career may also be interrupted like that of his older brother. The older brother is now in his mid-twenties and has been in and out of college for several years.

Johnny Singleton spent two years in a residential program suggested by a social worker associated with the Family Court. He entered the program voluntarily, feeling that he needed to make a complete break with his former environment in order to stay out of trouble:

Johnny Singleton: I knew I just couldn't make it in these city schools. I knew too many people.

He attended the regular schools in the suburban town where he was placed and earned his GED also.

Two others in this group also managed to earn GEDs. Reggie Hawkins chose to enter a GED program even though he had always done fairly well in school. He moved into the GED program in order to finish high school early:

Reggie Hawkins: I learned about it through my high school. I told them "I don't feel like staying,

going one more year, gettin' up every morning in the snow." They said, "Well, we got a GED program." I said, "All right, I'll take that." I only had to go three hours a day, so I took it.

Int: This was the start of eleventh grade for you, right? How long did it take you to finish?

RH: I got my high school diploma in January, right before the new term started.

Hawkins has since earned some college credits.

Ben Bivins earned his GED at the age of eighteen while he was in state prison. Lucky Giles also studied for his GED in prison and missed passing the test by only a few points. Giles was scheduled for a second test but missed it because he was released the day before that test was to be given.

The different educational achievements of the youths from Projectville and La Barriada carried over into their labor market experiences. More of the Projectville youths had high school diplomas, and most of them could read. Their academic problems were usually with math and the math portions of the GED test were the ones that gave them trouble. Most of these youths, both those with and those without diplomas, moved into clerical and service sector jobs which required more literacy than unskilled manual labor jobs. Some are attempting college in hopes of becoming professionals. Those with high school diplomas have been somewhat vindicated in their persistence since they have gotten slightly more and better-paying jobs than their peers who did not finish school. Those who did not finish found themselves restricted mainly to messenger and guard jobs. Their skepticism about the worth of the diploma has also been justified, however, since most of them, those

with and those without diplomas, are still frequently unemployed or employed at undesirable jobs. Schooling has provided most of them with basic literacy and some of them with a credential. Schooling has not given them job-specific skills or direct connections to jobs. The irregularity of their schooling seems to have preceded careers of irregular work.

C. Hamilton Park

The Hamilton Park youths treated schooling as one possible path into the skilled blue-collar jobs to which they aspired. All of them enrolled in vocational programs designed to give them job-specific skills in addition to a high school diploma. Half of this group did not finish high school. A few left school because they had been expelled for fighting or assigned to "600" schools or drug programs. Most of the school-leavers found jobs, usually through family connections, soon after leaving school. Those who finished school generally found better jobs than those who did not. Those who finished benefited not only from the high school diploma but also from the combined advantages of having the diploma, job-specific skills, and direct connections to desirable jobs through their families and also through the schools.

Most of the parents of the Hamilton Park youths had themselves grown up in this neighborhood and attended the same schools as their children. Many of them also had not finished school since they had begun work while they were still of school age. The parents generally encouraged their children to finish high school, but their attitude was quite pragmatic. They thought little of the public schools and, if they could afford it, sent their children to Catholic parochial school in the early grades. Boys were then expected to go on to public vocational/technical high school. Some families tried to keep their daughters in parochial schools through high school.

When some of their sons began to leave school before finishing, the parents' attitudes were quite flexible. If their sons went to work, the parents relinquished pressure to finish school. When they did urge them to finish school, they emphasized not only the intrinsic value of schooling for getting a job but the need for a minimal credential, the high school diploma, in order to benefit fully from family and neighborhood-based connections to jobs. Teddy Haskell had dropped out of his vocational/technical high school at sixteen and started working in a part-time delivery job in his cousin's business. At eighteen he enrolled in a GED program because he was tired of the kind of work he was doing and his father told him of a specific way that the diploma would pay off:

Field Notes: Teddy told me that his father is an engineer. I asked what kind. He said his father operates heavy construction equipment. His father wants him to go back to school because he can get him into the union, but only if Teddy has a diploma.

Some of the Hamilton Park youths had attended public elementary schools and others had attended local parochial schools. Most people in the neighborhood thought that the parochial schools were much better. John Gutski said that he would have gone to parochial school but his parents could not afford to pay. Otto Deutsch's girlfriend, Bonnie O'Brien, said that Otto's friends who had gone to public elementary school were practically illiterate. Pete Calderone said that his younger brothers had gone to parochial elementary schools and had learned more than he and his older brother who had attended public elementary school:

Int: How come you went to different schools? Did your parents start making more money?

Pete Calderone: I guess, maybe, or saved up or something.

Int: I heard the school in your neighborhood is a pretty wild place.

PC: I know. I wouldn't send my kids to that school. I think public schools are the worst thing. I have nephews, I wouldn't want to see them go to those schools. Catholic schools are a lot better, they teach you a lot. Public schools, the teachers don't seem to give a shit, they don't have any control over the kids. In Catholic schools, it's still pretty strict. They teach you a lot, they really drill it into you. Public schools . . . I never learned my times tables in the third grade. All my friends who were going to Catholic school, man, they knew all the times tables. Same thing with reading, all these guys in Catholic school, third, fourth grade, they were great readers. I couldn't read. I can now.

Int: And how are you on your times tables?

PC: No, I'm bad in that. Something I should study. I'm not a total dummy.

As they entered high school, the Hamilton Park youths all moved into the public school system. During their middle teens, about half of them left school while the other half managed to earn diplomas with minimal interruptions. Those who left usually did so as the result of getting into some sort of trouble, either with drugs or by fighting with teachers or other students. Most went to work very soon after leaving school, whether or not they left with a diploma. Those who did leave with a diploma had access to better jobs both as a result of the diploma itself, as a result of having learned job-specific skills in school, and also through direct connections to jobs through the school.

Some of the Hamilton Park youths never made it into regular high school. Brian Deutsch left school after the eighth grade and never returned. Brian Grady and Teddy Haskell got into serious trouble for fighting in their local public junior high school and were assigned to a "600" high school:

Brian Grady: Then they shipped me out of that school to a 600 high school. It's really strict. You do something wrong, they fuckin' punch the shit out of you. Kids just don't fuck around over there.

Int: That's when you quit fuckin' around in school, huh?

BG: No, that's when I quit school. . . . They was givin' me all easy work . . . fuckin' twenty-three year old dudes in there, they don't know how to spell their name. I'd tell 'em it's too easy and they'd say, "You gotta do it anyway, we got to know what level you're on." I'm doin' this for how long, three months? I'd rather go out and work. That's why I went to work.

Brian Grady never did return to school. Teddy Haskell also left the 600 high school, although he later enrolled in a GED program. Peter Murphy withdrew from school as a result of drug problems in his middle teens but later managed to earn his GED in a residential drug program.

Besides these three early school-leavers, most of the other Hamilton Park youths entered Burdock Vocational-Technical High School. This school was located in an industrial area adjacent to their own neighborhood. Like all vocational/technical high schools, it required a special application and entrance examination. Students from Hamilton Park had been going to this school for years, however, and most of the youths contacted by the study routinely applied to the school and were accepted.



Burdock High School did not have a reputation for being one of the better vocational/technical schools in the system. The student body of the school at the time of the study was composed of nearly three-quarters white students. Like the Hamilton Park youths, many of these students were from low-income families. About a fifth of them received free lunch. The school's attendance rate was over 75 percent but less than half its students received their diplomas. The youths whom we interviewed all described the school as a disorderly place where many students cut classes, got into fights, and used and sold drugs:

John Gutski: That's the worst school. They call that school "the pot school." Everybody goes to get high, hang out.

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Otto Deutsch: Then I went to Burdock, my biggest mistake. People from my neighborhood go there. They were all goofing off.

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Field Notes: Then Jim Osinski told me that he had gone to Burdock Vocational. He said it was mostly a hang-out place where a lot of kids go just to party.

Otto Deutsch and David Henry both withdrew from Burdock Vocational under pressure from their parents. Otto Deutsch fathered a child by a local girl. He said that at that point his mother "told me to go to work right away." David Henry's mother blamed the school for her son's wild behavior:

David Henry: My mom made me drop out 'cause I was gettin' in too much trouble. She thought I was takin' heavy drugs. I wasn't though. It was just

too much drinkin'. It was about 30 or 40 kids, meet every day, you know, just buy half gallons of liquor. You had to be in school 11:30. We'd meet like eight o'clock in the morning. Liquor stores open up, we'd be standin' there.

Int: So this was the ninth grade, tenth grade, something like that?

DH: Tenth grade. Then I got a job with my brother-in-law right after that.

The others who left Burdock Vocational without finishing had all gotten into fights. Jim Osinski punched his guidance counselor and was expelled. John Gutski also hit a teacher. He was in the twelfth grade at the time but did not have enough credits to be graduated on time. Carl Pollini left after his second fight with another student. Both regretted not having finished school. Carl Pollini expressed resentment toward the school after he was expelled for fighting:

Carl Pollini: I had a fight with a guy and they asked me to leave. I shouldn't have done it but they never should have asked me that either. That wasn't right I don't think. You don't pull a cat out of school for fightin' you know. Try and help the guy you know. No matter whose fault it was. But we had a fight and we fought again and that was it. I just left after that.

John Gutski felt that his job prospects had been impaired:

Int: Did you study a particular trade?

John Gutski: Electricity, and some plumbing.

Int: Did you ever try to get a job doing that since you were there?

JG: From school I could have, but my shop teacher, I had a fight with him.

Int: How many kids from your part of the neighborhood graduated?

JG: Only a few graduated, three or four I know of got diplomas. They went to college.

Int: Is that ever a problem for you as far as getting a job?

JG: Half the people don't know how to read and write. Like sometimes I help this guy learn how to count, he's sixteen years old.

Int: But you seem to have had a lot of jobs, the bakery, construction ...

JG: Well, I have a hard time too. I can't get a job once in a while too. But it don't matter what you know - it matters who you know.

The school-leavers in this group expressed considerable ambivalence about the value of the high school diploma for getting jobs. They felt that their job prospects had been impaired by their failure to finish school, but, at the same time, they also expressed considerable skepticism about the value of the diploma in and of itself for getting a job. Teddy Haskell enrolled in a GED program after having left school not because he thought that a diploma alone would get him a better job but because he needed the diploma to make use of his father's connections to the construction union. John Gutski felt that he had sometimes missed out on jobs not only because he didn't have a diploma but also because his shop teacher might have connected him directly to a skilled job. The Hamilton Park youths perceived the credentials and skills symbolized by the high school diploma -- "what you know" -- as being valuable for getting jobs only in the context of personal connections to jobs -- "who you know."

This linking of "what you know" to "who you know" is even more apparent in the attitudes and experiences of the Hamilton

Park youths who did finish high school. Both Pete Calderone and Charlie Gaberewski got their diplomas from Burdock with erratic attendance and barely passing grades. Both failed to see that their diplomas had helped them or their other friends with diplomas to get good jobs:

Int: Most of your friends finished high school?

Pete Calderone: Yeah . . . the thing that surprises me . . . all my friends who have no diplomas have good jobs . . . maybe not good jobs as careers, for the future, but they're loadin' up trucks, makin' \$9 or \$10 an hour. Here I am with a diploma, what they say I need, and I got nothing.

Int: How do they get these jobs?

PC: They just fall into them through people they know or advertisements in the Hamilton Herald.

Int: But the various jobs you've had, do you think it mattered that you had that diploma or not?

PC: I don't think so because the work had nothing to do with school.

Charlie Gaberewski reported that he had just "squeaked by" in Burdock. He failed the physics and computer automation courses that were required for his vocational certification but had enough credits to get his diploma. He got a full-time job as a messenger right after he finished school. He thought that the diploma may have helped him get that job, but he did not consider it a desirable job in the sense that it offered any chance for advancement:

Int: Most of the guys you used to hang out with, did they finish school?

Charlie Gaberewski: Yeah, most of them . . . like, a couple of guys that got jobs around that time,

they're still doing it, still making the same shitty wages. It's like they never finished school.

Two of the other Hamilton Park youths who finished Burdock Vocational were more optimistic about the value of their diplomas, but they too saw the diplomas as being of dubious value in and of themselves for getting jobs. Teddy Haskell's brother Barney received both his diploma and his vocational certification from Burdock. Instead of seeking a job in the skilled trade for which he had been trained, he enrolled in college. Out of all the youths contacted, only Pete Calderone's younger brother Tony made full use of the vocational education system in which most of them had enrolled. Tony Calderone studied plumbing at Burdock Vocational and went directly into a unionized plumbing job. Besides earning his high school diploma, he learned job-specific skills and earned his vocational certification in plumbing. His shop teacher also provided him with a direct connection to the firm that hired him.

Int: Did your little brother go into plumbing because you had done it?

Pete Calderone: Yeah, partly. He's a little smarter than I was, he got into it. He had the highest grades in the class. He studied hard.

Int: How much does he make?

PC: About \$6 an hour. He's been doing it for about four years now, working in the same place. His union is pretty decent. They give you a dollar raise every year, so next year he'll be making \$7 an hour. If he stays he'll be making more and more.

Most of the Hamilton Park youths enrolled in vocational education programs even though these programs fulfilled their

mission of providing a high school diploma and job-specific skills in only a few cases. Both those who did and those who did not finish the programs expressed doubt about the value of the diploma and the quality of their school. Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the school to them was that it was located in an industrial neighborhood and that many of the teachers had ties to local industry. Only Tony Calderone managed both to finish school and make use of his teacher's connections to jobs. John Gutski regretted not being able to make use of his shop teacher's connections even more than not getting the diploma. Carl Pollini never finished but still managed to get a job through the school indirectly. A friend from his electrical installation class finished school, got an electrical job through the school, and then managed to get a job for Pollini.

Conclusions: Continuities and Variations among the Study Neighborhoods in Patterns of Schooling

The comparative ethnographic data presented in this chapter have described the schooling patterns in each of the three study neighborhoods. The similarities and differences among these neighborhood-specific schooling patterns are analyzed below in terms of their mediating effects on the short- and long-term involvements of high-risk youths in employment and/or crime. These local schooling patterns are compared here first in terms of their provision of human capital and then in terms of their provision of socialization into work and/or crime.

We found considerable ambivalence among respondents in all three study neighborhoods about the value of schooling as human capital that would lead them into desirable jobs. They saw their fathers and older brothers working in jobs that did not require school credentials. They saw the schools providing occupational training for women's employment more than for men's. They themselves rated the schools they attended as inferior and unlikely to provide them with substantial skills. Yet they still tended to consider themselves in school even if they were not attending. Part of this ambivalence can be traced to a perception that school could indeed provide human capital, but that it might not pay off for them. From their point of view, a high school diploma was a risky investment. It could pay off, but it could also be wasted effort.

In fact, the fit between schooling and work was fairly loose in all three neighborhoods. Some people from each neighborhood did get diplomas and were seen to profit from having

done so. Yet it was also clearly evident in each neighborhood that some people without diplomas got relatively good jobs and some people with diplomas were stuck with bad jobs anyway. Under these circumstances, the effort to remain in school was too costly for many respondents. All of them felt pressure to gain income while they were still of school age. Foregoing income to stay in school in hopes of later returns to schooling required faith as much as rationality.

The particular fit between schooling and work did vary among the neighborhoods, however, and these variations were closely related to the differences in the amount and types of schooling which characterized each of the neighborhood groups. La Barriada youths participated in schooling the least and most of them subsequently moved into unskilled manual jobs which required the least education. What they needed most from the schools was basic literacy, which only some of them achieved. A few also sought vocational training for entrance to skilled blue-collar jobs, but they also failed to complete the programs which might have provided these skills.

Projectville youths, despite their high rates of interrupted and uncompleted schooling, valued schooling more than the other groups. Their perceived need for school credentials anticipated their subsequent paths into the labor market. They most desired clerical and service sector jobs. These jobs require more education and also employ bureaucratic recruitment methods which respond more to abstract credentials than do most blue-collar jobs. As will be seen in the following chapter on



employment, the Projectville youths were the most cut off from family and neighborhood-based connections to jobs. As a result, the difference between having and not having a high school diploma made more of a difference in labor market returns in Projectville than in the other two neighborhoods.

The Hamilton Park youths' attitudes towards and use of the school system were heavily influenced by the fact that they had many family and neighborhood-based connections to desirable blue-collar jobs. The high school diploma was valuable to them not in the abstract but as a minimum credential that would allow them to make use of these personal connections to jobs. Many of these connections could pay off without the diploma as well, however, and these youths often left school to go directly to work. They also valued the schools as sources of job-specific skills and of direct connections to jobs. The long-standing relationship between their neighborhood and their vocational high school in fact constituted an important source of neighborhood-based job connections.

The schooling patterns described in this chapter cannot all be accounted for in terms of their perceived and actual functions of providing or not providing human capital. Schooling also produced differential socialization into the legitimate and criminal labor markets, quite apart from its direct provision of skills and credentials that could lead to employment. In the short-term, the status of being of school age affected their relations with parents, employers, courts, and welfare agencies. School attendance, more than employment, was

the criterion by which their social worth was judged and according to which they received rewards and punishments. Their families were more likely to support them while they attended school and expected them to get jobs if they did not. Many jobs, however, were automatically closed to them because they were school-aged. Family welfare budgets were endangered when they did not enroll. When they went to court, they received more lenient dispositions if they could show that they were attending school, dispositions which frequently included mandates for further schooling.

The significance of being school-aged and its effects on their patterns of crime and employment also varied among the three neighborhoods. Parents in all three neighborhoods expected their sons to go to work when they left school, but the Hamilton Park parents were able to provide connections to jobs to a far greater extent than the parents in the minority neighborhoods. Lacking resources to enforce school attendance or provide employment, parents in La Barriada and Projectville often had little choice but to accept the out-of-school, out-of-work status of their sons. Arrest rates and welfare dependency rates were also much higher in these neighborhoods. Crime and court involvements were a more serious source of disruption in the schooling careers of the minority youths. Extensive court involvements, with their attendant disruption of schooling, usually came as a result of systematic stealing, which was more prevalent in these neighborhoods. Youths from all three neighborhoods reported problems with school resulting

from fighting, and some individuals from both Projectville and Hamilton Park were expelled as a result of fights. La Barriada youths did not get expelled for fighting mostly because they left school so early.

Schooling experiences also had socialization effects apart from the direct provision of human capital which lasted beyond the years of being school-aged and affected adult patterns of crime and employment. Fighting in school provided early socialization into violent behavior and hostile relations to authority. As will be seen in the employment chapter, when these youths eventually did enter the job market, many of them were handicapped not only by their lack of skills or diplomas but also by their lack of a productive daily routine. Years of irregular schooling prepared them for careers of irregular work. This continuity between irregular schooling and irregular employment was characteristic both of individuals and institutions. That is, the individuals' irregular commitment first to schools then to jobs matched both the disorganized nature of the schools which enrolled them and the insecure poorly paid jobs they then entered.

As provider of both human capital and socialization, schooling was a "third factor" which competed with both employment and crime during the school-aged years. The major reason that most of these youths left school was for the pursuit of income. Immediate financial need precluded many of them from making an investment in a high school diploma, an investment which might turn out to be useless if not combined with a job-

specific skill, a college education, or a personal connection to a good job. Youths who left school for work did see themselves as impairing their long-term employment prospects, but the tradeoff between crime and schooling was much more injurious in the long run than that between employment and schooling as the following chapters on employment and crime will show. The Hamilton Park youths who left school for work were sacrificing educational credentials but gaining work experience. The youths from the minority neighborhoods who left school only had access to criminal income at first. They were sacrificing both forms of human capital -- schooling and work experience.

Schooling is more than mere technical provision of "human capital." It provides a social identity for an age-grade. In the eyes of these youths, as well as in the eyes of their parents, of employers, and of institutional officials, their primary activity during these years should have been schooling. When crime interrupted their careers during these years, as it did for many, it was schooling, not employment that was primarily affected.

## CHAPTER III

### EMPLOYMENT

#### Introduction

The previous chapter described the different roles which schooling experiences and credentials played in channelling youths from the three study neighborhoods into the labor market. The comparative neighborhood data revealed considerable variation in the ways that youth from each local area made use of the school system. Much of that variation was related to the family and neighborhood contexts which supplied these youths with their knowledge of, attitudes toward, and, most critically, direct connections into the labor market.

This chapter analyzes variations within and between the three neighborhood groups in amounts, types, and sequences of labor force participation, employment, and unemployment. The empirical results of this analysis are then applied to a discussion of two broad theoretical perspectives that are currently advanced to explain these labor market processes. The human capital approach (Becker, 1975) assumes that labor market position reflects the worker's productivity and that individual productivity corresponds to individual stocks of ability, often measureable in terms of education and work experience. The segmented labor market approach (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Beck and Horan, 1978), while not entirely discounting the importance of human capital, attributes much labor market differentiation to the structure of the labor market and to

socio-cultural differentiations in the labor force which are not directly related to productivity.

The prominence of employment problems among young people, particularly those in inner-city areas, since the early 1960s has called forth a number of attempts at explanation by economists. Human capital theorists have acknowledged the difficulty of modelling the extremely volatile labor market behavior of the young and have frequently tried to explain this behavior in terms of the "school to work transition." The age period from the teen years into the early twenties is described as one in which labor market entrants explore various job possibilities, moving rapidly in and out of the labor force or from one job to another as they seek employment that suits their abilities and tastes and decide whether and how to invest in education and training (Adams and Mangum, 1978).

Economists of the segmented labor market perspective have also pointed to the volatility of the labor market behavior of all young people but have emphasized more the disparities among different race/ethnic and local groups. One source of these disparities, mentioned in the previous chapter, is the lesser labor market returns to education experienced by minority and inner-city youth (Harrison, 1972). These writers have also drawn attention to the complex legal, institutional, and social barriers to full labor market participation for young people. These barriers are especially strong for those still in their middle teens who are formally barred from many jobs by labor laws, school attendance laws, and union contracts. The period

from the late teens into the early twenties is also problematic and has been described as a period of "moratorium" in which young people are more interested in establishing personal than occupational identity and so are not fully committed economic actors (Osterman, 1980). These youth are involved in a process of "work establishment" (Freedman, 1969) in which choices and experiences may be more significant for their long-term than for their short-term returns. Osterman has tried to show that unemployment during this period, but not during the earlier middle teen period, has disastrous long-term consequences for minority and inner-city youths.

In a comprehensive review of the literature on segmented labor markets, Cain (1976) observes that the central issue in most disputes between segmented labor market and human capital theorists concerns the extent of "non-competing groups" within the labor market. This chapter presents a number of empirical comparisons among the labor market experiences of different age and neighborhood groupings which reveal both differences based on human capital as well as several which strongly suggest that social variables such as age, race/ethnicity, citizenship status, and neighborhood of residence do define "non-competing" groups in this regional labor market.

This chapter follows the transitions from schooling to the labor market among the three neighborhood groups and traces the progression from the earliest employment experiences into the period of work establishment. By the end of the data collection period, most respondents in the ethnographic studies

were in their early twenties. Though most of them were by no means securely placed in stable jobs by this age, most of them had had several jobs and many were working fairly regularly. This chapter describes the neighborhood-specific patterns of employment during the teenage years and analyzes variations among them in terms of the family and neighborhood contexts which mediate both their access to job opportunities and their responses to those opportunities.

The chapter is organized into separate sections devoted to each of the three neighborhood groups. Each section examines one group's experiences with finding and holding jobs, how these experiences varied among individuals within the group, and how these experiences changed as they grew older and found it more necessary to establish some source of regular income. The specific types, amounts, and sequences of employment for young males in each neighborhood are described.

Each section is organized similarly internally in order to make possible systematic comparison of the similarities and differences among the neighborhoods in the labor market experiences of young males. Each section begins with a description of the physical ecology of the neighborhood and of the family employment backgrounds of the youths studied. The ways in which local youths find jobs and become socialized as workers are then described with reference to the physical and social relationships which predominate between residents of their particular neighborhoods and the labor market. The specific factors differentiating neighborhood-specific patterns of youth



employment are described separately in each section of this chapter are as follows:

1. Ecology

Differences in the physical organization of the study neighborhoods both affected and reflected the types and amounts of employment available to the residents. The neighborhoods varied in their physical proximity to major centers of employment, as well as in the extent to which physical proximity was or was not articulated with other aspects of labor recruitment. Physical proximity to jobs was especially important to young job-seekers who often were still involved in schooling and sought only part-time work. The importance of the physical proximity of jobs also varied according to the type of job. Some employers relied more on recruitment through neighborhood-based networks than did others. Large businesses and public employment tend to rely more on bureaucratic methods of labor recruitment while small retail and manufacturing businesses tend to rely more on word-of-mouth recruitment and more localized publicity of job openings.

In addition to these functional aspects of the physical proximity of job-seekers to jobs, the physical distance of workers in each neighborhood from their jobs was also a product of historical developments in both settlement patterns and the labor market. While physical separation from centers of employment appeared to reinforce other barriers to employment in one neighborhood, for example, physical proximity to jobs was undercut by lack of reinforcing social networks between

employers and residents in another neighborhood. The inter-relationships between physical ecology and local job networks is described separately for each neighborhood.

## 2. Family Income and Employment

The previous chapter described some of the ways in which the existing relationships predominating in each neighborhood between local families and the labor market influenced the ways in which their teenaged sons used the schools. The youths' attitudes toward the potential of the school system for moving them into jobs were shown to be grounded in their perceptions of the difference that schooling had made for their parents, their older siblings, and other older members of their immediate neighborhoods. The perceived worth of schooling as human capital was measured differently in each neighborhood according to the kinds of jobs that did (or did not) employ local residents and the actual relationships of school credentials to getting those jobs. This chapter describes in more detail the nature of the labor market position of the residents of each neighborhood and the role played by the families of these youths in preparing them for the labor market and, most crucially, in supplying them with direct connections to jobs.

The most marked difference among the neighborhoods in family income and employment was that between Hamilton Park and the two poorer minority neighborhoods. The families of the respondents from Hamilton Park were supported primarily by income from relatively stable blue-collar jobs. Most of these families had lived in the neighborhood for several generations

and their sons were able to enter the labor market through channels previously used by their parents and older relatives and neighbors. Most of the families in Projectville and La Barriada, in contrast, were headed by first or at most second generation immigrants to the area. Most of these families suffered from severe unemployment and underemployment, and many were female-headed and supported primarily by transfer payments.

### 3. Job Search

Differences among the neighborhoods in family income levels, family connections to jobs, and uses made of school credentials all influenced the ages at which local youths began to seek jobs, the kinds of jobs they sought, and their degree of success in finding them. The job search process is described in two stages for each neighborhood group, first for the years when they were of high school age (whether or not they were actually in school) and then for the late teens and early twenties.

The job search process was structured quite differently in each of these stages as a result both of the structure of the labor market and of the youths' own development. Legal and social barriers to finding employment changed markedly in the late teens, even if they had not been attending school. While they were still of school age, many jobs were closed to them. Even the poorest families had little choice other than to support school-aged children. At the age of eighteen, the youths became eligible to compete in a much broader labor

market at the same time that they began to feel more pressure either to establish independent households or to contribute to their parental households. While changes in both the desire and the opportunity to work during the late teens were common in all three neighborhoods, the avenues and results of job-seeking were distinctive in each neighborhood. The different uses of the schools as an avenue to jobs have already been discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter discusses the different ways in which school credentials, personal networks, employer recruitment practices, public and private employment agencies, and other social agencies, including the welfare and criminal justice systems influenced the job search process in each neighborhood.

#### 4. Labor Market Structure

The ability of the youths studied to find, retain, or replace jobs depended not only on their own skills, attitudes, credentials, and personal connections but also upon the structure of the local labor market. Different kinds of employers recruited different kinds of workers through different channels, and the significance of personal characteristics varied accordingly. This chapter describes certain differentiations within the local labor market inasmuch as they contributed to variation in labor market experiences within and among the neighborhood groups.

The change in legal and social barriers to employment that occurs around the age of eighteen is one such aspect of the structure of the labor market that powerfully affected all the

youths studied. While they are still too young to have finished high school, many jobs are formally closed to them. Many of the factories in Brooklyn, for example, cannot legally hire persons under the age of eighteen for most jobs. Youths under the age of sixteen who want to work on-the-books in any job must acquire working papers. As a result, job seekers in their middle teens are often competing for a different pool of jobs than older people. The period of work establishment that follows the middle teens is also fraught with considerable difficulties. These two stages of labor market experience are described sequentially for each neighborhood.

Employers in different sectors of the economy also place different emphases on school credentials, personal networks, and ascriptive characteristics such as age, race/ethnicity, and gender. The orientation of the youths in each neighborhood toward particular kinds of jobs, whether in the service or manufacturing sectors, in public, private or underground employment, were grounded in the labor market experiences of older members of their families and other residents of their neighborhoods, although the shift to a service economy could also be seen to be differentiating some youths from their elders. The neighborhoods are compared for similarities and differences in these patterns.

Two other aspects of the local labor market affecting these youths were the presence of significant numbers of undocumented aliens in their neighborhoods and in many factories

and also the existence of a flourishing underground economy. The youths studied were all United States citizens or legal residents, but they all had had contact with undocumented aliens and had definite views on the extent to which they were or were not competing with them for jobs. The discussion of crime as an alternative source of income to legitimate employment is discussed separately in the following chapter and is noted in this chapter only inasmuch as it impinges on their careers in legitimate employment.

#### 5. Employment in the Middle Teens

The amounts and types of labor force participation, employment, and unemployment as well as the types of jobs sought and found are described for each neighborhood. The most striking difference among the neighborhoods was in the greater amount of work available during these years in the Hamilton Park neighborhood.

The two minority neighborhoods both had lower rates of employment for youths in their middle teens but they also differed in the kinds of youth jobs that were locally available. Employment programs were important sources of youth jobs in both neighborhoods but were especially prominent in Projectville, to the exclusion of practically any other type of mid-teen employment.

The patterns of mid-teen employment in each neighborhood are compared not only as sources of short-term income but also with respect to their longer-term consequences in providing work experience, contacts with employers, and an alternative to

crime and involvement with the criminal justice system. The continuities and discontinuities between mid-teen employment experiences and the ensuing period of work establishment are described separately for each neighborhood.

#### 6. Work Establishment

The tempo of job seeking increased considerably in each neighborhood as respondents reached their later teens. Those who had had little previous employment began to seek jobs in earnest for the first time, while those who had had some youth jobs began to seek more stable and desirable jobs. Most youths began to secure some kind of employment during this period, although the quality and duration of jobs varied widely both within and among the neighborhood groups. Most jobs during this period did not last very long, rarely more than a year. The limited duration of jobs during this period was in part the result of the nature of the jobs and in part the result of the still developing labor market explorations of the youths. Many of the jobs were still off-the-books and were only offered on a temporary basis or else were the kinds of 'dirty, low-paying' jobs in which few workers remain for long. At the same time, many of the youths were still dependent on their parents and/or still trying to invest in education. Even the most dedicated job-seekers and workers in each neighborhood rarely stayed long in one job because they were constantly trying to replace that job with a better one. With increasing experience in the labor market, however, most of them had begun to establish clear patterns of work by their early twenties.

A. La Barriada

Although the block where most of the respondents from La Barriada lived was physically located in immediate proximity to a large industrial area, the nearby factories provided little stable employment to the block's residents. Several factories were actually located on one end of the block. The tenements filling the rest of the block had originally housed the families of the workers in those factories. At the beginning of the research period, most of the tenements still remained, but the factory spaces were no longer fully used and did not provide the same amount of employment as previously. Many of the jobs that do remain are held by people who come in from outside the neighborhood or are only seasonal, temporary, part-time, and/or off-the-books. A survey of all the apartments on the block conducted a year after the research began indicated that 72 percent of the households were supported primarily by welfare or social security.

The owner of two buildings on the block described the changes in the block's residents since he had owned property there:

Field Notes: We talked this morning with the landlord who is on the block every day taking care of his buildings. He told us that he has owned two buildings on the block for the past sixteen years. He said that when he first came here most of the residents of the block were Irish, Italian, Polish and French. He pointed to a warehouse which occupies one side of the far end of the block. He said that this had once been used for manufacturing but that the company had moved to New Jersey seven years ago. When he first came to the block, many of the residents were workers in the factory. Now that building



is used only as a warehouse, and most of the current residents are Puerto Rican. Some households on the block are still supported by men working in the factories, but most of the families here now are on welfare.

During the first two years of the Project's observations on the block, the housing stock deteriorated severely. The buildings began to change hands rapidly, services became irregular, and most of the buildings eventually burned.

The families of the youths we interviewed from La Barriada were the poorest among the three study neighborhoods. All the parents of the La Barriada youths had been born in Puerto Rico and had migrated to Brooklyn as adults. The youths themselves were either born in New York City or had arrived there with their parents as small children. About half of these families were female-headed and were supported primarily by transfer payments. Other families were supported by men working in low-wage jobs that provided an income only slightly higher than that provided by welfare. Although several of their mothers had worked in factories when they were younger or still did some factory work on a seasonal basis, most of the working men did not work directly in the nearby factories. Only the family of Julian and Sonny Acosta had been supported by an adult male's long-term factory job. Their father had worked in a factory for twenty-one years and was a foreman when he lost his job over a dispute with his boss and began drinking heavily. Gaspar Cruz's stepfather worked occasionally as an unlicensed electrician and handyman. The fathers of Mario Valdez and Arturo Morales had worked for over twenty years in restau-

rants. Morales's father reported that he then earned four dollars an hour, sixty-five cents above the minimum wage. Valdez's family also received some welfare payments, illegally, although Valdez claimed that they had gotten into that situation unintentionally:

Int: You said your father was always living with you, and he was always working, right?

Mario Valdez: He was a family man, devoted husband and all that.

Int: Did your mother ever have any income?

MV: She used to work in a factory sometimes, but not since my little sister was born.

Int: Did she ever get any assistance?

MV: Yeah, for about the last three or four years.

Int: Do the welfare people know your father is living there?

MV: No. If they did, forget about it.

Int: Why did you get on? Your father's salary wasn't enough?

MV: I don't know, 'cause, let me see, my father one time, he got sick. He has a nervous . . . he gets nervous, so he went to the Veterans Hospital for a couple of months. He couldn't work, so my mother had to go down there to get a little bit of help till my father got himself back up on his feet. And then he went back to work, and, you know, since the money helps . . . they only send us just enough to pay the rent plus \$75 in coupons.

Miguel Tirado also lived in a household supported by a combination of wages and welfare. His mother received welfare and his stepfather had a factory job.

The rest of the households of the youths interviewed were supported primarily by transfer payments, including the Acosta

family after the father lost his job. Mike Concepcion lived with his mother who received disability payments. Jorge Padilla and Octavio Del Rio lived with their mothers who received welfare, and Chucho Rivera had lived with his mother on a welfare budget until he was fourteen. During the research period, he lived with a sister who received welfare for herself and her children but not for her brother.

The major exception to this pattern of households supported by low-wage jobs and/or welfare was Carlos Hernandez. He was a few years older than the others and no longer lived in the neighborhood though he still returned there in the evening to socialize. When his family had lived on the block, they were supported only by his father's job with the post office. Then his mother opened a beauty parlor which prospered and they moved to a nicer neighborhood:

Carlos Hernandez: There was always, like, this cloud over my whole family. I'm the last, right, and all my older brothers and sisters always got in trouble. My parents were always pretty poor, but then they took a gamble and they borrowed money from all their relatives and they opened a beauty parlor. It turned out well and now they own a second one. So now my brothers and sisters feel like they want more and they can't have it because of their past, they wasted their youth, you know, so they're all rooting for me. I was gonna quit college one time, 'cause it was so hard, but they all got behind me. That's the only reason I finished. It took me six years. I was practically the only Puerto Rican in that school, me and one other guy. He didn't make it.

Many of the residents considered their households to be particularly disadvantaged, even in comparison to some of their other relatives or other periods in their lives. The Acostas

said that their father's family in Puerto Rico had included storeowners and doctors. Their father had gone to business college on the island and had been an army sergeant, a bank teller, and a factory foreman before he lost his job and succumbed to alcoholism. Mario Valdez also reported that his cousins in Puerto Rico and New York included small businessmen and police officers. Other families had sons and daughters who were upwardly mobile in the New York area. Carlos Hernandez's career success contrasted sharply with the problems of all his older siblings. Arturo Morales had an older brother who was a union printer and a sister who was an executive secretary on Wall Street. Octavio Del Rio had one older sister in college and another who was married to a salesman in the suburbs. Mike Concepcion's father had been a truck driver with steady work before he died.

Several of the other families, even though they had always been poor, reported that they had previously lived in "nicer" neighborhoods and had relocated to the block only after they were burned out of their previous residences and had been unable to find other affordable housing. Though this block had long provided inexpensive but decent housing to the families of workers in the nearby factory, it served during the period of field research as a temporary refuge to families whose poverty and employment problems surpassed even those of their own peers, extended families, and residents of the rest of their neighborhood.

Many of these youths had left or interrupted their schooling by their mid-teens to seek employment. They were met with

some success but more failure. Most of them had left school by the age of fifteen, but even the most dedicated and successful job-seekers had no more than a year of full-time work before they turned nineteen. Most worked far less than that during their mid-teens, whatever the degree of effort they put into finding jobs.

During this period, many were forced to modify previously held aspirations. Many were leaving school to pursue income, but, not being able to find regular employment, they sought income in other ways. As is described in more detail in the following chapter, many of them were involved in regular acts of income-producing crime during this period. Both participation in crime and the resulting involvement with the criminal justice system kept them out of school and forced them to abandon their earlier occupational aspirations. Gaspar Cruz and Mario Valdez gave up the vocational programs to which they had gained admission. Arturo Morales, Mike Concepcion, and Octavio Del Rio had all been doing fairly well in school until they reached high school, but all terminated or interrupted their schooling during this period.

All of them were seeking work at some point during their middle teens, but they did vary in the intensity of their job search. Compared to the two other neighborhood groups, this group included the largest number of youths seeking work during their middle teens for purposes of basic family support. Mike Concepcion lived alone with his mother and needed work to clear debts that had accumulated. Gaspar Cruz had a fight with his

stepfather, left his mother's household and began supporting himself. Julian Acosta married and fathered a child. The rest of these youths received basic subsistence from their parental households during their middle teens and did not feel as much pressure to bring in regular income. They needed income primarily to provide for their own clothing and recreation.

Most of their attempts to find jobs, however, ended in frustration. Their job search during the mid-teen years tended to be confined to their own neighborhood. Many of them reported going from factory to factory looking for work. They found most of the factory jobs closed to them because of their age.

Three different types of jobs were available in this neighborhood to those younger than eighteen. These included government-sponsored summer youth jobs, part-time building superintendent jobs, and jobs in the local factories.

The youths among the core group interviewed by the Project has surprisingly little access to government-sponsored summer youth jobs in light of the generally high level of program activity in the neighborhood as a whole. Before we contacted the core group, we conducted a number of preliminary interviews with gang members whom we met through local social workers. Many of the gang members had had one or more summer youth jobs. In comparison, only two of the core group members, Octavio Del Rio and Chucho Rivera, had had such jobs. Del Rio had stayed in school longer than some of the others and had signed up for his summer youth job through his school when he

was fifteen. He worked on a park clean-up crew more or less regularly all summer. Chucho Rivera was signed up for a summer youth job by a social worker when he was fourteen but he only stayed at the job for two weeks. The fact that the others in this group had less access to summer youth jobs is probably related to the fact that they were little involved in either school or youth gangs and so were not affected by local efforts to deliver employment services through the schools and also through social workers focusing on the gangs. Chucho Rivera had encountered the social worker who signed him up because he was more involved than the others with the gangs. Social programs were to be more effective in delivering employment to this group at a later stage.

Most of the mid-teen employment among this group was provided by private employers, the local landlords and factory managers. These jobs were generally low-paying, part-time, temporary, and/or off-the-books. The two instances of full-time, on-the-books work for private employers involved falsifying records to satisfy labor regulations which otherwise would have prohibited giving the job to a youth under the age of eighteen.

Several of the youths had had temporary or part-time jobs as superintendents in their own tenement buildings or in others close by. Unfortunately, the availability of these jobs to them was closely related to the decline of the worth of the housing and the concomitant withdrawal of services. The buildings were changing hands rapidly and the new owners tried to

keep them going by hiring the teenagers living in them for very little. This process seemed actually to be working at the beginning of the research period. The buildings were relatively clean, and the youths were happy to have the work. Eighteen months later, most landlords had completely disappeared and most of the buildings had burned.

Jorge Padilla reported the most lucrative and longest lasting job of this type. When he was fourteen years old, his uncle bought a building in the area and paid him one-hundred and fifty dollars a week to maintain the building and also to help out in the small restaurant on the ground floor. This only lasted for six months, however, until his uncle sold the building. Padilla was then out of work for most of the next four years.

The other jobs for local landlords were reported during the research period and all involved the building where Arturo Morales lived with his family. When first contacted, Arturo Morales was being paid forty dollars a week to clean his building. In addition, he was given the use of a basement room and a telephone. He tried to rent the room out to a friend, though his friend never paid. He was eighteen years old at this point and this was his first employment of any sort.

His landlord also hired two of his friends. Gaspar Cruz performed occasional odd jobs, replacing fixtures and painting the hallways. To all appearances, both Morales and Cruz were performing the jobs they were paid to do. A few months later, however, they had moved on to other work and Octavio Del Rio took over the building, to the detriment of services:



most of these people were in fact Central Americans who may have entered the country through Mexico:

Gaspar Cruz: They don't like to hire us because we're young and we're Puerto Rican. Them guys, they just want to hire illegal aliens, 'cause they can get over on them cheap.

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Jorge Padilla: The bosses play it smart. Aliens, they could go work off-the-books. They got to 'cause they can't work on-the-books. Unless they got a card, but most of them don't got a card, you know. So what they do is they go look for a job, say if they're going to make \$200 a week, he [the employer] stays with \$100 and give \$100 to the guy. The Mexican [sic] can't do anything about it. He can't go to the Board of Work, or whatever, 'cause they gonna send him back to his country. He'd rather get gyped.

Two of the youths interviewed had worked for more than a year in factory jobs by the time they were eighteen, but in both cases they had lied about their age. Julian Acosta was able to do this only because his father was the factory foreman at the time and manipulated the hiring records. Julian Acosta was, however, by his own account, unmotivated to work and only stayed at the job for a few months. Gaspar Cruz, by contrast, was the most aggressive job-seeker of the group. He had been living on his own since he was sixteen and spent six months in jail. After he got out, he went to a factory with an older friend, lied about his age, and stayed for more than a year. During that time he was promoted to supervisor and received a raise from \$2.85 to \$3.50 per hour.

The single largest supplier of jobs to these youths during their middle teens was a single warehouse located right on

Field Notes: When Arturo was showing us the basement of his building, he said Octavio was now the super, but he wasn't sure that he was going to do a very good job. Later, outside, Arturo was talking to the landlord across the street. The landlord was complaining about the garbage in the lot next to Arturo's building. After the landlord left, Arturo said, "Octavio was probably cleaning out the abandoned apartments and just threw the garbage out the window."

Shortly after this, the landlord disappeared entirely, the residents moved out, and the building burned.

The nearby factories and warehouses were the largest source of jobs for these youths during their mid-teens, even though most of the jobs there were legally closed to them. They frequently went from factory to factory asking for work, but rarely finding it. Gaspar Cruz reported getting tips for bringing coffee when he was as young as twelve. By the time he was fifteen, he could occasionally find a full day's work, off-the-books:

Gaspar Cruz: I used to hang out, nothing to do, watching people load and unload the trucks. One day I was there, I said "You need any help?" "Nah, not now, what's your name?" They take down your name and phone number. Then they would call me, "Hey, we need you today, we got two or three trucks coming in." So we went to the truck, fill 'em up and that's it. The day is over. Go home.

Some of them claimed that age and United States citizenship were both handicaps, because local employers preferred to hire adult undocumented aliens. They referred to Spanish-speaking non-Puerto Ricans generically as "Mexicans," although census statistics and experts on this neighborhood suggest that

their block. Mike Concepcion, Octavio Del Rio, and Miguel Tirado had all worked there when they were sixteen years old. The company had once used the facility for manufacturing but at this point half of the building was unused and the other half was used only as a warehouse. Shipments in and out of the warehouse were irregular. The manager hired several of the teenagers from the block to load and unload the trucks as needed. This often meant getting the youths out of bed in the middle of the night. The pay was \$3.50 per hour, sixty-five cents above the minimum at that time, and taxes were taken out.

They were employed on a part-time basis, but they had quite different patterns of work. Mike Concepcion was working for basic household subsistence. He worked between five and fifteen hours a day, averaging forty hours a week for a period of almost a year. Octavio Del Rio worked slightly fewer hours a week, and, by his own account, much less diligently. After five months, he got into a dispute with his supervisor and quit. Miguel Tirado took his place and worked there for another six months. At that point, the company closed down the rest of the facility and both Concepcion and Tirado were laid off. Despite their varying degrees of commitment to the job, it constituted the longest spell of mid-teen employment for each of them. They were all out of work for over a year after these jobs. Three years later, though they had had some other short-term jobs, Concepcion and Tirado were still citing these jobs to potential employers as their most substantial on-the-books work experience.

Others in this group had no employment at all before the age of seventeen. Arturo Morales got his part-time building superintendent job at that age. Mario Valdez went to work washing dishes in the restaurant where his father worked at seventeen. Carlos Hernandez, because of his family's new prosperity, never worked until the summers after he began college. Even those who did have some work during their mid-teens were out of work more often than they were employed. With the exception of Hernandez, they were all attending school irregularly or not at all during that period. During this period, most of them were involved in fairly regular acts of theft. As is described in more detail in the following chapter, theft provided their major source of income during the mid-teen years. Employment opportunities during this time were severely blocked for them. They were effectively isolated from the adult labor market and were competing for a shrinking pool of local youth jobs.

As they began to reach the age of eighteen, they intensified their job search. The costs of their criminal involvements were beginning to mount at the same time that many more jobs began to open up for them. They became eligible to work in the factories and they also began to seek and find clerical jobs in the major business districts. Their own income needs also became more pressing. They no longer needed money primarily for clothing and recreation. Either they were starting to set up new households or their parents began to expect them to contribute money to the parental household.

Despite their more intensive job search and their own status as adult job-seekers, they still encountered considerable difficulty in finding and keeping jobs. They were entering the job market with very little in the way of credentials, experience, or personal connections. In addition they found themselves hampered by their involvements in crime and the criminal justice system and by the personal habits developed during years of being out of work, out of school, and on the streets. Most of them had several jobs in their late teens, but the jobs usually lasted only a few weeks or months. Many of these jobs were only temporary and ended in layoffs. A few ended in firings, usually as a result of absence and lateness. Many jobs ended in quits occasioned either by disputes over work responsibilities or by the search for a better job. Few of the jobs they did find offered much in the way of stability, desirable working conditions, or chance for advancement; and when they did encounter such opportunities they often were able to recognize them only in retrospect.

The transition from crime to work as a primary source of income caused difficulties for many in this group. Arturo Morales and Mario Valdez began their first serious searches for full-time employment as a direct result of their involvement in the criminal justice system. Arturo Morales went through several part-time jobs and finally found a full-time job at the factory where his older brother worked just before he was to be sentenced. He had quit the part-time job he had recently obtained through a local social program. His lawyer urged him

strongly to find another job as quickly as possible before he was sentenced, in the following terms:

Field Notes: "You told them that you did it for the money. If you go in there without a job, the judge will assume that you're going to do it again and put you in jail."

Valdez's father took his son to his own place of employment after Mario was arrested:

Mario Valdez: I was about sixteen, seventeen, my father used to get on my case, "If you're not going to go to school, work," you know. Then one time I got busted, and when I came out, my father really went off: "You'd better get a job, or do something!"

Involvement in the criminal justice system triggered strong pressures for Valdez and Morales to enter the job market in earnest, but this same involvement also hampered the employment of many in this group during this period. Gaspar Cruz lost one job that he had held for a year after his employer found out he had been in jail. A year later, a new probation officer who required weekly appearances prompted him to seek a new job in fear that he would lose his current one as a result of absences. Miguel Tirado actually lost four different jobs in the course of a six-month period during which he had to make weekly court appearances. He did not want to tell his employers that he had to go to court and could not otherwise explain his absences. At one point, Octavio Del Rio cited court appearances as a reason for not looking for work, though his common-law wife did not accept the explanation.

Social programs delivered significant employment services to this group during the work establishment period. During the earlier mid-teen period, this group of youths seemed to have had less access to program employment services than other youths of similar backgrounds from their own neighborhood. There was a fairly high level of program activity for youths in the neighborhood as a whole, but services had not been reaching their particular part of the neighborhood until a church organization opened a storefront literally around the corner from their block. The organization was small and lasted at that location only for a year, but during that time it managed to connect several of these youths to publicly-sponsored job programs. After he first got arrested, Arturo Morales went to the program for counselling and got a part-time job in a local hospital as a filing clerk.

Mario Valdez, Octavio Del Rio, and several others not among our primary contacts, got full-time jobs in a neighborhood demolition program designed to teach local youths construction skills while they rehabilitated local housing. The program was largely successful in providing employment, teaching skills, and demolishing buildings. When the program ended, however, it failed in another of its goals, that of placing participants in private jobs. Only three out of a hundred participants moved into private jobs before the program ended. While it lasted, however, this program had a significant impact on the lives of the participants. The youths themselves rated these jobs highly, not because of the pay but because of the

treatment. They also reported curtailing their stealing far more during this period of full-time employment than when they had had only part-time or temporary employment in their mid-teens.

The youths in this group varied considerably in their stated desire and demonstrated motivation to work, but their actual employment experiences were more similar than different and became more so with age. Julian Acosta and Octavio Del Rio were living with women and children in households receiving welfare by their late teens and openly tried to avoid work. Neither was entirely successful, however, since their wives, families, and financial circumstances did not permit them to be.

The most avid workers in this group were Mario Valdez and Gaspar Cruz. They talked approvingly of work and sought it relentlessly with only intermittent success. Valdez returned to Puerto Rico to seek work when he was nineteen after being without work for months since the demise of the demolition program. He could not find work there either and returned. Cruz was more successful in finding jobs, but he also lost them frequently. Many of his jobs were only temporary and others he quit in search of better jobs only to find that they were not better jobs. During their late teens, most youths in this group averaged about a half year of full-time work, whether they sought it actively or passively. During the other part of the year, they only got unemployment insurance if their employment had been on-the-books which it frequently had not been.



The kinds of jobs they sought and found were of two types. Most of this group preferred and felt most qualified for manual work. Mario Valdez and Gaspar Cruz had tried unsuccessfully to complete rigorous vocational education programs before they left school. They kept seeking craft skills, Valdez in demolition, Cruz as an upholsterer's informal apprentice a few hours a night. They and others in this group did not obtain skilled jobs or apprenticeships during this period. Their manual jobs generally required no skills or credentials and paid only slightly above minimum wage. None of them gained access during this period to the high-paying, blue-collar and municipal jobs which most of them considered the most desirable type of employment. They worked frequently in the factories but at low-paying jobs in which many of the other workers -- women and undocumented aliens -- did not remain long. They found most of these jobs through local word-of-mouth.

Some others in this group preferred clerical work. These were generally those who could read and had gone farther in school. These youths worked as stock clerks, mail clerks, and messengers in the offices in Manhattan. They found these jobs through public and private employment agencies and through female family members who worked as secretaries. They found opportunity for advancement in these jobs extremely limited, however, since they did not even have high school diplomas:

Arturo Morales: I get along OK there. But everybody in the office there keeps telling me, "You mean you never finished high school?" They keep telling me I got to go back if I want to get anywhere.

In fact, he and several of the others who wanted office work all enrolled in GED programs during this period.

These clerical jobs were also difficult to find and hard to replace. Miguel Tirado found a messenger job when he was eighteen which he held for more than a year. During that time, he was promoted to dispatcher and brought in his friend Octavio Del Rio. He quit after he was denied a raise he thought he was due and later regretted his decision:

Miguel Tirado: I made a mistake. I thought I could get another job, but it wasn't so easy.

Octavio Del Rio lost his job as a result of absence, and later sought other clerical jobs but had to accept factory work:

Octavio Del Rio: I missed one day one week and they didn't say nothing. Then I missed again the next week and they fired me.

Int: You didn't think they cared?

ODR: Right. I'm sorry I lost that job too.

Others also treated some of their early job opportunities carelessly and later regretted having done so. They confronted their first full-time jobs with very little experience of the workplace. They had spent most of their time during their mid-teens out of school, out of work, and on the streets. They were accustomed to keeping very late hours. They found the discipline of the workplace very much in contrast to that of family, school, and the streets. Their employers in both the clerical and manufacturing sectors emphasized reliability over all other aspects of job performance. Firings almost always

resulted from absenteeism. Octavio Del Rio and Julian Acosta lost several jobs in this manner, both because they preferred to stay home with their common-law wives. Others, however, showed themselves willing to work hard and consistently whenever they got the chance. Mike Concepcion and Gaspar Cruz had done so when they were still only sixteen.

The brief duration of most of their jobs resulted as much from the kinds of jobs they were as from the ability or commitment of the youths. Most job terminations during this period were layoffs. Most others were quits, with firings a distant third. Many of the quits were reactions to particularly dirty and undesirable jobs that offered little security or chance for advancement anyway. Arturo Morales worked as an office clerk for a manufacturing firm on and off for a period of over two years. During that time he was laid off, rehired, quit, was rehired, was laid off a second time, was rehired again, and finally quit. After his first quit, he did report learning more about the rules of the workplace:

Arturo Morales: Before, this guy Eddie, my supervisor, I used to think he was on my back all the time. But when they called me back, he sat down and talked to me and explained things. He's alright. I didn't understand before why certain things got to be done a certain way or on time or whatever.

Yet his repeated layoffs also discouraged him from maintaining his commitment to his job.

By the end of their teens, most of these youths had had and lost several jobs and were definitely if insecurely participating in the labor market. Wages, though irregular, had re-

placed theft as their major source of income and their income needs had become much more insistent. They were still frequently unemployed and generally made low wages when they did work. Their work was more often on-the-books than during their mid-teens, but they seldom stayed in jobs long enough to attain union membership. Indeed, they sometimes claimed being laid off to prevent access to union membership. With experience, they quit jobs and were fired less but still faced frequent layoffs. Some were still trying to get educational credentials and others were attempting to learn craft skills outside formal educational or occupational channels. Miguel Tirado and Chucho Rivera were removed from the community to prison after felony convictions.

**B. Projectville**

Most of the respondents from Projectville lived in a single building in the Morgan Houses, a public housing project. The Morgan Houses were comprised of several similar buildings and were themselves but one of several different housing projects in this neighborhood. This large concentration of public housing was physically distant from any major centers of employment. Much of the land surrounding the projects was literally empty, most of the private housing in the area having been abandoned, burned, and/or razed over the past twenty years. The neighborhood has always been distant from major centers of employment. Successive development plans have regularly noted the large concentrations of land and labor in the area and recommended industrial and commercial development. Each new phase of development, however, brought more housing projects but very few jobs. The only business activity in the area during the research period was concentrated in a rapidly dwindling commercial section. Most of the stores there were owned by people from outside the neighborhood. Although most of the residents of the projects were black, the store-owners were mostly Jews, Arabs, and Hispanics. During the research period, these businesses disappeared rapidly, succumbing to fires on an almost weekly basis.

The projects housed many non-working people. Some projects were designated for senior citizens and housed many residents receiving Social Security and other retirement payments. Many households supported primarily by welfare payments lived

in the other projects. Despite the lack of local jobs and the high concentration of households supported by transfer payments, however, the projects also housed many working people. Two activists in a local community organization described the kinds of jobs held by working people in this neighborhood:

Field Notes: Mr. Dawkins said that he was a bus driver for the city: "People think everybody in Projectville is on welfare, but there's a lot more working-class people here, blue-collar workers, than people realize." I then asked what kinds of jobs they had. Mrs. Waters said, "We have a lot of government workers: postal workers, transit workers."

The households of the youths we interviewed in Projectville included both those supported primarily by transfer payments and also those supported by the kinds of stable government blue-collar jobs described above. Zap Andrews lived with both parents and their household was supported by his father's job as a city bus driver. Jerry Barnes's parents were separated and he moved between them. His father was a transit worker and his mother worked as a data entry operator for a city agency. Another youth interviewed, slightly older and a resident of a different project, was Sky Whitney who lived with his aunt in a household supported by his uncle's job as a hotel manager. These households had the highest incomes.

Four other youths lived in households headed by females working in low-wage health and clerical jobs. Tommy and Johnny Singleton lived with their mother who worked as a home attendant. Their household also received Social Security benefits since the death of their father who had worked many years as a

cook. Stan Williams lived with his mother who worked as a secretary for the telephone company. Juice Baker, a neighbor and contemporary of Sky Whitney, lived with his mother who worked in a day-care center. None of these households had ever received welfare payments.

The other youths in this group came from households that were totally or partially supported by welfare. Ben and Harold Bivins, Sly Landers, and Al Hackett all reported having grown up with their mothers on welfare budgets. Lucky Giles lived with his mother on a welfare budget for years, though she no longer received welfare during the fieldwork period, having found a job as a home attendant through the Singletons' mother. Larry Jefferson lived with his mother and their household received welfare payments only for the children. Their mother was not herself "on the budget" because she held a part-time job as an elevator attendant in the projects. Reggie Harrison was raised by his mother's parents who received welfare payments, although his grandfather also received some money from the small church in which he preached. The project also contacted another slightly older individual who had grown up in one of the few private houses in Projectville. Sly Landers was twenty-four years old when contacted. His mother had collected welfare when he was a child, but he had lived on his own since the age of fifteen.

Early attempts to find jobs among these youths were more delayed and also more unsuccessful than in the other two neighborhoods. This pattern of delayed job search was related both

to their long-term educational and occupational aspirations as well as to the striking paucity of jobs for teenagers in this neighborhood. Most of these youths were around the age of sixteen when first contacted. At that age, almost the only type of employment any of them had had or even sought consisted of government-subsidized summer youth jobs. Their knowledge of and contact with the private labor market was much less than in either of the other two neighborhoods. When asked whether they wanted jobs, most said that they did, but then went on to say that their families were encouraging them to stay in school rather than seek full-time work. Even though they became more involved in the labor market over the next few years, this commitment to schooling continued to influence their attitudes towards looking for and retaining jobs throughout their teens.

As noted in the previous chapter, the influence of schooling on labor market aspirations in this group was greater than in either of the other two neighborhoods. They aspired more to white-collar and service jobs than to skilled blue-collar jobs, in contrast to the youths in the other neighborhoods. Such jobs frequently require more schooling and school credentials than blue-collar jobs. These aspirations reflected in part the kinds of jobs already held by those adults in their neighborhood who were working. Their commitment to schooling was also related to persistent themes in their popular culture, as expressed in the speeches of political leaders and in popular songs, such as those in the "rap" style that were beginning to appear at this time.



Though they reported more parental expectations that they remain in school and out of the labor market than youths in the other neighborhoods, they did desire part-time work and they expressed great dissatisfaction with the lack of local job opportunities:

Johnny Singleton: There ain't no social programs, no after-school programs, no part-time jobs, no nothing out there that could keep you off the streets.

The Project interviewed some older males, in their middle and late twenties, from this neighborhood, and they described a decline in recent years in job opportunities for teenagers. They related this decline to the disappearance of the local retail businesses and to the increasing separation between the owners of those businesses that did remain and the residents of the projects. One such individual, twenty-eight years old, described the difference between the current situation and the - situation that had existed fifteen years before when he moved there:

When I first moved there, we were one of the first black families on the block. This was before they had even built some of the projects, and some of the others were brand new. When I was little, there were lots of stores around the subway stop, and all the people in the stores knew all the little kids. I used to work for the newsstand on the corner, running little errands here and there. The guy who ran it knew my mother and he knew me since I was little, so it was no problem. Now most of those stores, and the houses where we used to live too, are all burned down. There's thousands of kids in the projects now and no place for them to work.

Another individual, twenty-five years old, related similar experiences:

I used to work in the supermarkets as a kid, but it's harder now. Arabs took over a lot of the stores and they don't hire community people. A guy around my way got his store burned down just the other day. That wouldn't happen so much if they would hire community people. But everybody's afraid of these kids now. We used to carry people's groceries home for tips, but now they're afraid you'll rob them.

Two youths among our primary respondents described their experiences with trying to find work in Projectville's dwindling retail section. One of Stan Williams's first employment experiences had been sweeping out a small store when he was sixteen:

Stan Williams: I tried to get some jobs, but they wasn't like real jobs. It was like sweeping out a store, like that, not a real job.

Int: How much would you make?

SW: Oh, about twenty dollars. They used to pay me by the week. Every day when they get ready to close up, I come by and sweep the place out.

Int: How did you get the job?

SW: I just walked by and said, "Yo, can I sweep in your yard, mop or something?" I said, "Whatever you are willing to pay, I'll take it." So he said it wouldn't be no real job like that and I said, "Ah, I'll take it." But then the store burnt down.

Larry Jefferson reported that he had tried to get part-time jobs in these stores but could not because hiring usually depended on a family connection:

Larry Jefferson: The only way I could find a job is, like, if I know somebody, 'cause most of these people who work in the stores around there, they know somebody. Mostly they hire Puerto Ricans, like mostly they family and stuff. There's this one store, Lady's, her whole family works there. There ain't nobody who works in that store that she don't know, like they all family, uncles, cousins, and stuff.

The members of this group in fact reported less employment during the middle teens than did the members of either of the other two neighborhood groups. The employment that they did report was also the most restricted in type.

Before the age of sixteen, only two of them had had any sort of regular private job. Larry Jefferson worked part-time for a few weeks when he was fourteen sweeping out a flower store in a distant neighborhood where his aunt lived. His aunt had introduced him to the florist. The job ended when the store went out of business. When Ben Bivins was fifteen, he obtained a factory job, also in a distant neighborhood. He found the job through a friend who was twenty years old and already employed at the factory. He himself lied about his age to obtain the job and worked twenty-five hours a week at minimum wage for three months during the summer. He professed satisfaction with the job while he was doing it, but also said that it had been hard physical work and that he did not want to do that all his life. At the end of the summer, his friend was fired for absence and Bivins then quit to return to school.

With these exceptions, almost all employment reported by this group before the age of seventeen consisted either of doing errands for the older residents of the projects or of government-subsidized summer youth jobs.

Two youths reported packing and delivering groceries. They undertook these errands on their own behalf and did not have regular jobs with the grocery stores. They simply waited in front of the few local supermarkets and offered their services to the customers, often mothers with small children and senior citizens, coming out of the stores. Zap Andrews reported this as the only type of employment he had had before he was seventeen. He said that he had been able to make about seventy-five dollars a week this way, working for several hours a day after school and on the weekends. He only worked that much for one three-week period, however, after which he only worked "off and on." Reggie Harrison reported making at most forty-five dollars a week delivering groceries periodically between the ages of fourteen and seventeen.

Larry Jefferson reported a kind of makeshift paper route that he devised when he was fifteen. He solicited individual residents of his building, generally elderly people who had trouble getting out, and brought them newspapers, adding a dime or fifteen cents to the price of the paper. He only kept this up for a few weeks until he decided he was not making very much money.

In addition to these delivery errands, these youths also reported a few odd jobs. Since they lived in public housing, they did not have access to the part-time building super and repair jobs provided by the small private landlords in La Barriada. Zap Andrews did report that he was friendly with one of the Housing Authority maintenance workers and that he occasionally assisted the man:

Zap Andrews: I used to help the maintenance man; I always helped on payday. They don't really like to work on payday. Like, the day they get paid, he'd say, "You clean this side of the steps and sweep down, I give you twenty dollars." You should see those steps, garbage all around. Take all the garbage and put it in one big bag, take it down, then come back up. Sweep down, then do the back steps, and that's the worst steps, got to take about two big bags, sweep down, then cut out.

Tommy Singleton reported helping an older man in his building fix up his apartment. The man paid him for the work, but he also just gave him money on other occasions because he was a friend of the family.

The total amount of employment provided for this group by private employers and errands, however, was very small. All cases of such employment for the entire group are described above. Government-subsidized summer youth jobs accounted for most of the employment experiences among this group before they reached the age of seventeen. Half of this group worked in such jobs during the summers when they were fifteen and sixteen years old. For most of them, these were the only jobs they had ever held. Tommy and Johnny Singleton held summer youth jobs when they were fifteen and these remained their only regular employment until they reached seventeen. Lucky Giles and Jerry Barnes held such jobs for two summers, when they were fifteen and sixteen, their only employment up to that time. Giles had no further work until he was eighteen, and Barnes had still not had any other jobs when last contacted at age twenty. Sky Whitney's first job was a summer youth job at the age of fourteen, though he had two other jobs by the time he was seventeen.

The last of these jobs had occurred the summer before the Project contacted these youths. As a result we did not observe or interview our primary respondents during the period they actually held these jobs. We did observe some of the summer youth workers during the fieldwork period, however. Those observations accorded with the descriptions of their summer youth job experiences given by our primary respondents.

Most of the jobs were performed in crews supervised by slightly older residents of the projects and most of the work was performed within the local neighborhood. The youths signed up for the jobs at the community center of their project. The summer youth employment programs were in fact the principal services offered to teenagers at that center which otherwise offered them very little in the way of either recreation or employment services. Many of our observations and interviews suggest that the actual isolation of these job programs from established workplace settings was also accompanied by widely varied standards of behavior quite different from those of most other jobs.

Project observers frequently noted the summer youth work crews engaged in activities that differed little from those of non-workers. Reports of the strictness of supervision varied considerably. Jerry Barnes reported irregular attendance at his job, but said that, "You don't have to show up, but if you want to get paid, you show up." Others reported being paid for hours not worked and explicitly stated their perception that summer youth jobs were not "real" jobs, as in the following case:

Field Notes: I talked to a female member of one of the youth crews. She was talking to one of her friends by the benches and didn't seem to be working, although she said that she was. She said that she was hired as a junior counselor in the manpower center, but she has never performed those duties. Instead, she is asked to pick up paper and sweep. She insists that she wants to work under her job title and not as an orderly.

She boasted about getting paid and not showing at all. No one checks the time cards. She said that no one enjoys working there because it's boring and disorganized. No one knows who is responsible for what. She says that it is known to the individual that he or she can't get fired from the job because the purpose behind giving school kids these summer jobs is to keep them out of trouble and off the streets. She said that summer jobs should have a full seven-hour day doing something worthwhile, getting experience, and, most of all, doing something interesting.

The work assignments among our primary respondents were primarily of two types: taking care of younger children and cleaning up the projects and public areas of the neighborhood. The child care jobs involved taking younger children, often their own siblings and neighbors, to public swimming pools or simply playing basketball with them right on the same basketball court in the projects where they themselves played every day of the year. They were familiar with these routines since they had themselves been cared for in this manner only a few years before.

Though several youths reported disorganized work settings, others did report working regularly and learning something. Harold Bivins said that he improved his ability to deal with children during the course of his summer counselling job. Tommy Singleton's summer youth job experience differed from

those of his friends because he was assigned to work in the offices of a hospital rather than to a crew of youths working right in the projects. He worked as a file clerk in the context of an established office routine and supervisory structure. His co-workers did not include other holders of summer youth jobs. He said that he had to show up regularly and that his supervisors checked his work.

During the summer of the Project's direct observations of this group, however, most of them were sixteen and seventeen years old, out of school, and unemployed. Some had tried to sign up for summer youth jobs too late and were trying unsuccessfully to find work. Others were actively involved in street crime and seeking work occasionally or not at all. The following chapter describes in more detail these crime patterns, which consisted primarily of selling marijuana and snatching gold chains. By the end of the summer, several of them had gotten into trouble and had been removed from the community. Larry Jefferson, then aged fifteen, and Johnny Singleton, then aged sixteen, went off to residential youth homes that September and returned only on weekends for the next two years. Ben Bivins and Lucky Giles, aged seventeen, and Jerry Barnes, aged sixteen, had all been sentenced to prison by the following December and were subsequently absent from the neighborhood for periods of eighteen to twenty-four months. During his second year in the youth home, Johnny Singleton worked in a part-time job at a supermarket in the upstate community where the home was located. Giles, Jefferson, Barnes,



and Bivins had no contact with the private labor market while they were institutionalized.

Those who remained in the neighborhood reported increasing their attempts to find work, with occasional success and considerable frustration. As they began to look for work more actively, they extended their job search beyond the local neighborhood and they sought not only part-time but also full-time work. All had interrupted their schooling by this point, even though some would continue their efforts to obtain schooling and training. Though they had not abandoned their early aspirations to gain school credentials and go into government and white-collar jobs, they were preoccupied at this point with securing an immediate and regular source of income.

These youths entered the period of work establishment with fewer personal connections to jobs than those in either of the other neighborhoods. Their neighborhood was the most physically isolated from centers of employment, many of their parents had no jobs at all, and those of their parents who were employed tended to work in government jobs that recruit by bureaucratic means more than through personal networks. Both Stan Williams and Juice Baker expressed their frustration over lack of family connections to jobs when they were interviewed:

Int: Doesn't your mother have friends at work or somebody in the projects who has a job connection?

Stan Williams: No.

Int: Maybe other family members, cousins?

SW: I wish I did have an uncle or cousins or somebody like that. The only people I got up here, it's

only my mother and eight of us. The rest is down South.

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Juice Baker: A lot of jobs have labels on them, nobody knows what they do. "We're looking for a GMP." All right, fine, what's a GMP? Nobody knows and nobody gets the job, unless your father works for the company and knows what GMP stands for for that company; then you get in. That's all it is, a family thing.

Int: Do you know people who have gotten jobs that way?

JB: Yeah, a few. I've tried for Amtrak and different things. Basically, they're family. The uncle will recommend his nephew and that's it.

As a result of their lack of family connections to jobs, even low-paying jobs, these youths relied more on impersonal methods of finding jobs. Their continuing efforts to obtain school and training credentials represented one way of relying on impersonal means of finding jobs. The other impersonal method was that of seeking jobs through both public and private employment agencies.

The Projectville youths relied on newspaper ads and employment agencies to a much greater degree than youths in the other neighborhoods. Several of them, including Stan Williams, Zap Andrews, Reggie Harrison, and Tommy Singleton, reported seeking jobs through private employment agencies. These agencies charged a fee, usually fifty-four dollars, to supply a job. The youths generally borrowed the money for the fee from their parents. They referred to this way of finding work as "buying a job." This process of getting a job turned out to be expensive and frustrating and rarely led to jobs that they con-

sidered desirable. Stan Williams reported having gotten four separate jobs through private employment agencies during the year when he was eighteen. He had been out of school without actively seeking work for two years before that and had begun to look seriously for work when his girlfriend became pregnant. The agency sent him first to a messenger job. He stayed at the job for six months but eventually left because he found that he was expected to work ten hours a day for eight hours pay. After that, the agency sent him to three separate factory jobs, all of which he left after at most a few days. In two cases, he was laid off almost immediately but still forfeited his agency fee. He quit the third factory job because he felt uncomfortable working in a place where no one else spoke English. In between these jobs, he also made several trips to find jobs supplied by the agency, only to find that there was no opening when he arrived. After these experiences, he reported his dissatisfaction with the agency:

Int: You say you only worked one day at that job, you didn't have to pay the \$54.00 to the agency, did you?

Stan Williams: Yes.

Int: So you lost money on the job?

SW: Yeah. The agency is crazy. That's why I'm not buying no more job. . . . I wish somebody would investigate them, as much money as they gyped out of me.

The longest held job obtained through an employment agency by a Projectville respondent was reported by Reggie Harrison. He found a job as a stock clerk through an agency shortly after he

received his General Equivalency Diploma. He stayed at the job for six months, found the work acceptable, and left only to move to California to live with relatives and attend a community college.

The Projectville youths generally did not seek factory work nor did they remain long at manufacturing jobs when they did happen to find them. They themselves preferred jobs in the clerical and service sectors, and employers in those sectors also appeared to recruit them more than manufacturing employers. These youths knew very few older people in their own neighborhood who worked at manufacturing jobs. Besides lacking personal networks to such jobs, their schooling experiences were concentrated in academic programs that stressed language and math rather than manual skills. Even those who had not finished high school, as most had not when they first began seeking these jobs, were sufficiently literate to read and handle the forms, addresses and labels that they would be required to manage in clerical and service jobs.

Four youths in this group held factory jobs briefly while still in their teens. None stayed at the job for more than six months. Relatively short tenure at most jobs at these ages was generally the case for youths in all three neighborhoods, but the Projectville youth had particularly short and uncomfortable experiences with factory employment. They suffered from frequent layoffs at both factory and clerical jobs. Some also lost both kinds of jobs because they were unfamiliar with the discipline of the workplace, especially with regard to lateness

and absenteeism. They found themselves particularly unsuited to factory jobs, however, not only because the work was frequently hard, boring, and ill-paid, but also because they encountered a variety of exploitative working conditions and a work force of immigrants whose language they did not share.

The Projectville youths who reported factory jobs were Ben Bivins, Stan Williams, Tommy Singleton, and Juice Baker. Bivins held his part-time for a summer when he was fifteen. He reported satisfaction with the job at the time but no desire to do factory work in the future. Stan Williams was laid off from two factory jobs and quit a third because the pay was too low, seventy-nine dollars take home after taxes and check cashing fees, and also "because mostly Puerto Ricans were there. The foreman was a Puerto Rican, too. There were a few black guys there, but they was like older men." Juice Baker worked in a factory for six months when he was nineteen. He had left college a few months earlier and first sought office work. Only after he was unable to find clerical work did he take a factory job. He found the job through an Hispanic acquaintance but eventually left because the job required a long commute to New Jersey and because of language differences:

Juice Baker: I worked at that about six months . . . minimum wage, two something. . . . Travelling was too much, so I had to let that go.

Int: How long a trip?

JB: Two hours each way. They had a bus that went straight to the company.

Int: Did you have to pay for the bus?

JB: Yes, you did. It was a regular bus. Plus nobody in there could understand me. A lot of Puerto Ricans and Spanish work there.

Int: Did the foreman speak Spanish too?

JB: Everybody! It's not funny, you know, they thought I was Spanish. No women, and all Spanish males, so I split.

Tommy Singleton worked for six months loading trucks in a garment factory when he was eighteen. He "bought" the job through an agency and quit the day after he was notified that he had passed his GED examination because "I figured I could get something better now."

The clerical and service sector jobs accounted for most of their increasing but still scarce employment during their late teens. These jobs also paid low wages, minimum or slightly above, and offered little security of employment. The youths also frequently quit or were fired for absence. Nonetheless, the Projectville youths generally preferred these jobs and cited them when asked what kind of employment they thought they could get. Other workers in these jobs were more likely to be young, black, and English-speaking like themselves.

These jobs included selling food, working on delivery trucks, working in stores, and working as security guards. The most prevalent jobs were as messengers in the downtown business districts. None of these jobs paid much above minimum wage but they varied considerably in the hours of work they provided and in whether or not they paid on-the-books. Some jobs also evolved over time from part-time and off-the-books to full-time and/or on-the-books.

Two youths managed to find service sector jobs in their own neighborhood while they were still seventeen. Tommy Singleton was interviewed several times during the year following his summer of unemployment. He told of repeated attempts to find work through newspaper advertisements and by going to messenger agencies in the central business district. He said, "I want a job so bad right now, I could climb the walls." He heard about one company that was hiring security guards. Even though he was below the minimum age of eighteen, he went to apply for the job with the intention of lying about his age. He withdrew his application when he heard employees in the office complaining about not being paid on time. During this period he was sporadically attending an alternative high school. After more than a year of periodic job-seeking, he finally found a job the summer that he was seventeen, working in one of the local supermarkets. He found the job through his older sister who had started there a few months before him. He left the job after the summer in order to return to school. Lucky Giles also found his first non-subsidized job that summer, in between being arrested and being sent to prison a few months later. He found this job in the local neighborhood also, by the simple expedient of asking the driver of a delivery truck passing through the neighborhood:

Lucky Giles: I met him on the street. He was riding around, going from store to store and he went by my store . . .

Int: What store?

LG: Candy store, right where I live at. I seen him there. . . . "Can I have a job, you need any help?" He said yeah.

Giles held the job for four months. He worked four days a week and was paid one hundred dollars a week, off-the-books. When he returned from prison two years later, he had difficulty finding work and remembered this job favorably, saying "That was an alright job. I wish I could get it back now."

Two others found work in furniture stores located in an adjacent neighborhood that, though still an inner-city area, supported more retail activity than Projectville. Zap Andrews worked for his cousin for a few months. Sly Landers found his job through a friend who lived near the store. In both cases, they were paid off-the-books and only worked part-time on an "as needed" basis. Andrews finally left the job because his cousin's business was not doing well and the work became more and more infrequent. He had been earning at most seventy-two dollars per week and he had to wait by the telephone in order to be available when needed. Andrews was still only seventeen at the time and busily exploring different job options, albeit with frequent spells of unemployment. Landers was already twenty-four when interviewed and had been drifting back and forth for years between low-level legitimate jobs and low-level "jobs" in the street drug trade.

As they began to reach the age of eighteen, most of these youths sought jobs outside their own local neighborhood. Zap Andrews found two other jobs while he was seventeen. He had more personal connections to jobs than his friends because his



father was the minister for a small church in addition to his regular job as a bus driver. After he left his cousin's furniture store, Andrews found two subsequent jobs through members of his father's church. The first of these was with a dry cleaners in an affluent neighborhood, delivering clothes. He earned one hundred and thirty-five dollars per week, off-the-books, when he worked a full week. He also had to work part-time and "on call" for a few weeks at this job until they began to offer him a full week's work. He worked steadily for six months but then was laid off when the business changed hands.

After being laid off from the cleaners, he was unemployed for two months until he was hired by a member of his father's church to work as a security guard in a newly renovated apartment building. The job only paid minimum wage but it paid on-the-books and he was able to work many hours overtime. He only stayed at the job three weeks, however. He quit after nearly being killed when a burglar fired at him and killed the guard dog which, along with a billy club and handcuffs, provided his only protection:

Zap Andrews: He was trying to kill us. He killed the dog. Then he must have run out of shells. When he got finished shootin', I ran out of there. I said, "I gotta quit. My life is worth more than money."

Several other Projectville youths also mentioned security guard jobs among their older brothers and friends and said that they knew where they could get such jobs when they reached eighteen. These were the most often mentioned jobs after messenger

jobs. They also feared the jobs because they were dangerous. They themselves had had occasional run-ins with security guards and were accustomed to taunting them as "toy cops."

After this experience, Andrews was again unemployed for several weeks. During this time he worked as a messenger for one day and quit because it was outside work on a bitterly cold day. Then he was called back to work at the dry cleaners by the new owners. They offered him a steady job, full-time and on-the-books. He returned to the cleaners and continued to work there for the next three years, delivering clothes from the shop and also working in the plant in an industrial neighborhood.

Other Projectville respondents also reported undergoing shape-ups and trial periods at their jobs. Juice Baker was working for a maintenance company when interviewed. He had to show up each morning by six to have a chance to work. Sly Landers had worked frequently for a temporary agency that supplied maintenance crews as well as loaders. Both Baker and Landers said that they had to show up regularly for at least two weeks before the agency began to assign them work every day. Landers had been a "regular" who received work every day for one six-month period. Baker never reached that status because he missed work one day after he had begun to get regular work. He then had to start all over again.

This group did begin to develop limited personal job networks. As they accumulated experience seeking jobs, they shared information about employment agencies and jobs. These

networks were still most often peer networks and not through their parents and connected them primarily to low-paying clerical and service sector jobs. The messenger jobs which were the most prevalent single type for this group during their late teens and early twenties recruited them through peer networks as well as through employment agencies. Six of the respondents reported working as messengers during this period, although none of them stayed very long. Most of them reported initial satisfaction with the work. In good weather, especially, they enjoyed being free of a restrictive office or factory atmosphere. Cold weather, low wages, and lack of chance for advancement then cooled their enthusiasm. Reggie Harrison reported the longest period of work as a messenger, a period of about eighteen months starting when he was nineteen. He worked for a company that paid him a regular salary for a year. He was fired for stealing a check but immediately found a similar job which he had held for another six months when last interviewed. Juice Baker was fired because he carried a loud radio into the bank to which he was making a delivery. The others all quit after a few months at most, for various reasons. Lucky Giles quit after two weeks because he was only making fifty dollars a week and was getting married. Stan Williams quit because he was expected to do ten hours work for eight hours pay. Zap Andrews found the weather too cold and the pay too little. Sky Whitney worked for the summer and quit.

Despite his frequent spells of unemployment, Zap Andrews reported the most employment during his late teens, primarily

as a result of his dry cleaning job. Some of the others had had short spells of non-subsidized employment while others were institutionalized during this period. When this latter group began to return to Projectville, they ranged in age from eighteen to twenty. As they began to seek jobs, they also relied on impersonal channels, although they relied more on public and non-profit employment agencies than on the private, for-profit agencies described earlier. They also preferred clerical and service sector jobs.

Ben Bivins earned his GED and a typing certificate in prison. He returned to Projectville at nineteen. He went to an ex-offender employment service for counselling and further skills training. After he increased his typing speed, the agency placed him as a clerk typist and he worked steadily for the next eighteen months.

Johnny Singleton had worked in a supermarket after school while he was in a youth home outside the city. He returned home at nineteen also, found work as a supervisor in a youth program for the summer, and then had trouble finding work for several months. He then enrolled in an employment program run by a settlement house in a distant neighborhood. He attended punctually and was one of five out of eighteen students in his class to finish the program, after which the program placed him as a mail sorter in a private company. He did not like the job but stayed at it for several months, longer than most of the workers who started there. He kept in touch with his counselor from the settlement house who eventually referred him to a

job he much preferred. The pay was the same, but he enjoyed the work making deliveries for a charitable organization.

Lucky Giles also found work through an ex-offender employment program after his return. He returned at nineteen and had no work for several months. He entered the program when he was twenty and was referred to a factory job paying over six dollars an hour. He lost the job for being absent and then went through three different jobs in the next four months. He tried delivering groceries, being a messenger, and doing maintenance in a nursing home. He could not make more than fifty dollars a week at the first two jobs. He quit them because he had gotten married and needed to make more. The nursing home job only lasted three days during a strike. He finally found steady work cleaning and loading in a meat market. Larry Jefferson and Jerry Barnes found little work after their return. At age twenty, both were still trying to finish high school and had had very little employment.

By the end of the research period, this group had made widely varying adjustments to the labor market. Larry Jefferson and Jerry Barnes still had had very little non-subsidized work. Ben Bivins returned to upstate prison after eighteen months on parole working as a clerk typist. Juice Baker was given a multi-year sentence for transporting heroin and Sky Whitney was making fifty thousand dollars a year selling cocaine. The others were seeking work or working at clerical or service jobs paying slightly above the minimum wage. The most successful of the group in the legitimate labor market

appears to have been Johnny Singleton. After receiving his GED, he quit his factory job and entered a public college. Finding that he could not afford the textbooks, he left college and found a clerical job with a prestigious business school. He did well at the job and was granted free tuition for night study in a business course. When last contacted, he had been working steadily and attending night classes for several months.

C. Hamilton Park

The housing stock in Hamilton Park was the oldest among the three neighborhoods studied, pre-dating even the old-law tenements in La Barriada. As in La Barriada, the residential buildings housing the families of the Hamilton Park youths were in close physical proximity to a large concentration of factories and warehouses. Unlike the section of La Barriada we studied, the central section of Hamilton Park where most of the youths we studied lived also contained a thriving retail section. Factories, stores, other businesses, and residences, though densely interspersed, were generally well-maintained and had seen relatively little turnover in occupation and management in recent years.

In contrast to the superficial ecological similarities between La Barriada and Hamilton Park in the close interspersion of business and residential land use, the two neighborhoods differed greatly in the social integration of residents and local businesses. Local businesses did provide significant employment to local residents. In addition, neighborhood-based job networks connected local residents to desirable blue-collar jobs throughout the metropolitan labor market.

Many of the current residents of the neighborhood are third and fourth generation descendants of the original settlers of the neighborhood, labor migrants from Europe. The housing in the neighborhood was originally built for workers in local factories. The parents of the youths we interviewed generally did not work in the low-wage assembly jobs in the

factories. They were held by more recent Hispanic and also Polish labor migrants.

Most of the families of the youths we interviewed were among the more established and better employed in the neighborhood. Their households were supported primarily by the wages of an adult male employed in a high-paying, unionized, blue-collar job. Many of these men had worked in the factories when they were younger, before they managed to obtain the better jobs they currently held and had held for fifteen or twenty years. The father of Otto and Brian Deutsch, as well as both the father and mother of John Gutski, worked as unionized office maintenance workers in the downtown business areas. Barney and Teddy Haskell's father was a unionized heavy equipment operator. David Henry's father worked for a major beverage company. Charlie Gaberewski's father had a college diploma in electronics and worked for a communications company. Carl Pollini's father was a unionized mechanic. Except for John Gutski, none of these youths' mothers worked full-time.

Two other youths came from families that were poorer and which did not depend primarily on the income of an adult male. Peter Murphy's father was deceased. His mother was a unionized secretary in a local factory. Brian Grady lived with both his parents, but his father was unemployed at the time of the research and had spent many years in prison. Grady's mother worked in a local restaurant. In striking contrast to the other two neighborhoods, none of these families received welfare payments. The only household receiving any form of trans-



fer payments was that of Pete and Tony Calderone, whose father received disability payments after many years working at a unionized maintenance job.

Although factory employment did not provide the major source of income in most of these households, the factories did provide a significant amount of employment to local residents. Women and young people were more likely to work in the local factories than the adult men who were more likely to work outside the neighborhood in higher-paying blue-collar jobs. As mentioned, many of the older men had worked in the factories when they were younger. Two of the mothers of the youths we interviewed worked at clerical jobs in the factory offices. Peter Murphy's mother worked full-time at such a job. The Calderones' mother worked part-time, at night and seasonally, at another such job in order to supplement their father's disability payments. The factories also employed teenaged boys and young men in their twenties in jobs that ranged from part-time, off-the-books employment to jobs as supervisors, loaders, and fork-lift operators which paid much better than the assembly jobs usually held by recent immigrants, documented and undocumented, who lived outside the neighborhood.

Since these youths generally came from families that were not as poor as those in the other two neighborhoods, their early job search was not prompted by an extreme economic need. None of them, for example, sought jobs when they were teenagers to provide for basic household subsistence, as was the case for some in La Barriada. Nonetheless, most of them began some kind

of work by the age of fourteen. In some families, the money was needed to provide for the child's personal needs. Otto and Brian Deutsch undertook a paper route when they were twelve and thirteen:

Int: What did you do with the money?

Brian Deutsch: At first my mother would say, "Let me hold it for you." And I'd ask for it say a week later, and then she'd say things like, "I bought you underwear and socks 'cause you needed underwear and socks" and I'd say "I hate underwear and socks." She used to always do that.

Other youths in this group came from families that were better off but they too began work early. The Haskell brothers came from a family that owned several pieces of property in the neighborhood, but they described their family's attitude towards work as follows:

Barney Haskell: We really don't have to work, but in our family we all do. It's just kinda expected.

In fact, all of these youths reported having had at least some employment by the age of fourteen. Almost all of these early employment opportunities came to them through their families, though the local newspaper and neighborhood word-of-mouth also helped. Many of these early employment experiences consisted of a few days doing light construction or cleaning for local businesses. Otto and Brian Deutsch and Teddy Haskell all reported a few weeks' work when they were twelve and thirteen years old removing cobblestones from demolition sites in the neighborhood owned by a local resident. They simply re-

sponded to an ad saying "Boys Wanted" and were paid thirty-five dollars off-the-books for a six-hour day. Charlie Gaberewski reported making \$2.10 per hour off-the-books to stack materials in a nearby factory when he was fourteen. The others all described several jobs which they referred to as "one-day, temp things" in local businesses around this age. Sometimes the work was in fact quite hard and dirty and they quit after one or a few days.

Besides these odd jobs, several of them reported working steadily on a part-time or even full-time basis in local businesses. They undertook these jobs during summers, before and after school, or in lieu of school though still of school age. These more regular jobs came to them almost exclusively through family connections. George Peplinski described his first full-time job during the summer when he was aged fifteen:

George Peplinski: When I was fifteen, I had just started to drink beer with my friends, so my mother says to me, "What are you gonna do, stay drunk all summer? Why don't you get a job?" So she sent me over to a factory where a friend of hers worked and they gave me a job. I worked there all summer, full-time. It was funny, I was the youngest one there.

This job, like most of the others during this period, was off-the-books.

John Gutski started at the bakery where his brother-in-law worked when he was only thirteen. He began at two dollars an hour, part-time, off-the-books, but he worked there on and off for the next four years. By the time he was seventeen, he was full-time, on-the-books, in the union and making eight dollars

an hour. David Henry worked during the summer when he was fourteen at his father's beverage company, a large corporation. He worked on-the-books but with no taxes taken out because he was still in school. He left school when he was sixteen and went to work full-time in an auto repair shop owned by his brother-in-law. He stayed for three and a half years during which time his wages went from two to eight dollars an hour, all off-the-books. Teddy and Barney Haskell both obtained regular part-time work through a friend of their father's who owned a local warehouse and was also active in local politics. Teddy used to distribute campaign flyers for two dollars per hour when he was thirteen. Both brothers also worked in the warehouse before and after school when they were fifteen and sixteen. Otto and Brian Deutsch reported two off-the-books, part-time jobs apiece when they were fifteen and sixteen, all the jobs in nearby small businesses. Both sets of brothers reported handing down jobs from older to younger brother. When the older brother tired of a job or found a better job, the younger brother inherited the previous job. Jobs also circulated through friendship networks. Brian Grady began working at an auto repair shop in the neighborhood at the age of thirteen and stayed at the job until he was sixteen. He got the job because the employer was a friend of his mother. During this time, his wages increased from two to eight dollars an hour, although always off-the-books and only part-time until he finally left school for good. After he left, the job went to his friend Peter Murphy.

In cases where the jobs were obtained through family connections, employers sometimes assumed an avuncular attitude towards the young employees. Barney Haskell reported that the warehouse owner once interceded on his behalf when he was arrested and obtained his release. When Brian Grady worked at the auto repair shop, his employer used to monitor and insist on his school attendance.

As with the other two neighborhood groups, there was considerable variation within the Hamilton Park group in how well they performed as workers. As described above, some stayed in the same job for as much as three years during their early and middle teens. Most jobs, however, lasted a few days to a few months at most. As in the other neighborhoods, most youth jobs were never offered except on a temporary basis and terminated by layoffs. Several youths in this group were also fired from their early jobs. Otto Deutsch was fired from one of his early factory jobs because his employer thought he had been bringing his girlfriend in at night. Charlie Gaberewski was fired from a part-time stock clerk job for sleeping and shortly thereafter lost a similar job for dropping a large crate full of fragile goods. Peter Murphy lost his job at the auto shop after a fight with his boss and later retaliated by burglarizing the shop.

These youths also frequently quit after one or two days because they were not prepared to engage in the hard, dirty work involved. When he was thirteen, Brian Deutsch went to work for a local employer for whom his mother had once worked:

Brian Deutsch: My mother used to work in his donut shop from like two to four in the morning. The same people also own a factory down over there. I worked for them at the time for like two dollars an hour and we'd work like eleven, twelve hour days. Man, they would bust our asses. I worked like three days. One day we were working all day in the factory, cleaning it up and loading and unloading trucks. It's like seven o'clock, we figure we're done, we've been there since eight o'clock. We leave, right, we always get a ride home in the guy's car. We get in the car and he takes us over to a different factory he owns. It's a syrup factory and we gotta clean the floor. The syrup is like an inch and a half thick on the floor and we gotta clean the floor. It was psycho, man. So the next day was Christmas Eve morning and I'm walking with my brother over to his job at the florist and we stop and smoke a joint and that was it. I never went back.

When these youths quit their jobs, however, they did so with a great deal more security than was possible for the youths from the other two neighborhoods. Because their families were generally better off, they could more easily afford to be without work. Several of them reported quitting jobs in the summertime because they wanted to spend more time at the beach, where many of their families owned summer bungalows. They also quit jobs either to take better jobs or with more assurance that they would be able to replace the job when they needed work again. During one period of unemployment, Teddy Haskell claimed that he knew "a place where I can get a job paying \$4.25 an hour tomorrow, but they bust your balls there." The relative plenitude of job opportunities in this neighborhood meant that job-seeking youths, even while they were still of school age and confined to the youth labor market, had a certain amount of latitude to compare and choose between jobs on the basis of relative wages and working conditions. Several

of these youths did in fact report periods when they had difficulty finding work, but most of them had had several jobs by the time they reached the age of eighteen, in sharp contrast to the experiences of the other two neighborhood groups.

The single most striking contrast between youth jobs in Hamilton Park and those in the other two neighborhoods, however, concerned the reliance on government-subsidized summer youth job programs. Though some of the La Barriada group had had such jobs and the Projectville group had practically no other type of employment before they reached the age of eighteen, the Hamilton Park group did not report a single subsidized job. The greater quantity of youth jobs in their neighborhood was completely supplied by private employers. The only employment secured outside localized job networks during the mid-teen years was that reported by Peter Murphy. He was heavily involved with drugs and found one job through a special school and another through a drug program. Neither job was subsidized, however.

As they reached the age of eighteen, these youths also began to look for work with more intensity. They became eligible for a much wider pool of jobs. They became eligible to work full-time, on-the-books in the factories and some of them did take such jobs. They regarded the low-wage assembly jobs as less than desirable, however, and most were hoping eventually to find their way into the high-paying jobs held by their fathers and older brothers. Entrance to these jobs often requires a waiting period, however, even with personal connec-

tions. During this period, some of them found their way immediately into these desirable jobs, while others alternated between lower-paying, on-the-books jobs and periods of unemployment during which they collected unemployment compensation and did not work. George Peplinski described the variations among his friends as follows:

George Peplinski: One friend of mine just went out and got himself a good job on the docks.

Int: Those are pretty scarce nowadays, aren't they?

GP: Yeah, but his father took him over and talked to a guy he had been in the Merchant Marine with years ago and got him signed up. He was lucky. That's what most of these guys want, a job like that. A lot of them are just hanging out now, drinking and getting high all summer, or else they're still holding on to their little supermarket job or whatever, just waiting for the day they get into that high-paying union job.

One kind of employment that is traditional in this neighborhood for males in this age range is the military. Many of the men in their late twenties who frequented the same bars as did the eighteen- and nineteen-year-old youths we interviewed were Vietnam veterans. Two of the group we interviewed had joined up at the age of seventeen. Barney Haskell had been in the Marines and Brian Deutsch had been in the Army. Neither one of them had finished his tour of duty. Both had been discipline problems and were discharged early.

As noted in the previous chapter, school credentials did play a limited role in this neighborhood in channelling local youths into desirable blue-collar jobs. Tony Calderone did



graduate from the local vocational-technical high school with his certificate in plumbing. He then moved directly into an apprenticeship that carried with it yearly wage increases of one dollar an hour. Teddy Haskell had not finished school, but his father kept urging him to go back to school because Teddy would need a high school diploma in order to activate his father's connections into a construction union.

This group made very little use of employment agencies. Charlie Gaberewski was the only one who reported finding any sort of a job through an agency. He went to a private employment agency the week before he finished high school and found a job as a mail clerk that paid five dollars an hour and offered good benefits. He liked the job well enough, but soon left for a job in a printing company that paid better. He heard about the job because it was located close to his previous job. He obtained the printing job not on the basis of his school credentials but because he had worked in his uncle's printing business while in school and had learned some printing skills.

Half of this group never finished high school, however, and most of the school-leavers still aspired to high-paying, unionized jobs. They relied primarily on family connections, in lieu of rather than as a supplement to school credentials. Otto and Brian Deutsch and John Gutski all failed to finish high school yet they still managed to find unionized building maintenance jobs before they were twenty years old. Gutski found his job through his parents, both of whom were already union members. The Deutsches' father was also a member of the

same union, but their direct connection came through an older brother who brought them to work in the luxury apartment complex where he had been working for several years. None of them performed especially well in these jobs at first. Brian Deutsch was fired after a few weeks because he failed to show up regularly. His brother Otto got several "pink slips" as a result of spending all day on the beach and then performing erratically during the night shift, but Otto had a reputation for being very concerned with money and jobs and managed to hold onto this job. John Gutski also lost his job after a few weeks for fighting with his supervisor but, when last contacted, he had arranged an interview for another job of the same type.

Some of those who could not find their way immediately into the skilled trades did take on-the-books factory jobs paying only a little over the minimum wage. Their experiences in these jobs were similar to the experiences of the youths from the minority neighborhoods who took such jobs around the same age, the late teens. They also felt out of place working in settings where most of the other workers were recent immigrants, documented or undocumented. Pete Calderone took a part-time, on-the-books factory job paying minimum wage a few months before he finished high school and then started working full-time after he finished school. He stayed at the job for a year and left after a dispute with a Spanish speaking co-worker:

Pete Calderone: I quit, just walked off the job one day, because, . . . I'm not too prejudiced, but there was a lot of Puerto Ricans, very few white people who didn't speak Spanish, you know, and like, because you're white, you're the dummy, you couldn't have a conversation with them. I used to always have trouble getting on the elevator. I'd say, "Take me here, I'm going here" and they'd say, "No, you first" to the other guy. It wasn't just one time, it happened a lot, and one day my barrels fell over or something. I said, "Shit, man" and I went to the office and said, "I quit." It wasn't a good job so I didn't care.

Although Pete Calderone referred to his co-workers as "Puerto Ricans," it is uncertain whether they were in fact Puerto Ricans or whether they included undocumented aliens from Central and South America as well. Other youths in this group were more explicit in drawing attention to the presence of undocumented aliens in the factories and to employers' practices of paying below minimum wage to undocumented aliens and maintaining fraudulent records. Otto Deutsch described a clothing factory where he worked for six months until the business closed:

Otto Deutsch: There was a lot of women you know, machine operators, immigrants, like Polish, Portuguese, Puerto Ricans [sic]. I think a lot of them were illegal aliens, who knows? He was paying them dirt cheap, that's what I heard.

John Gutski was himself a legal resident alien whose parents had come to Brooklyn from Poland. He spoke both Polish and English and worked for a time supervising very recent and undocumented labor migrants from Poland:

John Gutski: After the bakery, I worked construction six months. It was only five dollars an hour so I

took a cut, but it was better hours, I didn't have to work at night, I could go to the beach, hang out. There was about four Polish people there, illegal aliens working on the side for cash. They were using different Social Securities, this and that. I was the boss of all of them. They couldn't speak English, I was their translator. I used to drive them around in a truck. That was an easy job. I liked it.

Gutski left the job, however, and collected unemployment for several months until he found his first union maintenance job.

The local neighborhood did offer some jobs that were considered less desirable than the skilled trades but much better than the low-wage assembly jobs in the factories. These were jobs in the local factories which involved heavy physical labor but which paid much better than the assembly jobs. None of the youths in the core group we interviewed held such jobs, but they knew of them and treated those who held them with respect. After he left his first factory job, Pete Calderone had spent a year and a half hanging out, drinking, and doing very little work. Tiring of that life, he then held a succession of low-paying factory jobs and had begun to yearn for a better job. He envied his younger brother Tony's school success and place in the plumber's union and lamented the fact that he had not done as well at his vocational studies. He also wished that he could find a job like those held by several of his friends.

Pete Calderone: Some of my friends, they never graduated high school, some of them can't even read, a newspaper maybe but not good, and they're making decent money, nine or ten dollars an hour. These places like the freight company over here, if you can get in, they pay real good. It's hard work, ten

dollars an hour, man, what I make in one week they make in a day.

Int: You had some loading jobs when you were younger, didn't you?

PC: Yeah, but not like that, mine didn't pay like that.

Int: What's the difference between a loading job that pays ten dollars an hour and one that pays less?

PC: All you do over there is load and unload trucks eight hours a day. That's all they do and they got guys on top of you watching you all day long. Mine, you weren't working all day long; when the trucks weren't coming in you could take it easy, the boss wasn't always on your back. You need to know somebody to get into one of these trucking outfits. Very rarely you can walk up the street and they'll hire. Really, you got to know somebody to get in.

Int: Would you take one of those jobs if you could get it?

PC: Yeah, I would. I'd break my back for a while for that kind of money, ten dollars an hour. I'd do it.

Although the Hamilton Park youths as a group had much richer employment histories and prospects than the other two neighborhood groups, they still found themselves facing uncertain careers due to the rapid exodus of skilled blue-collar jobs from the region. These were the jobs which had sustained the neighborhood for generations and which most of them considered to be the ideal type of employment. Yet Pete Calderone was not the only one who encountered difficulties in obtaining a high-paying, skilled unionized job. One of the Deutsches' older brothers complained that local factories had lately been hiring young men and then laying them off just before they had worked six months and became eligible for union membership.

Others spoke of friends who had moved South and West in search of work. David Henry had gone to California where his older brother was in the Navy in order to look for work. After a year working in a supermarket, he returned to the neighborhood. John Gutski spoke of friends working in Texas and expressed a desire to join them.

The age-graded patterns of criminal involvements of the Hamilton Park youths are described separately in the following chapter, but some aspects of their crime patterns are relevant to this chapter's focus on their patterns of employment. First, since they had more employment both in the middle teens and during the work establishment period, they also had much greater opportunity for theft from the workplace. Several of them described such activities and these are reported more fully in the following chapter. None of them, however, reported being discovered or sanctioned by their employers for job-related theft. They also had far less involvement in street crime and consequently had far less protracted involvement with the criminal justice system. In contrast to the other two neighborhood groups, none of the Hamilton Park youths had their careers and jobs seriously interrupted by court appearances or periods of incarceration. Two members of this group, however, were depending on regular illegal income toward the end of the fieldwork period, to the point that it seemed as if that income might keep them out of the legitimate labor market. Several members of this group sold drugs, primarily marijuana and pills, but most did so as a supplement to rather

than as a replacement for legitimate employment. Teddy Haskell and Brian Grady, however, were becoming very active in their drug sales, spending much of their time doing business in one of the local parks and either keeping other sellers out or demanding a cut. Teddy Haskell also worked during this period with a relative whose business had both a legal and an illegal side. The business supplied restaurants and other small businesses but also served as a pretext for stealing cash from the businesses they served. Teddy Haskell still expressed a desire to finish his GED and gain entrance to his father's construction union, but his increasing involvement in illegal activities offered the possibility that he might continue in an illegal career.

At the end of the fieldwork period, a few of this group had already found their way into high-paying, unionized blue-collar jobs. A few more were working, but at jobs to which they were not committed and which they hoped eventually to replace with good blue-collar jobs. About half of them were unemployed, although most of those who were unemployed had recently been employed and expected to be employed again soon.

Conclusions: Continuities and Variations among the Study  
Neighborhoods in Youth Employment Patterns

This chapter has described how motivations and opportunities for gaining income through employment are sequenced with age in three different neighborhood environments. The descriptions of employment patterns within each individual neighborhood have portrayed the interplay of local opportunity structure and individual behavior. Similarly, the descriptions of progressions of employment experience with age have emphasized processes both of utility maximization and of the formation of occupational identity.

Several aspects of these employment patterns, primarily related to changes with age, are similar among the three neighborhoods. These continuities are as follows:

Lack of opportunities for non-subsidized, full-time, on-the-books employment during the early and mid-teen years. All three neighborhood groups experienced legal and social barriers to regular full-time employment at these ages. Before they reached the age of seventeen or eighteen, they found themselves defined by others and by themselves as "of school age" and not as "old enough to go to work." Many jobs were closed to them simply on the basis of their age. Their families generally desired that they go to work if they were not attending school, as most were not at some point before the age of high school graduation, but their parents also acknowledged the difficulty of finding regular work at that age and hoped that their sons might go back to school while they still could. All these youths did enter the labor force at some point during this



period, but the only ones who sought and found regular full-time jobs before the age of seventeen were the two La Barriada youths who lied about their age in order to do so.

Concentration of job search within the local neighborhood during the mid-teen years. Youths from all three neighborhoods usually found their first jobs within their own local neighborhood. This was a common pattern despite the fact that the amounts and types of early employment varied considerably, as is discussed below. The youths from Hamilton Park and La Barriada both began with part-time, off-the-books jobs from local private employers. The Projectville youths found their first jobs through public summer youth job programs, but they too signed up for these jobs and performed them locally.

Fluctuating labor force participation during the mid-teen years. Though most youths from all neighborhoods did enter the labor market at some point during their mid-teens, most also withdrew from the labor market at least once after initial entry. Each neighborhood group exhibited considerable internal variation in the extent to which its members desired and sought work during this period. Even the poorest families managed to provide them food and shelter during this period. Their joblessness at this stage was not considered socially deviant by their relatives and neighbors or by institutional officials because of the acknowledged difficulty of finding jobs and expectations that they should be in school.

Increasing labor force participation during the late teens and early twenties. As they reached their later teens, youths in all three neighborhoods greatly increased their labor force

participation. Beginning for some at the age of seventeen and for all by the age of eighteen, they faced increasing felt need for income and social expectations that they provide for themselves. At this same time, many more jobs became available to them as legal and institutional barriers fell away. By the age of twenty, most respondents from each neighborhood were unequivocally in the labor market, working or seeking work. Some still sought education and training, but usually in combination with work, not alone. As will be described in the next chapter, some were still involved in income-producing crime, but generally as a supplement to and not as a replacement for wages.

High unemployment throughout the middle and late teens.

Although the differences in unemployment among the neighborhoods, discussed below, were striking, finding jobs was difficult in each of them and the brief duration of most jobs led youths back out of the labor force or into renewed job search.

Brief duration of employment experiences from the middle teens into the early twenties. Within each neighborhood group, there were youths who were more and less committed to work and who performed better and worse when they did find jobs. Yet most jobs throughout both the middle-teen and work establishment periods lasted no more than a few months, even for the most committed and able among them. The more ambitious and able changed jobs frequently in order to find better jobs or to reinvest in education and training. Quits were the most frequent form of job termination among both more and less com-

mited workers. Most firings were occasioned by absence rather than incompetence. Absence was in fact frequently a way of quitting.

Layoffs were nearly as frequent as quits. Most jobs reported among all groups were only temporary to begin with, whether they were offered by private employers or public programs. Most jobs did not pay very well and did not offer either long-term job security or direct chances for advancement. This was true for all three groups during the middle teen period but was less true for some of the Hamilton Park group who began in their early twenties to find their way into desirable jobs that they might maintain for a long term.

Contact with and separation from legal and undocumented immigrant workers. None of the youths studied were themselves undocumented aliens. The only non-citizen was from Europe, had lived in Hamilton Park most of his life, and carried a "green card." The rest of the youths studied in all three neighborhoods were all citizens and lived in Brooklyn most of their lives. Respondents from each neighborhood reported encountering many recent labor migrants at workplaces where they themselves failed either to find or to manage to sustain employment. They often referred to them specifically as "illegal aliens." All the youths associated production jobs in factories with such workers and found it difficult to co-exist with these workers in these jobs. When these youths did work in factories, they usually worked on the loading docks, not in production jobs. Some claimed that employers actually pre-

ferred undocumented aliens for many jobs because the employers could take advantage of their immigration status to impose a variety of exploitative working conditions that youthful citizens would not accept. Two respondents, one from La Barriada and one from Hamilton Park, reported working as supervisors of crews of undocumented workers and serving as translators. These respondents considered undocumented alien workers as a "non-competing group" in the labor market with whom they competed openly only infrequently and without success.

Though the above patterns were to some extent common to all three neighborhoods, the neighborhoods also varied considerably in the amounts, types, and sequences of employment experience that characterized the process of labor market entry during the period from the middle teens through the early twenties. The single most striking difference among the neighborhoods was the greater amount of employment in Hamilton Park than in the two poorer, minority neighborhoods. This contrast was especially pronounced during the mid-teen years. During the late teens, the contrast between Hamilton Park and the other two neighborhoods began to shift from a difference in job quantity towards a difference in job quality. By their early twenties, the youths in the minority neighborhoods had greatly increased their labor force participation and employment, though they still suffered more unemployment than their age peers in Hamilton Park. The Hamilton Park youths, however, were finding their way into jobs which offered better compensation and security than the jobs found by the minority youths.

The contribution of human capital differences to these disparities in labor market success among the neighborhood groups appears to have been minimal, although differences within a given neighborhood could be noted. Of the two major components of human capital, education and work experience, the latter contributed more than the former to differences in labor market success among these groups. As a group, the Hamilton Park youths did not have much better educational credentials than the other two groups. Only half of them finished high school and some reported literacy problems. One member of the group finished a conventional public vocational training program in high school and went on to work at a good job in that trade. Another was still hoping to obtain an equivalency diploma because he needed it to join his father's union. The rest, however, either left school without diplomas or squeaked by with low grades and then went on to jobs that were similar to jobs obtained by their non-graduating friends. Their more extensive work experience during the middle teens, however, may have contributed to their lesser unemployment during their later teens. The Hamilton Park youths had far more work than their minority peers during the middle teens. As a result, they had a clear advantage in work experience by their late teens. The labor market advantages of this mid-teen work experience were manifested not so much in their greater ability to find jobs, since they found jobs more plentiful at all ages, as in their ability to hold on to jobs because they were familiar with the discipline of the workplace. By their late teens,

fewer of them reported losing jobs that they wished that they had kept, primarily because they had already been through that experience.

Human capital differences, especially the use of educational credentials, appeared to make more difference within the neighborhood groups than between them. This was especially true for the Projectville group, several of whom obtained equivalency diplomas after interrupted schooling and found themselves more able to find clerical and service sector jobs as a result. Even in La Barriada, where most youths did not have any sort of diploma, those who had gone farther in school found access to a broader range of jobs than their peers who left school earlier and were generally less literate. Those among the La Barriada group who had attended school through the tenth or eleventh grade were able to find more clerical and service sector jobs while the others were confined almost entirely to the low-wage, insecure, arduous factory jobs disliked by all the youths in the study. In Hamilton Park, the high school diploma made a difference for one youth because it provided him a minimum credential for making use of personal job networks.

Personal networks, not human capital in the form either of education or work experience, accounted for most of the disparities in labor market success among the neighborhood groups. This was true both for the youth jobs of the middle teens and for the jobs during the ensuing period of work establishment. The Hamilton Park youths found a relatively

plentiful supply of temporary, part-time, almost always off-the-books work through relatives, friends, and local employers during their middle teens. Most of these jobs were located in the local vicinity. As these youths reached their late teens, they employed these same networks to gain access to a substantial if diminishing supply of desirable blue-collar jobs characterized by high pay, strong unions, and job protection. The minority youths suffered during both periods from their lack of comparable job networks.

In addition to these major differences in the quantity and quality of employment between Hamilton Park and the other two neighborhoods, the neighborhood groups also varied in a number of other ways with regard to amounts and types of work they experienced at different ages.

Although both minority groups had much worse labor market difficulties than the Hamilton Park group, there were also a number of differences between these two groups. These differences were influenced both by the physical ecology of the neighborhoods and by the orientation of local residents towards particular sectors of the labor market. The youths from La Barriada had slightly more work in their mid-teens than those from Projectville, and the Projectville group showed some signs of gaining an advantage over the La Barriada group with increasing age. The two minority groups also sought and found different types of work. The youths from La Barriada lived in close physical proximity to a major concentration of employment and managed to get some work in local factories and from small

landlords. The Projectville neighborhood's physical isolation from centers of employment limited the employment opportunities of residents, especially those of youths in their mid-teens for whom job search is often confined to the local area. Had it not been for public summer youth jobs, the Projectville youths would have been virtually without employment during their middle teens. Projectville differed greatly from both the other neighborhoods in the overwhelming predominance of summer youth jobs among mid-teen employment experiences. La Barriada youths reported a few public summer youth jobs and Hamilton Park youths reported none.

Whatever advantage La Barriada youths enjoyed over their Projectville peers as a result simply of living near many jobs paled in comparison to the superior opportunities open to the youths from Hamilton Park. The Hamilton Park youths also benefited from living near many jobs, but in their case social ties between residents and local employers reinforced physical proximity to produce a much greater supply of youth jobs than in either of the other two neighborhoods.

As the two minority groups reached their late teens, this relative advantage shifted as those Projectville youths who had remained out of the labor market in their mid-teens but had managed to acquire equivalency diplomas faced broader labor market prospects than the youths from La Barriada.

At the close of the fieldwork period, most of those studied were very much involved in the process of work establishment, yet each neighborhood group seemed headed for a



distinctive niche in the labor market. Both the La Barriada and the Hamilton Park youths aspired to high-paying, stable, skilled blue-collar jobs, but those from La Barriada appeared to have much worse prospects for getting such jobs. They were beginning to find and stay with unskilled, insecure, low-paying blue-collar jobs and also some service-sector jobs. Some Hamilton Park youths expressed fear that they might not be able to secure one of the desirable blue-collar jobs that had been more plentifully available to their older male relatives, but some had already found such jobs and others expected to do so eventually. The Projectville youths had little aspiration to manual work. They aspired either to college and white-collar employment or to good government jobs, and were actually beginning to find and hold jobs in the clerical and service sectors. Most of these jobs paid little better and offered no more prospects for advancement than the low-level factory jobs - they so disliked, but they preferred the working conditions. They also had readier access to these jobs, although they relied to a much greater extent than the other neighborhood groups on advertisements, agencies, programs and other impersonal modes of labor recruitment in order to find jobs.

These comparative analyses of employment experiences among three neighborhood groups indicate several lines of cleavage which appear to define "non-competing groups" in this regional labor market. Immigration laws separate citizens and undocumented aliens. Labor laws, school attendance laws, and work rules separate those still of school age from competition with

adult workers. In a more subtle but no less effective way, personal networks separate local neighborhood groups from access to the same sets of jobs. During the mid-teens, these personal networks are solely responsible for allocating jobs to some groups and not to others. With increasing age, youths do begin to move outside the local neighborhood and to come into more open competition for jobs. Personal networks still maintain a great deal of importance in finding adult jobs, however, and those with effective personal job networks are likely to carry the added advantage of having more extensive work experience because those same networks have already given them more access to mid-teen employment.

## CHAPTER IV

### CRIME

#### Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes field data concerning the patterns of involvement in income-motivated crime of youths in the three study neighborhoods. The objective of the analysis is to show how youths in each neighborhood perceive and respond to the structure of opportunities for illegal income and how these perceptions and responses change with age. The comparisons among the three neighborhoods reveal the specific nature of local opportunity structures while the data collection strategy of one or more years of continuous observation in each neighborhood combined with retrospective life-history interviews makes it possible to trace the career progressions in economic crime of individuals and cliques from their teens to their early twenties.

Since the focus of this report as a whole is the process whereby high-risk youths choose between employment and crime as alternative sources of income, the emphasis in this chapter is on crimes that high-risk youths commit for money. Accordingly, the terms "income-motivated crime" or "economic crime" will be used throughout in order to designate those crimes that are committed for money. The more conventional designation of crimes as either "violent" or "property" is not used here since violent crimes for money, particularly in the form of street muggings, constitute one of the primary categories of economic

crimes committed by high-risk youths. Since economic and non-economic crimes are closely intertwined in the lives of the respondents, however, early sections of this chapter address the issue of the intermixture of violence, thrills, and income as motivations for crime.

After having defined this focus on economic crime, the chapter then proceeds to detailed analyses of the types of economic crime and career progressions associated with them that characterize each of the three neighborhoods. The field study began with assumptions, based on the Project's review of the literature (Thompson, Sviridoff, McElroy, et al., 1981), concerning the degrees of intensity and specialization associated with economic crimes by youths. It was assumed that the middle to late teens are crime-intensive years for high-risk youths and that most of them "age out" of high crime involvement by their early twenties. Associated with this change in intensity of crime involvements, it was expected that a change would be found in the degrees of specialization and sophistication of economic crime behavior. Previous research, notably that of Wolfgang, Figlio and Sellin (1972), has found that youths are relatively unskilled and unspecialized in the types of crimes they commit.

While the ethnographic research generally confirms these assumptions, the detailed focus on specific local structures of criminal opportunity and the careers of a few cliques and individuals has made it possible to identify patterns of specialization and progression in economic crimes by youths which could not be expected to be visible in aggregate statistics.

In order to portray neighborhood variations in crime patterns and changes in crime behavior with age, the bulk of the data in this chapter are presented in sections which focus on an individual neighborhood and then trace progressions of involvement in various types of economic crime of youths in the neighborhood. These career patterns are then analyzed with reference to the ways in which each neighborhood environment facilitates and/or controls different types of crime. The rest of this introduction to the chapter discusses the dimensions of variation among the neighborhoods and the crime types associated with them which inform the comparative analysis.

As described in Chapter I, the process of selecting neighborhoods for field study was designed to identify three neighborhoods which all presented local youths with significant choices between legal and illegal means of gaining income but which also differed in terms of population and social organization. The dimensions of neighborhood variation which inform the comparisons of crime patterns can be grouped broadly under the categories of poverty levels, ecology, demography, and mechanisms of social control. These dimensions of variation are discussed briefly here in order to guide the specific comparisons elaborated throughout the chapter.

None of the neighborhoods studied is at all affluent, yet differences between the average income levels of neighborhood residents and also between the range of income levels within the neighborhood are associated with differences in the economic crime behavior of local youths. The most striking differ-

ence in average income levels is between the white neighborhood, Hamilton Park, and the two minority neighborhoods. Higher levels of parental income and youth employment in Hamilton Park are associated both with less economic crime by local youths and with a particular type of social control environment. Both minority neighborhoods are populated primarily by very poor people, but the presence of some moderate-income families in the black neighborhood, Projectville, is associated with a different type of social control environment than that found in La Barriada.

Both physical ecology and demography affect the types of economic crime opportunities that are available to local youth. The presence or absence of factories, stores, abandoned buildings, or of large numbers of drug users or vulnerable women, children, and elderly persons are shown here to be associated with variations in opportunities for specific types of crimes such as burglary, robbery, drug dealing, and auto theft.

The three neighborhoods, besides offering different targets for economic crimes by local youths, also have distinctive social control mechanisms which vary in the amount and types of crime that they can and will tolerate or sanction. The three neighborhoods differ not only in the willingness of residents to use the police but also in how they use the police when they do, what kinds of police they use, and in the organization of and reliance on informal methods of social control.

As a result of these variations among the neighborhoods in opportunities for economic crimes, very distinctive kinds of

crime characterize each neighborhood. The comparisons among the neighborhoods will also address the issue of what it is about the technique and organization of different kinds of crime that leads them to be tolerated or sanctioned within a particular neighborhood's environment. The major types of economic crime discussed in this chapter are factory burglaries, residential burglaries, street robberies, snatching of purses and jewelry, auto theft, drug dealing, on-the-job theft, and "errands" for older professional and organized criminals. These types of crime are not distributed randomly by age or by neighborhood. Differences among these different types of crime which affect how they fit into a neighborhood or an individual career include the role and amount of violence involved, the amount and type of skill required, how close to the criminal's home they take place, the organization of markets for stolen or illegal goods, and the degrees of recruitment, training, support, and direction supplied by adults or more established criminals.

**A. Gangs, Cliques, Turf, and Violence**

Although the focus of this chapter is on the crimes that high-risk youths commit for money, whether non-violent or violent, and not on non-economic violent crimes, it is necessary to consider the other patterns of violence which characterize their neighborhoods in order to understand the standpoint from which they perceive the costs of engaging in violent crimes for money. Accordingly, this section discusses the social context of violence committed for other than directly economic motives by youths in the study neighborhoods. The more detailed analyses of specific neighborhood patterns of economic crime which follow examine the dollar returns and informal and formal sanctions which respondents experienced and perceived during their explorations of economic crime and how these risks and benefits shape specific local structures of opportunity for economic crime. Their willingness and ability to employ violence for economic gain, however, both initially and over time, cannot be understood apart from the context of non-economic functions of violence in their neighborhoods.

The most prominent pattern of non-economically motivated violence in the lives of the study respondents was that of fighting with age peers. Although some respondents did report episodes of family violence, none reported being seriously abused as children and the scattered instances of family fights stand in contrast to reports of adolescent street fighting in both number and severity. Nearly all respondents, excluding only those labelled "punks" or "patos" (effeminate) by their



peers, reported fighting both in individual confrontations and in gang fights. The fighting was often quite severe, frequently involving weapons. Many had seen companions killed. This adolescent street fighting chronologically preceded involvement in systematic economic crime in most respondents' biographies and provided some of them with experience in the techniques of violence which they then applied to the systematic pursuit of income.

In comparison to the patterns of systematic economic crime which are described later in this chapter, patterns of adolescent street fighting differed in two important respects. First, although most respondents in the field study reported both income-motivated crimes and fighting, peak involvement in fighting generally preceded periods of peak involvement in economic crime. Second, although fighting frequently involved disputes over property, the basic motivations for street fighting stemmed from concerns over status and territory rather than from 'a quest for income (Suttles, 1968). Those respondents who became involved in systematic economic crime generally did so after earlier involvement in individual or group confrontations with other adolescents. As will be seen, the economic crimes which characterized these neighborhoods varied in the role and amount of violence they involved, but all economic crimes, burglary and drug dealing as well as more overtly violent crimes such as street robberies, involved the potential for violent confrontations. By the time respondents became involved in these economic crimes on a systematic basis, they had experi-

enced street fights and knew how and when to fight or run, and how to procure and use weapons.

We found some variations among the study neighborhoods in the social organization of adolescent street fighting but all three neighborhoods were essentially similar in that any male youth growing up there found it necessary to establish a place for himself in the configuration of adolescent cliques and territories. From the early teens on, the young males in each of these neighborhoods spent much of their time together outside their parents' houses and recognized some sort of attachment to a territory or "turf." Smaller children and adults might pass through unchallenged but youths from other areas who passed through without invitation or an appropriate display of deference would be assumed to be provoking confrontation.

Local variations in the organization of cliques and turf involved the degree to which adolescent cliques were ritually incorporated as named youth gangs and the significance of ethnic boundaries. La Barriada was the only one of the three study neighborhoods in which there were named youth gangs, although gangs tend to come and go in cycles and older residents of the other two neighborhoods could remember times in the past when there had been local gangs. The degree of ritualization of adolescent cliques in terms of distinctive names, clothing, and initiation ceremonies did not in any case seem to affect the basic behavior of adolescents in these groups. The cliques and gangs were quasi-familial groupings which served to protect their members from outsiders. Some gang members from La

Barriada were interviewed, although the main clique of youths contacted by the study lived outside the main gang area of the neighborhood. Only two of this core group of respondents had been in the gangs, but the rest had often had to band together to protect themselves from neighboring gangs. A vivid description of the necessity for affiliating with a local clique for purposes of simple self-protection was given us by a youth named Carlos Hernandez:

Carlos Hernandez: Once we got attacked by a gang . . . it was either Halloween or Fourth of July, one of those things. Someone threw a bottle . . . these guys said they were coming back. The guys on the block went around collecting everybody on the block. When they got to my house, I had to go outside. I didn't want to, but if I said, "No, I gotta study" . . . well, you could imagine. Not that they would have done anything to me, but I may have needed them some day. I could be getting mugged on the corner and they'll just turn their backs on me or something like that.

Unlike most of the other youths from this clique, Carlos Hernandez never became involved in economic crimes, refrained from drug use, and eventually went on to complete college. Yet, even he found it necessary to join with the other youths on his block in street fights.

Respondents from the other two study neighborhoods, although they reported no local youth gangs, also reported similar affiliation into local cliques with loosely defined territory and the obligation to protect each other against outsiders. In the case of the La Barriada clique, their territory consisted essentially of the single city block where most of them lived and where they all spent most of their free time.

The core group of respondents from the Projectville neighborhood mostly lived in a single high-rise project building and treated the benches and basketball court in the immediate vicinity of the building as their territory. The only non-residents of the building who associated with this clique were relatives of residents. One of this group, Ben Bivins, described what it was like to grow up in this area:

Int: Were there gangs in Projectville when you were growing up?

Ben Bivins: Only when I was real little. There used to be lots of gangs in Projectville, but that's all gone since I was about ten.

Int: Did you feel you could walk safely anywhere in the neighborhood since then?

BB: Well, it depends. If I went more than about a block and a half away, or if I went in somebody else's building, I'd have somebody watch my back.

A Hamilton Park youth, Charlie Gaberewski, described similar processes in his neighborhood, even though Hamilton Park was somewhat more affluent than the other two neighborhoods and had a much lower incidence of street crime generally:

Charles Gaberewski: Some people can't go into different neighborhoods or different blocks. You walk by somebody else's corner and right away they start something with you for nothin'. They grab you, say "what are you doing" . . . "nothin" . . . or they grab your radio and run with it. What are you gonna do, do you want to die for a radio? Fuck it, give it up. Or break it, nobody gets it. That's the way it is. I ripped off a couple of radios that way myself.

Many of these kinds of confrontations in Hamilton Park involved ethnic boundaries, Hamilton Park being a predominantly white

neighborhood surrounded by black and Hispanic areas. Ethnic factors did not often enter into the confrontations in the other two neighborhoods, however, since they lacked the sharply defined ethnic borders that characterized Hamilton Park. La Barriada gangs and cliques, for example, were predominantly Hispanic and fought mainly with each other. The Projectville neighborhood was predominantly black and surrounded by other predominantly black areas.

Regardless of the presence or absence of named youth gangs or polarized ethnic borders, therefore, all three study neighborhoods were characterized by adolescent street fighting socially organized on the basis of localized adolescent cliques. As the Hamilton Park youth mentioned, such fights might involve acts of theft of personal items such as radios, bicycles, or clothing, but the primary purpose of such confrontations was the definition of status and territory rather than that of making money. As one La Barriada youth put it when describing his involvement in the local gangs when he was age fourteen and fifteen: "That was about fighting, not stealing."

This distinction between fighting and stealing appears not only in their own perceptions but also in the sequencing of fighting and stealing involvements. Peak involvement in fighting with other youths generally preceded involvement in systematic economic crime, and a developing involvement in economic crime tended to displace involvement in expressive fighting. With increasing age, fights still continued but, besides being less frequent, they also were less likely to be the kind

of confrontations in which localized groups asserted claims to territory. Fights in the late teens were more often individual confrontations that took place in and around pool halls, bars, and discos.

Despite the non-economic motivations of their fighting and the fact that such fighting both preceded and overlapped their involvements in systematic economic crime, however, fighting provided some elements of socialization into economic crime. First, as mentioned, fights over territory and status often did involve taking of another's property. In this way, property rights came to be seen as matters regulated by individuals or informal groups as much as by formal authorities. In addition, fighting taught techniques of violence which some then went on to apply to a more systematic pursuit of income. During the period of field study, the fighting often became quite violent. Many respondents reported possessing or having possessed knives and guns and instances of killing in street fights were recorded in each neighborhood. Several respondents, particularly the older individuals, perceived an increasing availability of firearms and expressed the opinion that not only were more guns present in their neighborhoods but that they were now in the possession of much younger teenagers than had previously been the case.

Despite the near universality in these neighborhoods of having to fight, however, not all individuals who went through that process then went on to become involved in systematic property crime. Further steps were required before the recog-

nition of the adolescent clique as a major foundation of social order in the local setting became transformed into reliance on the clique as a support group for involvement in systematic economic crime. Some cliques become more oriented towards economic crime than others. In other cases, a group of boys who had grown up together began to split up as some members become progressively more involved in economic crime and others did not. Later sections of this chapter describe such processes.

One final distinction between patterns of fighting and patterns of stealing concerns the way in which these activities were sanctioned. Except in cases of major gang fights or killings, fights rarely were reported to the police or resulted in formal arrests. Systematic involvement in economic crime, however, did eventually result in arrest for most individuals. Though many respondents reported being involved in fights, the only ones who reported sanctions for fighting through the criminal justice system were those who got involved in fights after they were already on probation or parole as a result of their economic crimes and who were then at risk of having to return to incarceration.

Subsequent sections of this chapter examine the experiences of youths from each of the neighborhoods who became involved in systematic economic crimes and their decisions to continue, discontinue or alter their economic crimes as they experienced the rewards and sanctions associated with particular types of crime. With few exceptions, they found that violent confrontations in the pursuit of income incurred costs

that they were unwilling to continue to risk on a regular basis. The willingness to risk violence for petty economic rewards is particularly characteristic of youth crimes. This willingness can only be understood in the context of the necessity for youths to fight in order merely to survive in their neighborhoods.



**B. First Explorations of Economic Crime**

The previous section of this chapter discussed patterns of non-economic adolescent violence and the manner in which street fighting provided early socialization into illegal behavior and the techniques of violence which some individuals then went on to apply to systematic economic crime. Before discussing specific patterns of systematic economic crime, however, it is necessary to consider the circumstances which led study respondents into their first explorations of crimes motivated explicitly by hopes of economic gain.

As later sections of this chapter will show, sustained involvement in economic crime resulted in patterns of behavior which were shaped both by neighborhood-specific illegal markets, criminal organizations and environments of social control. Early explorations of economic crime, in contrast, were typically undertaken without accurate knowledge of the risks and rewards associated with various types of economic crime. Early explorations were also typically undertaken at an age at which the individual had little experience with generating a flow of income of any sort. Under such circumstances, these youths' expectations concerning the returns to economic crime differed considerably from the expectations they developed later on when they experienced a need for more sustained income and had developed a more realistic perception of the varied legal and illegal opportunities for gaining income open to them. This section examines the circumstances and motivations which attended early explorations of economic crime in order

that the subsequent sections may show how more sustained involvements in economic crime were shaped by the structure of both illegal and legitimate economic opportunities within the individual neighborhoods.

A few respondents cited as their first economic crimes incidents of stealing fruit or candy from stores before they were yet teenagers, but most, even though they had committed such acts, did not consider them significant crimes. Most respondents who had become involved in systematic economic crime cited incidents that occurred when they were fourteen or fifteen years old as their first experiences with gaining illegal income. These first experiences generally involved non-confrontational acts of theft such as picking pockets, stealing car parts, or, most commonly, burglaries of factories or apartments. Violent confrontations at these ages were almost always with other youths in the kinds of fights described earlier in which status and territory, rather than economic gain, were the dominant concerns. During their early teens, none of the respondents were willing to risk violent confrontations with adults, even though fighting with other youths was common. These exploratory economic crimes usually were conceived and carried out by pairs or groups of age peers very close to their own familiar territory.

Respondents varied considerably, both within and among study neighborhoods, in the degree of emphasis they attributed to economic and non-economic motives for engaging in their first crimes for money or property. Their accounts of these

experiences differentiate them both from street fights, including those in which radios or other personal items were seized, and also from later, more sustained involvements in economic crime. Such statements as "that was about fighting, not stealing" in accounts of street fights clearly downplay the economic motive. Conversely, the economic motive stands out in the accounts of sustained involvements in economic crime which include constant evaluations of the risks and benefits of particular types of economic crimes in relation both to other types of crime and to legitimate jobs.

In contrast to these two extremes, accounts of first explorations of economic crime typically emphasized a certain amount of explicitly economic motivation combined with a search for excitement and the desire to establish a reputation among peers. This admixture of non-economic motives in early economic crimes is evident in the field material from all three neighborhoods. A Projectville respondent, Ben Bivins, who later became a frequent economic offender, described his first experiences with shoplifting and purse snatching when he was fourteen:

Ben Bivins: I used to be with guys a little older than me and we would go stealing.

Int: What was that like back then, what did you want the money for?

BB: It wasn't so much the money then. It wasn't till I got older, say 'bout seventeen, and I wanted to buy clothes and impress females; that's when I started caring about the money. Back then, it was more like the excitement of it, plus, you got to make that reputation for yourself.

Several of the Hamilton Park youths described a factory burglary that they had all participated in as their most significant early experience with economic crime. The factory they broke into made toys, and, although they later sold some of the toys for profit, they also played around inside the factory for a while and were quite boisterous about removing what they stole. Vandalism and rowdyism, as much as economic motives, appear to have motivated this burglary. Some La Barriada youths also reported breaking into factories initially just for fun and then subsequently for profit. Reports of auto theft also reveal mixed motives. Respondents from both La Barriada and Hamilton Park reported stealing cars initially for joyriding with some individuals then going on to strip parts to sell for profit.

The most in-depth example of the mixture of economic and non-economic motives in early experiences with economic crime comes from the material on La Barriada. It is worth quoting in full since it seems to exemplify the motivations which underlie many exploratory economic crimes. A La Barriada respondent, Arturo Morales, wrote the following document and showed it to the Project's fieldworker. Morales had written it on his own initiative, although he knew that we were doing research and would be interested in what he wrote. He was seventeen at the time and had already been involved in economic crimes for about two years, but his writing still reveals quite a mixture of economic and non-economic motives:

Let's say it was right before the burglary with a serious armed robbery charge on me and pending. How was I thinking then? If I was to write my thinking about myself in a scale of 1 to 10 it was a 2 if I was lucky.

1. Didn't care if I got caught by police, prepared to do any crime, Down to shoot, stab, not fatal thoughts though, mug, Rob anybody, burglarize any property.
2. No job at all.
3. No girlfriend or person to count on.
4. School, I gave up on that.
5. Family let down.
6. Real tight dirty relationships.
7. Try to get over on cheap shit (crime in general).
8. Thinking to do a job for some money.
9. Wasting time on absolutely nothing but to think nasty and dirty things to do.
10. Damaging myself physically on a day to day basis without doing any sort of positive thinking for myself.
11. Almost every penny to get high or find dumb pleasures.
12. Didn't handle boredom the right way.
13. Being in the neighborhood 90% of the time.
14. Hanging out with the wrong people 85% of that time I hang out.
15. Thinking that I had authority to rob and steal.
16. Not think about the future at all, or serious thing not to do especially at such a young age.
17. Just falling into hell.
18. Not using nothing at all as lessons.
19. Not knowing all I was doing was wrong and was later going to be punished for it.

20. Letting money problems get to me thinking I was slick, having a lets do it attitude.
21. Nothing to be happy about.

Morales's list reveals many motivations of a social and psychological, rather than economic origin. Among these are low self-esteem, boredom, isolation from family, girlfriends, and school, and his desire to impress a peer clique already heavily involved with property crime. These motivations do not appear alone, however. Lack of a job and a need for income are also prominently mentioned. This mix of motivations appears throughout the field notes and life histories collected in the study neighborhoods.

The relative emphasis on thrills or economic gain did vary among individuals and neighborhoods, but some mixture of the two characterized most early explorations of economic crime. One example of variations within one neighborhood is the contrast between Arturo Morales, whose motivations at age seventeen still were significantly oriented towards thrills, and another member of his clique, Gaspar Cruz, who reported a very businesslike attitude toward theft from the age of twelve onwards. The most distinctive variation among neighborhoods with regard to the mix of motivations for early economic crimes was the contrast between the greater and earlier income orientation of the youths from the poorer minority neighborhoods, Projectville and La Barriada, and the greater importance of expressive motivations for the somewhat more affluent youths in the white neighborhood, Hamilton Park. These variations within

and among the neighborhoods are examined in more detail in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Despite these variations within and among neighborhoods, however, the income motivation during early economic crimes appears to have been generally undeveloped. The excitement of doing the crime was at least as important as the income to be gained from it. This early emphasis on thrills, despite the fact that most of these youths come from poor families, is not surprising when one considers their situation at the ages of fourteen and fifteen. At this point in their lives, almost none of them had experienced earning a regular flow of income, legal or illegal. They were not accustomed or expected to provide regular income to support basic subsistence. Though they knew need and deprivation, they experienced them as the children of impoverished parents. Even the Hamilton Park youths, whose parents were somewhat more affluent and who would themselves have access to a considerable amount of part-time work in their later teens, had not yet had much work. Even the youths from the poorest households in Projectville and La Barriada depended on their parents for food and shelter.

Under these circumstances, their initial economic crimes must be seen as responses to poverty in a dual sense. First, the income that they did derive was used to satisfy those personal needs beyond basic subsistence for which their parents could not provide. In fact, most of their early income, from whatever source, was spent on clothing and recreation. Secondly, the actual doing of the crime constituted a kind of recrea-

tion (Tannebaum (1938) in Silberman (1978, p. 91)) in environments with few recreational facilities and lots of boredom. Crime in the early teens was undertaken not as an easier or more lucrative income alternative to employment, since employment was not available, but rather as an alternative to hanging out day after day with no money at all.

The undeveloped nature of their economic motivations is evident not only in their own evaluations of why they first committed thefts but also in the way that they handled the proceeds. Many stole initially in order to enjoy direct use of the stolen objects. Stealing that took place in adolescent street fights, for example, usually involved the appropriation of youth culture consumer items such as radios, bicycles, sneakers, or coats, which were then as likely to be used directly as to be resold. Initial experiences with stealing cars were often for the purpose of joyriding. Some youths who snatched jewelry on the streets and subways did so initially in order to wear the gold. They also were often unaware at this stage of the true worth of what they had stolen, so that, when they did sell merchandise, they received only a fraction of what it was worth, even on the black market.

After the first few experiences with economic crime, however, their motivations began to change. Few of those exploring economic crime encountered serious sanctions as a result of their initial ventures. Crime proved a viable way to make money at the same time that they were beginning to perceive needs for more regular income. With continued involvement, the



income motivation became steadily more important. Stealing for direct use gave way to conversion of stolen goods into cash. They learned what prices to expect for stolen goods. The risks and rewards associated with specific criminal opportunities were then weighed against opportunities for other types of crime or for legitimate work.

At this point, the specific opportunity structure of each neighborhood environment began to channel exploratory criminal behavior into very distinctive patterns. Although the movement from stealing for thrills to stealing as part of a more sustained search for income was a common process in all three neighborhoods, both the extent of more sustained involvement and the particular types of criminal activity undertaken were shaped by the local neighborhood environments.

C. The Transition to Systematic Economic Crime: Neighborhood Influences

The variations among neighborhoods in opportunities for legitimate employment described in the previous chapter were one set of factors influencing the extent and type of developing involvements in economic crime. The greater availability of employment for the white youths of Hamilton Park was associated with a lesser degree of involvement in systematic economic crime, especially during the middle teen years. The Hamilton Park youths who did commit economic crimes also tended not to commit the highly exposed and risky predatory street crimes in which many of the La Barriada and Projectville youths became involved.

Although neighborhood variations in employment opportunities influenced the propensity of local youths to engage in income-motivated crime, the practical opportunities for them to do so on more than an exploratory basis were predicated on several features of their local environments which combined to produce neighborhood-specific structures of illegal opportunity. The descriptions of neighborhood-specific crime patterns which follow examine the ways in which neighborhood characteristics influence the types and sequencing of opportunities for income-motivated crime, as seen in the careers of local cliques of youths. The neighborhood characteristics compared across study neighborhoods, and their implications for the types and sequencing of illegal income opportunities are as follows:

### 1. Ecology

The physical ecology of the local neighborhoods defined a certain set of opportunities for and limits on the kinds of illegal income opportunities for local youths. Youths tend to commit crimes fairly close to the area with which they are familiar, especially during the earlier stages of their crime involvements. Ecology had a direct effect on opportunities in terms of the sheer physical availability of crime targets such as factories, stores, crowded shopping areas or unprotected pedestrian routes to and from transportation, and of empty lots and abandoned buildings to house stolen goods, car stripping, and drug selling operations. Ecology reflected indirectly the social isolation of some poor neighborhoods. The same residential areas which contained high proportions of burned out blocks and abandoned buildings or were located near noxious industrial and transportation facilities were also characterized by a lack of services and of effective neighborhood organization to demand services. This isolation from municipal government and services affected the ability of local residents to control crime in their areas.

### 2. Local Markets for Illegal Goods and Services

Physical opportunities for economic crime do not elicit criminal behavior apart from a social atmosphere which validates and supports economic crime. The most pervasive social supports for youthful economic crime in the study neighborhoods were the markets for the illegal goods and services supplied by youths. Such markets played a crucial role in channeling

exploratory ventures into more systematic economic crime. Youths exploring economic crime soon found that they could sell the products of criminal enterprise with ease and virtually no risk. This discovery of underground markets provided an early and crucial connection between their individual acts of income-motivated crime and a wider, reinforcing social context.

The organization of underground markets did vary among the neighborhoods, however, and this variation contributed to the specificity of local structures of illegal opportunity. Neighborhoods varied in how openly drugs and stolen goods could be sold on the street. Neighborhoods also varied in their particular combinations of diffuse and specialized markets, with some neighborhoods containing specialized fences for gold, auto parts, and other goods and all neighborhoods containing diffuse markets, based primarily on personal networks, in which youthful suppliers of illegal goods and services sold to ordinary residents buying for their own use. Certain neighborhoods or sections of one neighborhood were also known as marketplaces for stolen goods, drugs, gambling, and prostitution, attracting a large number of both suppliers and purchasers. These relatively open marketplaces were in some cases located on the borders of a residential area where such activities could not be carried out as openly but which supplied clientele to the adjoining market areas.

### 3. Social Organization of Criminal Operations

Few of the income-motivated crimes reported by youths in the study were carried out alone. Most youths operated with

others in some kind of structured relations, however rudimentary. Several aspects of the social organization of the actual criminal operations had significant implications for the types and sequencing of illegal opportunities within each neighborhood environment, including:

a. Patterns of recruitment. The major distinction in patterns of recruitment was that between recruitment by the adolescent peer group and recruitment by older and/or more established criminal entrepreneurs. Most youthful stealing was conceived within peer cliques and did not involve older people except as buyers of stolen goods. Involvements in such youthful predations lasted from a few weeks to a period of two or three years, but rarely continued unchanged as those involved reached their twenties. The pattern frequently reported was one in which youths in their middle teens learned to rob and steal from slightly older youths just as the older youths were about to decrease or end their own involvements. The amounts and types of larceny, burglary, and robbery involved varied among neighborhoods according to other aspects of the local opportunity structure being discussed here.

Though most youths were recruited into economic crime initially by other youths, some respondents did report being recruited by adults. This kind of recruitment characterized certain types of crime, specifically auto theft, drug selling, and organized gambling in the material reported here, and had much different implications for the career possibilities of the youths involved.

b. Vertical and horizontal lines of organization.

Associated with the difference in being recruited by peers or adults were differences in the importance of vertical and horizontal lines of organization. Youths working primarily with each other, though they might assume differentiated roles at some points, all faced roughly the same high level of risks and were forced to decrease or discontinue their predations as risks and sanctions mounted. In contrast, youths who worked for adults started off doing the riskiest jobs but faced the possibility of advancing themselves to more sheltered and lucrative criminal roles. Horizontal relationships were also important at higher levels of criminal enterprise, as in the case of drug sellers who shared sources, clients, and information.

c. Skill transmission. Although crimes committed by youths are relatively unskilled and unspecialized, some individuals from each neighborhood clique emerged as more successful than their peers at types of crime that many of them had attempted. The more successful individuals could attribute their success to special abilities and cite specific reasons for the failures of their peers. Two broad categories of skills to be discussed are manual skills, which are important in burglary and car theft, and social skills, which are important in drug dealing and in working with others generally. Those who claimed such skills also described how they had learned them from older or more experienced individuals. Skill acquisition was particularly important for those who were

involved in criminal operations that included vertical lines of organization and possibilities for career advancement. Those who aspired to such advancement displayed a keen awareness of the need for learning skills. A third kind of criminal "skill," the ability to employ violence, is discussed separately below.

d. The role and management of violence. Both the propensity of an individual to engage in a crime and his ability to continue engaging in that sort of crime had much to do with that crime's requirements for the use of violence. The kind of crime that a local neighborhood will tolerate also has a great deal to do with the type and amount of violence involved in that crime. Robbery, which automatically involves the use or threat of violence, was the most universally unacceptable crime in each of the study neighborhoods. Larceny and burglary, however, also involve the potential for violent encounters with the police or with a victim. Many drug sellers start selling drugs because it does not involve violent predations, yet the potential for violent encounters with predators or competitors is very high with protracted involvement in the drug world. As discussed earlier, all these neighborhoods are characterized by patterns of non-economic violence and most males in these neighborhoods have some experience with the techniques of violence. The role of violence in the types of economic crime they undertook and their ability to manage violence, however, were crucial factors in determining how long they could continue to be involved in systematic economic

crime. The indiscriminate use of violence leads inevitably to arrest or retaliation. The ability to employ violence effectively without upsetting business requires nerve and judgement that most often come with experience. Older individuals who have acquired such experience thus have a broader range of opportunities for economic crime.

#### 4. Social Control Environment

Besides offering a distinctive set of opportunities for economic crime, each study neighborhood also possessed a distinctive social control environment. The character of social control in each study neighborhood varied both according to the types of crime that local residents were willing to tolerate as well as according to their resources for controlling those crimes they did not wish to tolerate. Drug selling and traffic in stolen goods occurred in each neighborhood, though the neighborhoods varied in how openly these operations could take place. Violent predations committed by a youth close to his own home drew sanctions in each neighborhood, though in some places the residents preferred to deal with the situation themselves rather than call the police. The kind of police available, whether regular, housing, or transit, varied as did the quality of the ongoing relationship between local residents and the local police. Neighborhoods also experienced considerable internal dissension over how to control their criminally-involved youths. The distinctive social control environment resulting from these kinds of variations also influenced the types and sequencing of criminal opportunities available to local youths.



The remaining sections of this chapter examine distinctive neighborhood patterns of youth crime and how they are shaped by these neighborhood characteristics.

D. La Barriada: Theft

Most of the field contacts in La Barriada were concentrated among a clique of youths associated with a single city block where most of them lived and all of them spent most of their time. This particular block was ecologically well situated to provide criminal opportunities, particularly for burglary of factories and for auto theft. The block was bounded on one side by a large complex of factories and cut off from the rest of the neighborhood on the other side by a large highway. The factories were empty at night, protected only by alarms and irregular police patrol. Abandoned buildings and the easily accessible basements of the old tenements provided storage space for stolen goods and refuge from the police. Vacant lots provided shelter for stripping cars.

Several social characteristics of the population reinforced these ecological shelters for criminal activities. The families living on this block were, as a group, the poorest of the three study neighborhoods. Most households were female-headed and supported primarily by welfare payments. Those families headed by working adult males were scarcely better off financially, as these men worked in the lowest paid service jobs associated with local industry. Most parents of the youths interviewed had grown up in Puerto Rico, received little education, and spoke more Spanish than English. The residents of the block were generally isolated from local employers, from community organizations and politics, and especially, from the police and other agents of institutional social control.

Housing conditions deteriorated rapidly during the period of study as landlords first began withdrawing services, then either let the buildings burn for the insurance or surrendered the buildings to the city in lieu of taxes (in rem). The abandoned buildings all eventually burned as the result of arson committed either by agents of the landlords or by vandalizing youths. By the end of the study period, only a few buildings remained on the block.

For a few years prior to this, however, the block had provided local youths the most regular opportunities for illegal income discovered among the study neighborhoods. Although there were individual variations, the general pattern of economic crimes among La Barriada youths was a progression from systematic factory burglaries during the early to middle teens to robberies at knifepoint during the middle teens to a gradual decrease in frequency along with a shift to less risky crimes in their later teens. During the first two phases of this process, crime was their major source of income, while the deintensification of street crime activities in the later teens was associated with a rapid increase in income from regular employment. Auto theft activities were also intermingled with other crimes throughout this period, but they are discussed separately later on because different career patterns were associated with auto theft. Some youths also dabbled in selling marijuana and collecting numbers bets, although these activities provided very little income in comparison to the various crimes of direct predation.

The types and sequencing of the crime opportunities just described are analyzed here in terms of recruitment and organization patterns, social control environment, local markets for illegal goods, and the development of skills.

The recruitment of youths into systematic theft and the planning and organization of most theft operations occurred within the context of the adolescent peer group. We found little evidence in La Barriada that adult-controlled criminal organizations directly recruited youths to undertake burglary or robbery. The following excerpt from an interview with Jorge Padilla describes the importance of the peer group for the planning and organization of these crimes.

Int: So, you used to go to the next block over to hang out?

Jorge Padilla: Yeah, I found it more better, like these people on the block where my mother lives. They use to hang out and talk about going to school, this and that. Go to the other block we be talking that.

Int: Do people talk about crime a lot? How do they talk about it?

JP: Like they would say, "What we gonna do today?" and all day, "What 'gueese'\* you got planned for

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\*"Gueese" (spelling approximate) was the term commonly used by La Barriada youths to describe theft when speaking English. This Spanglish term is similar to the Spanish term "un guiso" which can mean crime but also has a broader range of meanings. "Eso es un guiso" for example, can mean simply "that's a cinch, it's easy" in reference to a perfectly innocent task. "Un guiso" in Spanish can also have approximately the same meaning as the term "hustle," that is, some kind of job for money, either legal or illegal, that is different from regular employment. A typical example of a legal "guiso" would be a musician's single engagement for a weekend dance. Among La Barriada youths, however, the Spanglish word "gueese" was not used to cover this broader range of meaning covered by the Spanish word "guiso." "Let's do a gueese" spoken in English referred specifically to a crime for money.

today?" "Me? nothing, man." And like everybody used to say, everytime everybody had a gueese like if three persons was involved they didn't want nobody else, you know, like them three would go to a corner and "Hey, psss, psss" this and that, they would of talked about it and they would do it, but they don't want nobody else. Like everybody was in a group of three or four, everybody use to hang out together, but if there's a gueese going on about three of them use to cut out and go do it, come back with some money, hang out.

Int: Would they talk about it afterwards?

JP: Yeah, they would talk about it afterwards.

Int: Beforehand they wouldn't tell anybody else, but . . .

JP: When they got over, they would come and say it.

Int: Would they buy smoke [marijuana] for everybody or be generous with the money, or what?

JP: Naw, that's it, that's the point, that's why people rob because, like, one day we hang out about six of us on the corner, or seven, or nine whatever. From all of us probably three got money. So like they would say, "Let's chip in for some thing," and I would say, "I don't got no money," and they would like try and push me out to the side, like "You don't got no money, you can't get high with us." So you would say, "Ah, fuck that, I'm getting money to hang out," and that's why people go to get money. They go do crime to hang out with the group that got money. "Now I got money. Now let's go hang out," you know.

Although the adolescent clique is described here as the generating milieu in which many economic crimes were conceived and planned, it should be emphasized that the clique was by no means a specialized criminal organization but was rather a multi-functional, quasi-familial grouping in the context of which these youths discussed school, jobs, their families and girlfriends, played handball, raced pigeons, and engaged in many other activities besides economic crimes. Their orienta-

tion toward economic crime, however, was definite and contrasted with that of the school-oriented youths on the neighboring block where Padilla actually lived. Two other youths who moved onto the block from other areas, Arturo Morales and Mike Concepcion, also described the crime orientation of the local youths as stronger than they had previously encountered and one that quickly drew them in to regular theft.

The adolescent clique remained the primary source of recruitment and organization for these youths as they progressed from factory burglaries through street robberies to the decrease in frequency and shift to less risky crimes in their late teens. The relation of these youths to the local social control environment, however, underwent considerable change as their criminal careers progressed. In comparison to the other two study sites, the social control environment of this block was the most isolated from the police and other bureaucratic control agencies. The residents, though not always approving of what they saw, were reluctant to call the police unless they felt directly threatened and had no other recourse.

Many illegal activities were carried out in the middle of the street and sidewalks, including the selling of soft drugs and stolen goods and the stripping of automobiles. These overtly illegal activities were carried out mostly by the youths as well as by a group of older males in their twenties and thirties who were heroin addicts. Other illegal activities such as public drinking and gambling were participated in by a wide range of residents, including the older men who in good

weather set up their dominoes games in front of the corner store. The corner store sold candy to school children in the afternoon and marijuana to older residents in the evening.

Despite these elements of permissiveness, other kinds of activities were not allowed. Heroin sales took place behind closed doors, for example, and when violence or theft threatened too close to home, residents did respond, although they still preferred to avoid using the police if possible. This social control environment afforded a certain amount of shelter for the illegal economic activities of the local youths. The extent and limits of that shelter varied according to the type of criminal activity, the amount of that activity and the social identity of the criminal. Most of the youths on the block took advantage of the opportunities presented by their situation and only decreased their criminal activities when these activities had saturated the environment. The workings of these localized processes of social control are described more fully below with reference to the successive phases of the youths' economic crime involvements.

The earliest and most frequent systematic economic crimes committed by the La Barriada youths were burglaries of the nearby factories. Most were extensively involved in such burglaries in their middle teens. Some began even earlier, as in the case of Gaspar Cruz who claimed to have engaged in systematic burglaries starting at the age of twelve. The technical requirements of burglary worked to the advantage of their age and situation. A successful burglary involves no encounter

with the victim and no violence, thus making it feasible for youths who are still physically immature. Burglary also profits from advance knowledge of the premises and manual skills and requires the transportation, storage, and sale of stolen goods. The physical and social situation of the La Barriada youths worked to their advantage in overcoming these technical requirements.

One major advantage of these youths was that they knew a lot more about the factories than the owners and managers of the factories knew about them. A conversation between the Project's fieldworker and Arturo Morales reveals that the youths on the block had considerable knowledge of the physical layout and social organization of the factories that were their main crime targets during these years:

Field Notes: As we continued to walk, Arturo pointed out several old factories which he claimed he has broken into with several friends. As he pointed to one particular building which has several floors, he told me exactly what is manufactured on each floor. He told me that most youths on the block know what the different factories produce. Arturo says that he himself knows "every factory" and how to break into it. I asked him, "How do you and most guys find out what is manufactured in these factories?" He told me that they know just by observing the delivery trucks when the finished products are taken out. They also find out from people they know that are employed there. "Some of the guys who work there hang out with us," he said. "Sometimes we hear people talking about what is made there." He told me that the method of learning how to break into the different factories is by getting the information from other guys who have successfully broken in previously, or learning about an easy way to break in from someone who works there. Sometimes the youths see for themselves how to get in while they are working there. They can break into these factories successfully and get away with it due to their familiarity of the



area. Since the youths live in the neighborhood, they are aware of ways to get away in case the cops show up. Arturo claims that, for the most part, the guys know how to get away.

Other interviews and observations generally confirm Morales's description of how he and the rest of his clique gathered information about burglary targets and carried out the burglaries. Most of these burglaries were directed against factories within four blocks of where they lived (this included several dozen establishments arrayed in multi-story loft buildings). The goods taken then were stored in the abandoned buildings and basements on their own block until they could be sold. The local youths' knowledge of the organization of the factories was not matched by knowledge of the local neighborhood and its people on the part of the factory owners and managers. Although, as Morales noted, some of the youths had worked occasionally in the factories, most had not held full-time jobs during the period of their burglaries because they were too young. Those who had worked inside had done only occasional odd jobs. When he was twelve and thirteen years old, for example Gaspar Cruz used to work sweeping up or taking orders for coffee. He used this access to study the physical layout and alarm systems and then returned at night to commit burglary. He claimed that no one in the neighborhood suspected him for a long time because he was so young.

Not only did the factory owners and managers not know the youths who were burglarizing them, neither they nor the police were familiar with or willing to chase the youths through the

residential part of the block away from the factories. Several of the youths interviewed described the ease with which they could escape into the abandoned buildings or even the buildings where they lived if interrupted in the midst of a burglary. The significance of the fact that the factory owners and managers lived outside the local neighborhood also became clear when we asked how the youths disposed of the stolen goods:

Int: Weren't you afraid of getting caught when you tried to sell the stuff?

Gaspar Cruz: We would go out, wait till, say, seven, eight o'clock the next night. You don't expect the owner of the place to be up here at this time. What are your chances of the owner of that factory walking through here at eight o'clock, nine o'clock at night? Wow, chances are hard, damn. You would not get that guy. You'd find a regular person, "Hey, you wanna buy a nice typewriter, nice calculator," whatever had to be sold.

This separation between the local people and the factory owners also extended to the police:

Mario Valdez: We always know who the undercover cops are. I mean, there's no Spanish cops around here. Once a white lady comes up the street from down that way. We know there's nothing down there, where's she coming from? She's got to be a decoy. Another time a white guy comes around here asking about guns. Arturo really had him going: "Yeah, come back tonight, I'll get you all the guns you want." The guy comes back, Arturo says, "get out of here, sucker, everybody knows you're a cop."

One police officer who was well known in the neighborhood came down to the block not to stop crime but to buy stolen parts for his own car.

The young thieves could not hide their burglaries from local adults as easily as from the factory owners and police, one principal reason being that local adults provided indirect but essential support for their burglaries by buying the stolen goods. This area of La Barriada was characterized by both diffuse and specialized markets for stolen goods which cross-cut almost every segment of the community. Stolen goods were sold openly in the street and through personal networks, as well as to specialized fences, as the following excerpts from the field data demonstrate:

Int: So how did you sell the stuff, do you know a fence?

Jorge Padilla: Nah. Just go up to anybody on the street, or, I got friends who will buy lots of things for the right price.

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Mario Valdez: We knew this friend. He had a van. An older guy. He'd be talking to the storeowners up on the Avenue. We were young you know, we couldn't negotiate to do stuff.

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Arturo Morales: Sometimes we'd sell to anybody. Other times we took it to an apartment.

Int: A fence?

AM: Yeah.

Int: Did all your friends go to him?

AM: Nah. Only a couple of us knew him.

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Mario Valdez: You should have seen it when we sold those coats. It was right before Christmas. Every-

body was coming out of their houses, old ladies, everybody.

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Field Notes: Today, I saw two guys selling an electric typewriter and adding machine. Several people on the block saw but did not buy. Later I found out that they sold the typewriter to a factory owner and the adding machine to a store owner. Both businessmen said they would be interested in other things if it was a good deal.

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Field Notes: I ran into two of the guys. They offered to sell me a pair of leather gloves. They had at least ten pairs of these gloves. I didn't want them so one of them asked me for a quarter to buy a soda. He entered the store and bought a bottle of juice and stole another one which he hid under his coat. The owner of the store saw the lump under his jacket and asked what it was. Sammy said "a gun" and walked out. The owner came outside but Sammy had already hidden the bottle. Then Sammy offered to sell the gloves to the store owner's wife. She said she didn't want them because she couldn't sell them. She then said, "If you get me Duracell batteries I'll buy them from you, or anything that I can sell here."

As these examples indicate, organized fencing operations did exist, but they were only one avenue for disposing of stolen goods. The market for stolen goods was so pervasive that it included even the factory owners and merchants who were the most frequent targets of crime.

The interviews with the La Barriada youths reveal various levels of technical expertise and planning in the commission of these burglaries. Some individuals, for example, claimed that they did not like to do crimes with others because they did not like their methods:

Int: Could you tell me about the time you got arrested with Arturo?

Octavio Del Rio: I should have never went with Arturo. . . . He's a dumb burglar. We broke in, there was a gate, right?

Int: What kind of place was this?

ODR: Sells guitars, drums, records . . . the door was kind of weak. We could have kicked it in but I wasn't gonna take those chances because the door might have an alarm . . . so we spend time, we made a hole, cut through the tin and everything, got in the place. . . . So I go in there, I go upstairs and I come down and I see Arturo playing with a little box, clicking it. He says, "Octavio, what's this?" Next thing I know the cops are right there. After we got busted, we was inside the precinct, the cop told us, "Which one of you triggered the alarm? You got in the place, you had a chance to get away, who touched that alarm?" I started thinking: Arturo. Then Arturo says, "No, no that wasn't the alarm." I just left it like that, but I was really mad.

Gaspar Cruz emerges from the notes as the most meticulous and manually skilled burglar of the group:

Field Notes: Gaspar told me "I always plan everything, that's why I never get caught." He gave me a detailed account of how he rigged up an alarm wire so that the alarm would not go off. He explained that his sister takes out books on alarms from the library and reads them to him because he can't read very well.

Though none of the other youths showed such pride of craftsmanship in their burglaries, in fact most of them described a fair degree of planning. Besides gathering information of the layout and schedule of the factory, they also planned tools and ways to break in, organized lookouts, and learned the schedule of police patrols.

In the course of carrying out the burglaries, they also had to perform a certain amount of semi-skilled manual work. In this, their crime patterns parallel their work orientation,

which, as described in the employment chapter, was towards manual work more so than among the Projectville respondents. This degree of planning, skill and labor by youths aged twelve to sixteen seems remarkable in light of some stereotypes of youth crime as unskilled and spontaneous. What is even more remarkable is that, as will be seen, they progressed with age to more unskilled crimes requiring more physical daring and less skill and planning.

As a result then of the physical proximity of these youths to the factories, the physical isolation of both from the rest of the neighborhood, and the curious mixture of social connections into the factory with social isolation from the owners and the police, burglary of these factories provided these youths with criminal opportunities that were relatively safe and lucrative compared to those of the youths in the other study neighborhoods. It is difficult to estimate just how much income they received from these activities, though the topic is often discussed in the notes and interviews. Many individuals claimed that they "couldn't count" the number of burglaries or the frequency:

Int: Would you say you did a gueese [crime] every week?

Gaspar Cruz: No, it's not like that. Depends on how much you make. When you run out of money, you have to do it again.

When asked how much they made from an individual burglary, most individuals tended to cite their biggest take. Thus, three different individuals told us nearly identical stories of

breaking into a coat factory and selling the coats in the street to all sorts of neighborhood people. They all claimed to have split a thousand dollars three ways. This claim is not unreasonable since the field observer once observed about that amount of business being transacted in a similar manner by a group of older addicts who had stolen a large quantity of towels. The most reasoned estimate we got seemed to be that of Gaspar Cruz, who, when pressed, finally said he thought he had been making about seventy-five dollars per week in this fashion, and he appears to have been the most active burglar of the group.

Despite the difficulty of estimating exact profits from these crimes, even with cooperation from the youths involved, it does appear that economic crimes, principally in the form of factory burglaries, provided these youths with a fairly regular income during their middle teens, during which time they had very little income from legitimate employment.

The factory burglaries of the La Barriada youths constituted the most sustained and sheltered pattern of youthful theft discovered in any of the study neighborhoods, but even they eventually began to draw sanctions. After periods of a few months to a few years of involvement in burglary, many of the youths involved in these burglaries began to get arrested. Overstepping the limits even of their particularly permissive social control environment, their abilities to continue burglary with impunity began to run out, either because they had done too much, they had struck too close to home, or they had run into a violent encounter.

In order to understand how the La Barriada youths eventually overstepped the bounds of the protection afforded them for carrying out their burglaries in this particular environment, it is necessary to examine more closely the interactions between them and the adult residents of the neighborhood who generally did not themselves commit or condone predatory crimes. The attitudes of local adults towards the local youths involved in theft were highly ambivalent. Local adults were reluctant to call the police only because they had personal ties with the youths, because the youths usually directed their thefts away from those with whom they had personal ties, and, finally, because the youths were not above intimidating or retaliating against someone who "ratted out." On the other hand, many local adults disapproved of crime both out of a general sense of morality and also out of fear that they might become victims. The field data below document these various aspects of the social control environment. Arturo Morales began to experience the generalized moral disapproval of theft after he had been arrested:

Arturo Morales: The good people treat me differently now. Some of those guys have some pretty daughters. Now they're not going to let them talk to me.

The following incident which occurred around this same time illustrates the ambivalence of local residents who disapprove and fear crime even while they benefit from the supply of cheap stolen goods:



Field Notes: Today the junkies were selling towels, lots of them, ten dollar towels, real thick, for a dollar apiece. All the people were down there buying them, even one lady who wouldn't let her son go to the baseball game with Arturo the other week because he had been arrested. Also, the landlord who won't let the junkies in his building told me he bought two and his wife told him when he got home that he should have gotten more at that price.

The sellers of the towels in this incident were not the youths who were the study's main respondents but were heroin addicts in their twenties and thirties who lived in groups moving from one abandoned building to the next. Although these addicts also committed many factory burglaries and provided a supply of cheap stolen goods to local people, their relations to local people were otherwise quite different from the youths' and resulted in different patterns of victimization and social control. The addicts were more indiscriminate in their choice of burglary targets and were quite as willing to burglarize the residents' buildings as the adjoining factories. The residents, for their part, although they might buy stolen goods from the addicts, feared and avoided them otherwise.

Although the La Barriada youths we interviewed did report some apartment burglaries, they still maintained they did not victimize their own relatives, friends and neighbors. They generally preferred factory burglary as safer and more lucrative. If they broke into apartments, they either went some distance away from their local area or chose a victim whom they did not consider "one of my people." The only two burglary victims on their immediate block whom we identified, for example, were an elderly Jewish man and a homosexual, both of whom

lacked supportive personal networks in the local area. The La Barriada youths contrasted their own choice of victims with the indiscriminate thefts committed by the older heroin addicts in the same neighborhood:

Mario Valdez: That Frank Feliciano stole the plumbing out of the building where his own daughter lives. Those junkies don't care about anybody.

In contrast to the addicts, the non-addicted youthful thieves maintained a wide range of social ties in the local area. Their crimes often strained these social ties, but those ties also served to channel their crimes largely, if not entirely, away from the apartments and persons of their friends, relatives and close neighbors.

The reluctance of local adults to sanction the crimes of the youths on the block was based not only on personal ties, however. If the youths felt that someone was "ratting them out," they were also capable of intimidation and retaliation, as shown in the following two examples:

Gaspar Cruz: Nobody knew it was us for a long time because we were so young they thought it couldn't be us. But then we heard some of the ladies talking about our new clothes. So we messed up their clothes lines and then they didn't talk about us anymore.

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Mike Concepcion: I fixed that guy good, the one who ratted out Arturo. I went up on the roof and dropped a concrete block on his car.

The second of these examples bears closer examination as it is also an example of the kind of incident in which the

youths went too far, overstepping the boundaries of the environment that so far had afforded them a considerable amount of shelter for their crimes. Arturo Morales was "ratted out" by a resident of the block after he had burglarized a small two-man repair shop located right in the middle of the block, much closer to the apartment buildings than the loft buildings at the end of the block. Although Arturo had previously burglarized many of the other local factories with impunity, he had erred in thinking that the repair shop was as isolated from the local residents as the other factories. In fact, the men who worked there knew the people on the block quite well and quickly learned Arturo's identity. When the Project interviewed them, they expressed amazement that Arturo had not known better than to steal from them:

Repair Shop Manager: It was that Arturo who did it. He should have known better. It's always the new kid on the block who does something like this. None of the kids who have lived here for a long time would do this because they know we have friends around here. That's how we found out who did it. We're not like some of these bigger places. We let kids come in here and put air in their bicycle tires or paint their school projects. Every now and then you get one, you see him looking around, I say, "What are you doing? Don't case the fucking joint."

In dealing with the crime, the men from the repair shop avoided involving the police as long as possible. First, they sent out word that they knew Arturo had burglarized them and offered to let him return the tools and merchandise he had stolen. When he did not respond, they then began telling people that the stolen merchandise actually belonged to "the

mafia" and that Arturo could be in real trouble if they passed on his name to the owners. Finally, as a last resort, they called the police and Arturo was arrested. Even then they expressed regret at having to use the criminal justice system because the process was too complicated and the results too uncertain.

Although Arturo's arrest was seen by his victims and also by some of his peers as the result of the mistake by the "new kid on the block" who had been "trying to prove himself," other youths who were more experienced at burglary than he also got caught eventually. Gaspar Cruz, who seems to have been the most careful and intensive thief in the group, was convicted after fighting with police who had followed him while he was carrying stolen goods into an abandoned building. He spent six months in jail. Mario Valdez and two others were arrested after they assaulted a man who returned to his apartment while they were in the midst of a burglary. The very factors which had made burglary so lucrative for these youths for a while eventually raised the costs prohibitively. The convenience of being able to steal so close to home finally began to work against them when their activities became too obvious and too extensive not to be noticed. Violent confrontations resulting from interrupted burglaries led to serious sanctions from the criminal justice system. Stealing close to the area with which they were familiar provided initial advantages but eventually saturated the environment. Besides the fact that the youths became too well known, the environment itself also began to

change as the factories increased security, the residential buildings next to them burned down, and the block became depopulated.

Burglaries were the first systematic economic crimes committed by the La Barriada youths and dominated their income-seeking activities around the ages of fourteen and fifteen. By the time they reached the age of sixteen, many were still involved in burglaries but were also stealing cars and committing robberies. These were the years of their most intensive involvement in income-motivated crime. At this point in their lives they were developing needs for more regular income. Some were already experimenting with living outside their parents' apartments. Others wanted money for recreation and to buy clothes to impress females. Most still had very little access to legitimate employment.

The progression from burglary to robbery (auto theft is discussed separately later) was based in part on the fact that robbery provided a much faster source of cash since the whole process of having to transport, store, and sell bulk stolen goods was eliminated. The other element in the progression from burglary to robbery, however, was the increase in their capacities for violent encounters. Burglary preceded robbery in their careers because it minimized the chances for violent confrontation. Looking back on their early burglaries, several referred to them as "little, sneaky things I used to do when I was a kid." Having been relatively successful at burglary and having learned the techniques of violence from fighting with

other youths, they then went on to apply the conscious threat of force to the pursuit of income. Robbery, however, though it could yield a quick cash return, proved to be a much more unstable source of income since it involved confrontations which could lead to identification and also elicited much more severe sanctions from both neighborhood residents and from the criminal justice system.

The robberies that they committed during this period were typically carried out at knifepoint against victims selected at random at some distance from their local neighborhood. The necessity for going farther away for robberies is apparent in the case of Chucho Rivera who had the most extensive involvement in muggings. Rivera started out robbing students outside a nearby junior high school when he was only fourteen. He became the best known youth from this group to the local police and was constantly in and out of youth homes for years. His tendency for indiscriminate violence also provoked local adults. He had to leave the neighborhood for six months after he had cut a woman who lived on the block and her husband came after Rivera with a shotgun. Although the adults on the block might only grumble about factory burglaries and auto theft by the local youths, they were not ambivalent in their responses to violence.

At the other extreme from Rivera's robberies too close to home, Gaspar Cruz reported having robbed stores at gunpoint, going as far away as New Jersey, during the period after he came out of jail. Most of the others, however, were in between

these extremes, and went some distance away from their own block but still within the general area known to them. Mario Valdez used to wait outside subway stations for people coming home from work. Arturo Morales began by threatening drunks outside bars with imaginary weapons and was eventually convicted of robbing at knifepoint a middle-aged businessman in a nearby but more affluent neighborhood as the victim left his house. Most of these robberies were committed with knives against victims chosen more or less randomly. The income gained could range from only a few dollars to about a hundred dollars.

Compared to their burglaries, which lasted over several years including the period of their robberies, their robbery careers were fairly brief. For some, this brief involvement in robbery was a matter of taste. They tried it and did not like it. Mike Concepcion described his experience with robbery as follows:

Mike Concepcion: I only did two muggings, with Arturo, and I didn't enjoy it.

Int: Why?

MC: I'm a thief with heart. I don't like to see people suffer that much. I'd rather do it behind somebody's back and not hurt nobody . . . rather than inflict any pain. I don't go for that.

Those who persisted with robbery after exploratory ventures, however, found it much more difficult to avoid arrest and conviction for robbery than for burglary. Their own local environment did not shelter robbery as it had sheltered non-

violent theft and, when they strayed outside their own area, they found themselves operating in a much more exposed environment of control. Violent confrontations, whether in the form of interrupted burglaries or robberies, led most of them into continuing involvement with the criminal justice system around the age of sixteen or seventeen. Gaspar Cruz spent six months in jail when he was sixteen. Miguel Tirado was sentenced to one and a half years in prison when he was nineteen. Most of the others were on three to five years probation by the time they reached the age of eighteen. Jorge Padilla was the only one of the criminally active youths interviewed in La Barriada who had never experienced a serious arrest, although he had accompanied many of the others in numerous burglaries and robberies.

After they reached the age of eighteen, most of the La Barriada youths decreased their criminal involvements even if they did not terminate them altogether. This decrease in the frequency of their income-motivated crimes resulted not only from mounting sanctions as a consequence of their saturation of the local environment with their crimes but also from their greatly increased opportunities for legitimate employment. Most were on probation by their late teens, and, though they still experienced frequent unemployment, they were in the labor market and working more often than not. They now needed more regular income than the sporadic income they had achieved through crime during the middle teen years when crime was their main source of income. Work was both more available and pro-



vided more regular income. Some ceased engaging in crimes completely for long periods of time. For others, income from occasional crimes now provided a supplement to their wages. In addition to shifting crime to the periphery of their income-seeking activities, they also shifted the types of crimes away from the time-intensive burglaries and highly exposed random street robberies of their middle teens towards on-the-job theft and more selective robberies, specifically, robberies of persons known to be undocumented aliens who could not go to the police. They referred to these people as "Mexicans" even though experts on the neighborhood suggest that they were Central and South Americans who may have entered this country through Mexico.

The following excerpt from an interview with Gaspar Cruz documents these shifts in the frequency and type of income-motivated crimes during the late teens. At the time of this interview, Cruz was nineteen years old and had been working at one full-time job for more than a year:

Int: Have you done any crimes since the last time we talked?

Gaspar Cruz: Yeah, a couple of little things. Me and some of the other guys took off ten Mexicans [sic] at a card game in the park. It was Friday afternoon, we were hanging out, drinking, getting high, and we ran out of money. We wanted to stay high, so we got some sticks . . .

Int: What kind of sticks?

GC: A gun and a knife. We put stockings over our heads and took their money. Then we went around the corner. Fifteen minutes later we walked right by and smiled. They never knew it was us. We robbed another game, too, but that was a lot more dangerous.

Int: Why?

GC: Because that time it was older guys, blacks, Puerto Ricans. Those guys have guns. With the Mexicans, it's better. They don't have guns, and they're illegal aliens so they can't go to the police.

Int: Have you done any more factory burglaries?

GC: Nah.

Int: Why not?

GC: That takes too long. Factories you got to spend days setting it up and it takes two or three hours to do it and you got to wait till the middle of the night, then you got to sell the stuff. To take somebody off in the park only takes 15 or 20 minutes. If you're high, you want to stay high, you don't wait.

Int: But it's much worse if you get caught for a robbery isn't it?

GC: You don't think about that at the time. Besides, like I told you, Mexicans can't go to the police. Also, we used the disguises.

Int: Are there any other reasons you don't do burglaries any more?

GC: Well, I used to be littler. I could climb in the bathroom window and just walk into the office. Also, it's not like it used to be when I was younger. Crime keeps going up and up. The factories have more alarms, more gates on the windows, more dogs, and more guards. Plus they understand how we operate. They know how it is we come in whether it's through the window or the roof or whatever.

In addition to Cruz, both Mario Valdez and Jorge Padilla also reported working more regularly, ceasing their burglaries and occasionally mugging undocumented aliens during their late teen years. The only one of the group who reported any involvement in burglaries during this period was Octavio Del Rio, who was unemployed most of the time, lived with a woman on welfare, and thus still had time to plan and execute burglaries. Even Del

Rio lessened the frequency of his burglaries, however, in response to the increased security in the factories. Many of these youths were also removed from physical proximity to the factories as their block burned down.

The other patterns of income-motivated crime during this period were on-the-job theft and sudden reversion to crime as a result of layoffs. Jorge Padilla reported work-related thefts, not at his own workplace but at that of an older friend:

Jorge Padilla: I haven't been stealing too much. The only times are . . . sometimes I go to where my friend works and he throws rolls of material out the window to me.

This pattern of work-related theft also came out in an interview with an older neighborhood resident, Willie Vazquez. Vazquez was twenty-eight years old and had been in jail for theft several times. When interviewed, he was working in a garment factory and reported that sometimes he managed to stuff garments into the garbage containers for later retrieval.

Sudden reversions to income-crime after layoffs were reported by Arturo Morales and Miguel Tirado. Morales had been criminally inactive for more than eighteen months after he was put on probation. During this time he had worked at several different jobs. After being laid off from a clerical job he had held for several months, he committed three muggings during a period of thirty-six hours. He was subsequently rehired at the same job and has apparently been criminally inactive since. Miguel Tirado committed no crimes during the period of

more than a year that he worked as a messenger. The job ended after a dispute with his supervisor over promotion. He sought but was unable to find new employment and lived for several weeks on his savings. After his savings ran out, he robbed a local salesman at gunpoint of nearly a thousand dollars. Tirado was convicted of that crime and subsequently served eighteen months in prison. Both Tirado and Morales had committed many income-motivated crimes before they entered the labor force decisively, but only the crimes following their layoffs were directly "caused" by unemployment in the sense that specific crimes were precipitated by loss of employment. The most crime-intensive years for them and the rest of their clique were the mid-teen years during which they most often were unemployed or out of the labor force.

At the same time that most of the La Barriada group were decreasing their involvement in burglaries and street muggings, two of them were becoming involved in illegal income-producing activities of a different kind. Mario Valdez, after returning from an unsuccessful trip to Puerto Rico to look for work there, worked for a time in a local store that sold marijuana. Mike Concepcion was maintaining a regular involvement in quasi-organized auto theft. Unlike the burglaries and robberies of these youths' middle teens, drug selling and auto theft operations are characterized by the direct recruitment of young workers by older persons who train and direct them. Drug selling and auto theft also offer a type of career ladder that does not exist for the kinds of robberies and burglaries that these

youths committed during their middle teens. Auto theft patterns in La Barriada are discussed separately in the following section. Drug selling is discussed later with reference to the youths from the Projectville and Hamilton Park neighborhoods.

**E. La Barriada: Auto Theft**

During the same period of time that the members of the clique in La Barriada were involved in various types of robbery and burglary, some of them were also making money from stealing automobiles and automobile parts. Unlike most of their robberies and burglaries, their acts of auto theft did not always originate within the adolescent cliques, and not all their careers in auto theft saturated the environment by their late teens. Though some youths stole cars and parts in a relatively unskilled and spontaneous manner, others were recruited by adults, developed specialized skills, and operated in the context of criminal organizations which offered possibilities for advancement to more sheltered and lucrative criminal activities. This section examines the different levels of opportunity for participation in auto theft activities identified in this locality. After examining the intermixture of auto theft activities with other kinds of stealing in the mid-teen careers of several of the youths interviewed, this section then focuses on the experiences of one individual who developed special skills and was recruited into more organized forms of auto theft.

Both the presence of a thriving auto theft industry in this particular neighborhood and the fact that it is considerably more organized than the types of youthful robbery and burglary described earlier are closely related to the particular technical requirements and social control environment of auto theft. Auto theft shares some of the characteristics of bur-

glary in that it profits from the application of manual skills, it is usually non-violent and it consequently does not incur as rapid or severe sanctions as robbery. The nature of the goods being stolen, however, differentiates the technique and organization of burglary and auto theft. Cars are easy to move but difficult to conceal. An intact car is also easily identified by serial numbers on the engine block. Consequently, auto thieves try to dismantle stolen cars as quickly as possible and sell the separated, untraceable parts. After the car is stripped, risks diminish rapidly since possession of stolen parts, even if one is apprehended, is not as serious a crime as possession of a stolen car. In order to strip cars, however, auto thieves need sheltered space for a few hours' work. La Barriada's abandoned buildings and empty lots provided such space.

The practicality of ongoing, organized auto theft operations, in contrast to the more individual entrepreneurial activity of other forms of theft, derives from the need for mechanically skilled individuals to rework the cars and from the possibility of dividing the responsibilities and risks associated with the different phases of stealing, reworking, and marketing. The different levels of organization of auto theft in La Barriada reflected different approaches to these technical problems of auto theft.

Several members of the La Barriada clique reported stealing cars or parts in a relatively spontaneous manner during the same period of time in their middle teens when they were also

engaged in burglaries and muggings. The simplest approach was that reported by Chucho Rivera:

Chucho Rivera: When I was sixteen, I used to steal batteries. If somebody told me they needed a battery, I would just go around the corner and take a battery.

Jorge Padilla, Mario Valdez, and others reported stealing whole cars around this age, although they employed very little skill:

Jorge Padilla: One day I was out walking and I saw this car parked right on the street with the door unlocked and the keys in the ignition and everything. I needed money to hang out so I just took it and parked it in front of my house, took out the radio, the speakers, this and that, put them in my house, then I drove it down the block, took off the tires, this and that, made me a couple of bucks.

Int: Did you know who you were going to sell the stuff to beforehand?

JP: No, but in my neighborhood you sell it quick. Everybody buys. I took the tires to a car service. They got a lot of cars, they need tires. You're not gonna sell it for 100% what it costs in the store, cause nobody's rich over there so we give them a nice price, they buy.

Int: You don't break the lock or anything?

JP: Nah, I don't steal cars like that. I just walk around. If it's on, I take it. If it's not, I don't take it with a pully. I know how to do it, my friend showed me, but I just be walking down the street and people leave their car and I hop in and book [leave].

Padilla went on to relate that he had stolen about eighteen cars in this manner, making between one and two hundred dollars on each and selling to different buyers including both individuals and small businesses. Most of the time he stole without advance knowledge of a buyer, although on four occasions he stole specific models on request:



Jorge Padilla: They would tell me, "Hey, I need two doors for a Monte Carlo; I need this front end" so I would tell them, "Look, I'll bring you the whole car. You just give me \$100 and strip it yourself."

Not all of the youths in the La Barriada clique stole cars, however, even of those who committed other kinds of thefts. Arturo Morales described how he and his close friend Mike Concepcion had gone separate ways about the time Concepcion began to get heavily involved in auto theft. Previously the two had committed many burglaries and two muggings together as well as playing on the same sports teams in school and being constant companions:

Arturo Morales: I always got along with Mike, but he's into cars now. I'm not into cars.

Mike Concepcion had his own view of why Arturo was not interested in auto theft:

Mike Concepcion: Some of these guys on the corner, they don't want to get dirty to make money.

In fact, Arturo Morales did generally dislike manual work, legal or illegal, and began to move into low-level clerical jobs as he got older.

Mike Concepcion, in contrast, not only did not mind getting dirty but showed a genuine fondness for working on cars. He not only stole and stripped them but also did occasional legitimate work in local body shops and spent most of his free time and his income working on his own car. The rest of this section traces Concepcion's career as an auto mechanic and thief.

Mike Concepcion stole his first car when he was sixteen years old and had already committed many factory burglaries. At sixteen he had also left school for a year to support himself and his mother, lost his job when the company relocated, and returned to school. He reported having some family background in auto theft: both his father and uncle used to steal cars, his uncle apparently on a professional basis. His parents separated when he was only ten years old, however, and he claimed that it was not family influences which led him into theft but the atmosphere on the block in La Barriada where he moved when he was fourteen:

Mike Concepcion: I used to see all these things going on out my back window and I said to myself, "Damn I want to get into that."

He was recruited by an eighteen-year-old who taught him to use specialized tools from the beginning:

Mike Concepcion: I learned in one day. This friend of mine, Cisco, you could say he recruited me. We went up to a car that was already stripped but it still had the ignition. He showed me how to take off the door cylinder with pliers. Then there's this tool called a butterfly, it's a bad tool, you stick it in the key and you just slap it out in one shot and pull the starter and turn it with a screwdriver.

Int: But you say the car was already stripped?

MC: It was, like, practice, just practice. This was in the afternoon. That same night, I went out and did it by myself.

After this initiation, Concepcion rapidly became involved in systematic auto theft. He began going into middle-class neighborhoods both with the person who recruited him and with

others. He obtained his own tools. He still sold to a variety of buyers in individual negotiations. He was neither working nor in school at this point and was stealing a car every weekend. After a few months of this, however, he was arrested in a stolen car with his tools:

Mike Concepcion: We got chased by the cops a few times, but we had a Trans Am hooked up real good, it was fast and legal. We got away. Then one time, I stopped for a light in a hot car on my way to Queens. I stole the car in Brooklyn to go get another car in Queens.

Int: You had an order for a certain kind of car?

MC: Yeah, and I stole the first one for transportation to go get it, but I didn't notice that one of the back lights wasn't working too good and the cops noticed it. All of a sudden I got about three cops surrounding me and no way to get away.

This arrest, his first of any kind, led to a court case which lasted for six months. His stealing actually increased during that period of time as he began to work in the context of a more organized operation:

Int: Could you tell me more about how you got into organized stuff?

Mike Concepcion: I was gettin' hooked with, like professional guys. They had some bad tools . . . see, they were experts in alarms, cut-off switches, chain locks, anything. If the car didn't turn on, they would find out what's wrong with it quick.

Int: Were these older guys? [MC was seventeen at the time.]

MC: I was the youngest guy there. The others were around nineteen, twenty. One was in his thirties. But they all learned from much older men . . . men like in their thirties and forties who used to do it when they were as young as us. So they showed us the

tricks of the trade. Sometimes the old guys put the young guys to drive the cars. The old guys already have records. If they get caught they know they get in more trouble, they got families or they know the consequences are gonna be worse. Now the courts know a young fella might have made a mistake give him a break. Not the older person. They don't give you no break.

At this point, Concepcion's own as yet clean record allowed him to take risks for their organization in return for learning skills, working with more professional associates, and having access to more regular buyers for parts. Around this time, the car ring rigged up an advantageous workspace for stripping cars, right on Concepcion's block and during the period of field observations. The block was already a popular spot for car stripping at this point. Not only the youths but also some of the older heroin addicts stripped cars in the street every week. Concepcion's group, however, found a backyard protected from view and fenced off by the property owner. They installed a gate and put their own lock on it to protect themselves not only from the police but also from addicts and other unwanted collaborators trying to horn in on the stripping.

The disposition of his court case brought an abrupt change to Concepcion's place in the organization. He received three years probation. The end of his clean record and an incident in which he was shot at during a theft convinced him to quit stealing and confine himself to other less risky roles:

Mike Concepcion: We got a little set-up in this backyard. Me and two other guys are the only ones who have the key. I let 'em in if he tells me to. I don't do any actual stealing no more. I just do the

stripping. I get the customers too sometimes. I get parts or they'll throw me something, \$50 or \$25 for getting them the customers.

It's about fifteen cars back there now. They go in, they don't come back out. We take out the motor, the interior, everything.

A further consideration in his decision not to continue stealing cars was his perception that the police were becoming more effective in cracking down on auto theft. He described a kind of technology race between car thieves and the police:

Mike Concepcion: People still go to Queens. I don't understand it. They got better cars over there, but Queens is so hot, it's burning. They got an Anti-Crime Unit out there that's real good, they are not stupid. That's one of the reasons also I quit. These guys are gettin' too smart for us. Every time we learn something, they learn something. They know all about the slappers. . . .

Int: Slappers?

MC: The thing you slap the ignition on with. . . . Some of the thieves are getting police scanners now . . . . You need that little edge over the cops . . . like that corkscrew . . . that's two seconds right there. . . .

While his backyard car stripping operation lasted, Concepcion also performed other organizational functions. He recruited a fourteen-year-old to help him out stripping the cars. He kept the addicts away from their operation. He also paid some of the addicts and some of the smaller children on the block to keep watch for the police. As he described the situation later:

Mike Concepcion: Even the ladies used to watch out for me.

Int: Why did they do that?

MC: They thought I was like Robin Hood 'cause I used to give their kids a couple of dollars to watch out for me. I used to put somebody on the roof, somebody up the block . . . all the money I was making then, I didn't mind spending a little here, a little there, and everybody would watch out for me. The ladies and the kids would be yelling "la jarra, la jarra" [the police].

Concepcion was the same individual who had vandalized the car of the block resident who had reported Arturo Morales to the police for burglary a year before.

For a period of some months, the backyard lot flourished, to the point where it almost had to be abandoned because it was too full of stripped cars. At that point, someone placed a call to the city to complain about the lot. City workers appeared and cleared out the remains of several dozen cars. Afterward the operation resumed.

Within a few more months, however, the shelter provided by the back lot disappeared, along with over half the dwellings on the block, as a result of fires. The addicts began to draw the police as they increased in numbers and brought in stolen cars indiscriminately. Buildings burned, addicts appeared to strip the fixtures and then took up residence in the basements of the abandoned buildings. More buildings burned until residents of the next building in line began to leave before the fires. The back lot then became part of a large open space which the addicts used for a new source of income. Copper prices had soared and the addicts were now bringing in carloads of copper cable from abandoned docks. Before selling the copper the addicts used the lot to burn the insulation off the copper.

Concepcion's building was one of the few that did not burn and he continued living on the block. During this period, he was also working and going to school again in addition to stripping cars and arranging deals. He had gone back to school when he received probation. He transferred to an auto mechanics program. He had also taken a maintenance job which one of his friends had told him about. The job only paid about half the two hundred dollars a week average that he had once made stealing cars. When his block became too exposed to the police and burned down to continue to serve as a convenient place for stripping cars, he remained in contact with all his associates but they had to move their operations elsewhere.

Within a few more months, however, he was again stealing cars. Now nineteen years old, he had left school again but was still working:

Mike Concepcion: I'm working now and maybe once in a while I'll steal. I don't really have the time to do that. You gotta be up late at night and you gotta take chances. Then when you get the car you gotta strip it, that takes time. I ain't got time. I gotta go to work.

Int: Before you said you had quit stealing and you let younger kids take over that part. Why did you go back? What's different?

MC: It's more professional now. When I take a chance now, it's for big money, good money.

At this point he was working with another nineteen-year-old and a fifteen-year-old, the younger one being the person he had recruited to help him strip cars when the back lot was still functioning. They followed the strategy of having the

fifteen-year-old drive the stolen car and also minimized their risks by planning which cars to take in advance. The only times that Concepcion actually drove stolen cars were when they would take two or three at a time. Even though they were going out less often, they were stealing more cars at a time. They also had made connection with their most discreet and reliable buyer yet, a junkyard with a limitless capacity for parts and an excuse for having them.

This was the situation of Mike Concepcion at the close of the Project's fieldwork in La Barriada. His career in auto theft had gone through many phases during a period of less than three years. Though he had many doubts about continuing to steal cars, he was not at all certain about how long he could continue to escape jail despite the fact that he continued to acquire professional expertise and organizational affiliations which both cut his risks and increased his profits.

Though it is impossible to predict his future career, some further field data do give an idea of his possibilities and help round out the picture of the structure of opportunities for auto theft in this neighborhood. These additional considerations include the distinction between levels of organization in auto theft, the types of involvement in auto theft of older men in this neighborhood, and the overlap between legitimate and illegitimate work on automobiles.

Though Mike Concepcion's auto theft activities were considerably more organized than those of most of the other youths and older heroin addicts from his same block, still higher



levels of organization of auto theft than his exist. Concepcion himself related that his uncle had been involved in a more sophisticated operation years earlier:

Mike Concepcion: He was organized all the way, with the mafia. Nobody believes me around the block except Fausto, you know the guy who runs the store on the corner? He knows from those days what my uncle was into. Way back then the cops didn't know . . . my uncle had his own lot, towtrucks, everything . . . they used to steal cars and bring 'em down to Florida and things like that. My aunt didn't like it, but they wouldn't let him go. They wanted him 'cause he was a real professional.

Concepcion's mother also confirmed his uncle's occupation.

Access to such highly organized and capitalized criminal operations was thus conceivable to Concepcion, though two other kinds of career patterns were more immediately visible to him. One was to continue stealing but discreetly, with skill and as a supplement to legitimate wages rather than as a full-time occupation:

Int: You say most of the guys you work with now are around twenty. Do you know older guys in the neighborhood, say in their thirties, who still steal?

Mike Concepcion: Yeah, there's people like that around, but they're chilling out. People like that know when to do it. They got family so they're real careful. They do it, they chill out, they do it again, then they chill out, it's not like an everyday thing.

Another possibility would be for him to combine legitimate and illegitimate work by holding a regular job in one of the "chop shops" in the neighborhood which combine a variety of legal and illegal business functions. In separate field con-

tacts in a different part of this neighborhood, for example, we interviewed two young men in their mid-twenties who had gotten involved in illegal operations after starting their careers in legitimate auto repair. One was a mechanic, the other a body and fender man and both had gotten offers to make "big money" working at night on stolen cars. Concepcion himself had already worked in some of the local "chop shops." He had also made two attempts to enter auto mechanic training programs, once in school and once after he left school, which would have given him legitimate credentials.

The possibility that he might go completely legitimate seemed also present, although it would have involved much lower earnings:

Int: Ideally, what would you like to do for a living?

Mike Concepcion: Something to do with cars, I guess. That's what I know about.

Int: You think you could get a regular job as an auto mechanic around here?

MC: Yeah, I got a friend who might open his own place. This one's strictly legitimate. I could work for him. But it's hard you know. All these little places around here. They don't make so much money. They try to get over on you. There's a lot of guys who want to work on cars, so they try to pay you about \$80 a week or something. That's not very much.

**F. Projectville: Theft**

The field contacts in Projectville were concentrated in one building of a public housing project. Like the La Barriada block, the housing project is also isolated from the rest of the neighborhood. A massive concentration of low-income housing projects sits amidst acres of burned-out rubble relieved only by a few shopping streets, a small section of private houses, and a very few factories. Fire continues to ravage what is left of the retail section. Successive development plans have recommended both housing construction and industrial development, but the construction of public housing has not been matched by commercial or industrial development which could provide jobs for the many low-income residents of the projects.

The Morton Houses, where most of the youths contacted in this neighborhood live, are modern high-rise buildings surrounded by open space with some benches and a few basketball and handball courts. The residents are mostly black and include very high proportions of women, children, and elderly people. Some buildings are set aside for the elderly, and female-headed households receiving welfare account for much of the non-elderly population. Unlike residents of the block in La Barriada, however, these people are not uniformly poor. Some moderate-income families do live here, paying higher rents than the poorer welfare and Social Security recipients whose rents are more subsidized. These moderate-income families are typically headed by transit, postal and hospital workers.

Despite the fact that the housing is modern and physically sound, many aspects of this environment are quite dangerous. A high proportion of poor teenagers, vulnerable senior citizens, women and children, combined with unfortunate design characteristics lead to very distinctive crime patterns. The local youths who are tempted to steal simply do not encounter the opportunities for factory burglaries and auto theft found in La Barriada. Some youths do shoplift in what remains of Projectville's rapidly dwindling commercial sector, but the most available targets for crime are the apartments and persons of their neighbors. Even the apartments are difficult to break into in comparison to the old tenements and factory lofts of La Barriada. The most common crimes around the projects were muggings, and snatchings of purses and gold jewelry. These crimes commonly occurred in the elevators and stairwells or in the empty, unprotected open space which separates the project buildings from each other, from transportation stops, and from shopping areas. After "practice" in the local neighborhood, some youths also went on to commit such crimes on the subways and in distant downtown commercial areas.

Recruitment to these crimes occurred, again, primarily in the context of cliques of age peers. Like the youths in La Barriada, the Projectville youths were also out of work and out of school during their mid-teen years. They spent most of their time either in their apartments, hanging out around the basketball court and benches outside the building in good weather or, in bad weather, in the interior spaces of the building.

The planning of crimes often occurred in these settings. Tommy Singleton gave this description, a few months after he was involved in his first and only court case:

Tommy Singleton: To tell you the truth, I don't spend that much time down there anymore. I'm trying to stay out of trouble, so I've been staying up here in the apartment. I go down to play basketball, but you can't play basketball all the time. All they want to do down there is get high. They say "Come on, let's go get a trey bag" [three dollars worth of marijuana]. Now I won't lie. I like to do that sometimes, but some of those dudes, that's all they ever do, and if nobody got any money, it's "Let's get down; let's go get paid."

The circumstances leading to the planning of crimes among the Projectville youths are similar in many respects to those described by Jorge Padilla in La Barriada youths. In both cases, out-of-school and out-of-work youths in their mid-teens spent much of their time together and concocted illegal schemes for making money. The differing ecological and social circumstances of the two groups, however, led to very different crime patterns.

The distinctive crime patterns of the Projectville group derived not only from the ecological and demographic characteristics of their environment but also from the social organization of that environment. In comparison to the youths from La Barriada, the Projectville youths faced an environment that was both more anonymous and more exposed. The anonymity derived from the concentration of a large population in multi-story project buildings in which residents could not know each other as well as did the residents of the block in La Barriada.

Along with this anonymity, however, there existed an overseeing bureaucracy and a group of residents with more middle-class values who tried to use that bureaucracy to control local youths. Unlike the La Barriada group, the Projectville youths encountered constant harassment from the authorities. Whereas the adults in La Barriada usually ignored groups of youths hanging out together either from fear or familiarity, the Projectville adults engaged in a continual struggle to keep local youths from loitering in the stairways, elevators, and lobbies of the buildings. Unlike the informal methods of social control preferred in La Barriada, social control methods in Projectville were highly bureaucratic and involved the housing police, the housing office, the city police, and tenant volunteer patrol groups. Though these methods often proved ineffective in preventing crime, they did produce an atmosphere in which local youths experienced constant harassment, especially during the winter months when they were not supposed to congregate in the halls and lobbies. Tenants then called the housing police, who then gave summonses to the youths for loitering or smoking marijuana. If the youths then pled guilty, they were fined through the housing office. Their parents were notified and had to pay the fine along with the next rent payment. One respondent complained that he once was arrested and fined for loitering in this manner within seconds of stepping out of the elevator. Another described the way the city police look for crime suspects:

Sometimes the cops come in the lobby. They're holding pictures in their hands. They look at the pictures. They look at our faces. If nothing matches, they leave.

Despite the fact that tenants and police constantly attempted to watch and control the activities of these youths, these attempts could only be partially successful. There were too many youths and too many spaces to control. Tenant efforts towards more social control were further complicated by the fact that many tenants sympathized with the youths. As Tommy Singleton's mother put it, "They're big boys. They can't stay in the house all day." There was almost literally no other place for them to go, unless they got on the subways to get out of the neighborhood entirely. The result was a constant struggle between the youths on the one hand and tenants who feared them allied with the housing authorities on the other.

The crimes described by the Projectville group include apartment burglaries, shoplifting, picking pockets, and, most prominently, the snatching of purses and gold jewelry. As they aged they did tend, like the La Barriada youths, to move from crimes depending on stealth to those involving the direct use of force. Examples of these crimes, the social context in which they were performed, and the effects of age on criminal careers are discussed chronologically below.

Several youths reportedly were involved in some apartment burglaries when they were around the ages of fourteen and fifteen. Though the apartments in these modern buildings are relatively secure, they devised some ways of breaking in. The most notable incident involved a group of several who broke

into an apartment in their own building. Having determined that the woman who lived there was away for the evening, they assigned a small fourteen-year-old the task of entering through a window on the fifteenth floor. Zap Andrews, who claims he was not involved in this incident but knew the details, gave this description:

Zap Andrews: These brothers in my building robbed this lady on the fifteenth floor. This little guy crawled in her window. See, the windows are like this, there's one here in the hall and then you got to crawl across the outside of the building.

Int: Did they need a little guy to get through the window?

ZA: Yeah. If you're real husky, you can't get through there. I could get in there myself, but I ain't crossin' no windows on the fifteenth floor. Any ol' way, they blamed the whole group of us. The cops came to my house the next morning, wakin' up my father. I said, "I didn't do it" and they said, "you know who did then." I didn't know what was goin' on. A bunch of them finally squealed and the lady pressed charges against them all. They said Ben Bivins did it and he got time, because he had a record. All of them are home except for him. And the thing is, he didn't have nothin' to do with it. I was smokin' reefer with him downstairs when it was goin' on.

In addition to having a record for shoplifting and snatching gold chains, Ben Bivins was also older than the rest of the group. He was seventeen at the time and the rest were mostly fifteen. Bivins consequently was prosecuted as an adult while the others had their cases dismissed or handled through Family Court. Tommy Singleton, who did participate, described his experience in Family Court to us:



Tommy Singleton: I heard the cops were looking for me, so I went right down to the station house. They sent me upstairs and I saw all my friends in handcuffs. They never put cuffs on me, but they arrested me and put me in a special school. The case got dismissed cause I had no record and they had no evidence, no witnesses. But they sure messed me up in school. I've been tryin' to transfer into a regular school ever since but they always find some reason not to accept me.

Though Zap Andrews disclaimed involvement in this incident, he described another burglary which he committed by means of guile rather than acrobatics:

Zap Andrews: This lady in my building used to come see my mom. One day I told my friend, "Hey, I can get the key and go in her house and take what we want and put it in your house. Then I'll take the key and put it back in her coat. It went along just like that. We took a T.V., a camera and a jewelry box with lots of gold bracelets, watches . . . we sold it and made around three hundred apiece.

Despite the fact that this particular burglary was successful, burglaries in general seem relatively infrequent for this group, certainly in comparison to the La Barriada group and probably as a result of superior physical security of the project buildings.

More common among the non-confrontational crimes characteristic of their early to middle teens were picking pockets and shoplifting. Lucky Giles, eighteen when interviewed, reported that he had been a pickpocket when he was younger:

Lucky Giles: I used to dip but I can't do that now, I be scared and shit, 'cause I used to be little. I could just run through the crowd. I'm getting too big for all that.

Int: Were you good at it? Could people tell you were doing it?

LG: I used to be with people who knew, then I knew I could do it. This guy who lives in the next building, we used to go out there all the time. I used to be with this girl too. She dipped on a lady, got her Citibank card with the code number right on it. She went to the machine, got about \$500.

Lucky Giles and Ben Bivins also used to shoplift drugstore items:

Lucky Giles: People used to say, "You got a whole lot of heart, going out there in the white people's neighborhood." We used to take the bus all the way to the end, we used to boost, Dristan and Tylenols, get a whole bunch and sell it to stores. Not like going to knock somebody in the head.

Int: Clothes?

LG: No clothes. Drugstores, like Key Foods, A&P, they have a drug section. We used to go in there and take them and sell them to the stores on the corner. We sell them for half price and they buy 'em. We use to come home, have about fifty dollars in my pocket.

Ben Bivins, who used to shoplift closer to home, was caught several times shoplifting and made himself visible to the local precinct, setting up his later conviction for burglary.

By the time they were fifteen, some of these youths were already involved in mugging local people in the elevators and hallways of the buildings. The elevators were a constant source of friction in the building. Even young children know many ways to manipulate the elevators, stopping them between floors, fixing doors so they could not open or shut, and frequently breaking them, leaving residents stranded in the high-rise buildings. We observed such manipulations during field visits. None that we observed involved crimes, though people in the building reported many such incidents. The residents

considered the stairways even more dangerous than the elevators. The youths that we interviewed also reported growing up in a constant atmosphere of worrying about being robbed themselves by youths from other buildings.

Zap Andrews described his involvement in elevator and stairway muggings when he was around fifteen:

Zap Andrews: Me and Ben used to do a couple of things before he went to jail. We caught one lady as she was going to pay her rent. We put on stocking caps and then I dived on her as she was walking down the steps. Then we split.

Another time, we got on top of the elevator. A lady got on. We cut off the lights, jumped down. That shit is dark. Then we take her money, get back on top, open the door, get on the other elevator. She never knew who did it.

A few months later, however, he tried the same technique with the elevators and was recognized:

Zap Andrews: Another time, I was with this girl, and we tried to do the same thing. I ripped off a lady and she seen my face, and then, one day I tried to rap to her daughter, only I didn't know it was her daughter. Next thing you know we really started getting friendly and she said, "I want you to meet my mother." She knew it was me right off the top. She just pulled me over to the side and said, "I know what you done. Now I ain't gonna do nothing and I ain't gonna mess my daughter up, but, do you still do that?" I said, "No, I stopped that now." We the best of friends now.

This incident did prove an abrupt turning point for Zap Andrews. Around this same time, his whole clique began to differentiate into two factions with respect both to their interactions and to their involvement in economic crimes. Zap Andrews, Tommy Singleton and his brother Johnny, and Stan

Williams began to steer clear of theft. Ben Bivins, Larry Jefferson, Lucky Giles, and Jerry Barnes became increasingly involved in confrontational economic crimes, particularly the practice of snatching gold chains on the streets and subways which became a prevalent and widely publicized crime pattern in New York City around this time.

To some extent, these divergences seem to derive from differences in the family situations of the youths in the two factions. The youths who began to avoid crime lived in more nurturing households with higher levels of income. Andrews's father worked as a bus driver and the Singletons' mother both worked as a home attendant and received Social Security. Both Andrews and the Singletons explicitly attributed Lucky Giles's crime behavior to his family situation. Giles lived with his mother and several siblings. His mother worked on and off as a beautician and storefront preacher and was often away from home for days at a time:

Tommy Singleton: No wonder Lucky do like that. His mother don't take care of him. You go in his house, it look like somebody's backyard.

Other individuals, however, could not be so readily categorized in terms of family situation. Jerry Barnes, who became a chain snatcher, was the only child of two parents with steady jobs. Although he received more spending money than the others, his parents were separated, and he went back and forth, ending up with his mother who drank heavily. The two other chain snatchers, Ben Bivins and Larry Jefferson, lived with

their mothers and several siblings in households supported primarily by welfare. Their families were close but among the poorest in the projects.

Though family income and socialization contributed to the divergence in crime behavior in this clique, these factors did not operate mechanically. Despite the differences just described, these youths were all generally poor and had experimented with economic crime by their mid-teens. Family background is not sufficient to explain which ones decreased or increased such activity thereafter. Their choices were also the product not only of such intangibles as "character" but of their actual experiences of stealing money and their developing perceptions of the risks, rewards and alternatives.

Those who moved away from crime did so when it became clear that they could not continue without being discovered. They began to fear retaliation and incarceration. For Zap Andrews this realization came when he was recognized by the woman he had robbed in the elevator:

Int: After she recognized you, you changed your mind?

Zap Andrews: Yeah, that changed it. Because if I ripped off somebody else it wouldn't be that easy. If I run into their house and all they sons be home and say "that's him" and they all break on me or something like that.

Int: And did you stop?

ZA: Yeah. That played out now. By the time I got to be sixteen, I wasn't even thinking about that no more. I figure if I want something I might as well work for it.

He also saw Lucky Giles encounter retaliation:

Zap Andrews: Lucky act too bad. They don't like him. Matter of fact, couple of times they be carryin' they piece, "Man, I'll blow his head off." I don't wanna go through that.

The Singleton brothers decided to move away from crime after they were arrested in the apartment burglary. Even though the case against them was dismissed, Johnny Singleton and his mother decided to seek a residential placement for him away from the neighborhood which they arranged through Family Court. He remained for a year and a half. His brother Tommy remained home, began to disassociate himself from the clique and finally received placement in a new school. Both Tommy Singleton and Zap Andrews increased their efforts to find work at this point, although with little success.

Although the members of the clique had grown up together and claimed to have been very close since they were small children, by the time we met them, most of the incidents described above had already happened and they had begun to go different ways. They still saw each other every day but no longer wanted to include Lucky Giles in their basketball games:

Field Notes: I walked some of the guys over to the Center to play basketball. Lucky had a bike which they said he had stolen and the rest of them were walking. They kept trying to shake Lucky. Stan told me that they were not about to go in the Center while he was there. They say he is a bum who takes off neighborhood people.

A few days later, the field observer saw the whole group together but arguing about what to do:

Field Notes: Today when I got there everybody was talking about "getting paid." Only three of seven were willing to "get paid": Lucky, Jerry and Johnny. Then Johnny became undecided and Lucky and Jerry went off to Central Park. Johnny said he would go in later. Then he told me that he has a different way of "getting paid." He said the other two are probably going to snatch a purse or mug somebody. He has met someone who is going to advance him some marijuana to sell.

Those who continued to seek money through stealing on a regular basis began to move out from the projects to seek opportunities on the shopping streets near them, on the subways, and in the business districts of Brooklyn and Manhattan. Like Zap Andrews and the Singletons, they also realized that they could not continue to victimize their immediate neighbors without being recognized. Lucky Giles went too far in this regard and encountered consequences. He was partially ostracized by his peers and eventually had to leave the neighborhood to escape the retaliation of his neighbors. His mother sent him to stay for a few months with relatives in South Carolina after some men with guns came looking for him.

In addition to perceiving the need to take their predations farther from home, these youths also discovered a "new" criminal technique which became profitable and popular very rapidly during this time, around the summer of 1980. This technique involved the snatching of gold jewelry from the necks of people in the streets and subways. Both the rewards and risks of this crime changed dramatically as the implications of this crime dawned on the youths, the police, the public, and the buyers of gold.

By the end of the summer of 1980, gold chain snatching had become a media-certified "crime wave." The following excerpts from the New York Times provide some succinct background on the incidence and techniques of this type of crime:

. . . The incidents are part of what police officials believe is a wave that became serious less than six months ago. So far this year, two women have been killed in attacks involving chain snatchings.

Most of these thefts take place on subways because of the ease of escape and the isolation of the victims. The crime is now the largest class of transit felonies.

In the first eight months of this year, nearly 2,000 people have reported having had necklaces snatched in the subways alone, and since the warm weather began in late April, the pace has built to nearly 500 a month.

. . . Transit Police Chief James Meehan says of the criminals: "With gold selling at more than \$600 an ounce, it's natural they'd turn to this eventually." Young men, teenagers, and younger boys have been arrested with \$200 or \$300 in their pockets, he said.

But beyond the price of gold, there are other factors that influence these young criminals: It's an easy crime that requires little "muscle"; it affords little danger, since most victims do not bother to prosecute; it offers an easy escape; and because the victims are usually uninjured, judges impose short jail terms or more frequently parole when the thieves are captured.

In addition gold chains are easy to sell. Many jewelers are happy to offer the novice criminals cheap prices for the gold. In some instances neighborhood gift shops, pizza parlors and coffee shops have acquired jewelers' scales and put up signs: "We buy gold." A necklace with a gold value of \$1,500 may be bought from a snatcher for \$100 or \$200.

. . . A recent tour with two transit plain-clothes officers showed why the subways are so popular for chain snatching. . . . "Watch the doors,"



said Officer Young. He positioned himself in front of a subway door. Next to him, seated, was a young woman with a heavy gold chain -- a would-be mark. As the doors began to close, Officer Young wedged his foot into the door to prevent it from closing. His partner moved quickly across the train and out the door as Mr. Young motioned toward the woman.

Had it been a theft, the woman's necklace would have been snatched, the thief out the door and the train immediately moving out of the station. The thieves would have been up the stairs and into the street by the time the train reached the next station, where the woman could report the crime.  
(9/22/80, p. B1.)

In all respects except for its implication that these "novice criminals" easily avoid arrest, this newspaper article accords with the accounts of chain snatching which appear in the Project's field notes and interviews. Ben Bivins, Lucky Giles, Jerry Barnes, and Larry Jefferson all operated on the subways and sold their stolen gold to a variety of fences ranging from jewelry stores through the smaller neighborhood businesses to individual entrepreneurs. The field material which follows is presented so as to place this type of crime within their criminal careers and within the social context which defined this criminal opportunity and its limits.

The spread of chain snatching occurred at the same time that the Projectville clique was dividing into those decreasing and those increasing their involvement in crime. Spontaneous decisions to snatch chains by some individuals in the midst of group outings accelerated the split within the group. Lucky Giles described his quick decision to snatch a chain during a trip into Manhattan to see a movie with a friend:

Lucky Giles: We was goin' to the movies. I had \$10 in my back pocket, but it was gone. I had left my pocket open, and somebody took it. I should never have put it back there. I was mad, so I see this old man, he looked all drunk, I didn't have no money so I just snatched it and ran.

Int: Did your friend know you were going to do it?

LG: Nah. He was standing by the movie, I was walking down the block, I snatched and ran across the street.

In this case, Lucky Giles was apprehended and his friend was not involved. Tommy Singleton, however, described another occasion when he nearly got arrested as a result of similar behavior by Jerry Barnes:

Tommy Singleton: Jerry came over to my house with money in his pocket and asked me did I want to go downtown. We got on the train and he starts talking about he's gonna snatch a chain. So we was getting near where I had applied for a guard job before and the man had told me to come back and check it out next time I was around. When we came into the stop, I got off first. Then he snatched this chain and she started cursin' at him and the cops started chasin' him. I just walked up the steps and went on to see about the job. Then a couple of weeks later, the cops called my house and said he wanted to talk to me about chain snatching. He said witnesses had seen me with Jerry and I better come down there. Then they're telling me, "Just admit you held the door." I told them exactly what happened, that I didn't have nothin' to do with it even if I was with him. Then they talk about, "He's gonna tell when we get in court."

Int: Who's going to tell? Your friend?

TS: Yeah. I know him since we was little, then he's gonna go and do something like that? I ain't seen him since.

Int: You think he gave your name to the cops?

TS: He did. Otherwise, how would they know?

A closer analysis of some of the technical aspects of chain snatching in comparison to other types of crime helps contextualize chain snatching within these youths' criminal careers. These technical considerations include the relative lucrateness of chain snatching, the distance from home at which it is practiced, and the relative requirements for speed and violence.

Compared to apartment burglaries and muggings in the elevators and hallways of their own neighborhood, chain snatching on the subways and commercial streets was less exposed. The likelihood of being recognized by the victim during random later encounters was much less. Lucky Giles, for example, turned to heavier involvement in chain snatching after he returned from his trip South to escape irate neighbors.

Compared to purse snatching, chain snatching was much more lucrative. For Larry Jefferson and Ben Bivins, in fact, chain snatching was a direct outgrowth of the purse snatching that they had practiced when they were younger. Johnny Singleton described for us the chances involved in purse snatching:

Johnny Singleton: Some of 'em around the way, they like to be about snatching pocketbooks. I won't snatch pocketbooks myself. If a person press charges on you for that, you could go to jail. And half the time there ain't no money in the pocketbook anyway.

A gold chain, in contrast, brought a minimum of thirty dollars and as much as several hundred.

Besides being more lucrative than purse snatching, however, chain snatching also tends to be more violent since gold

chains do not always break easily. Larry Jefferson described an incident he had witnessed:

Larry Jefferson: My aunt came over and she had a big gold chain and I told her "hide it, these people will snatch it and they be choking people." Especially those people that wear them big ones; they hard to pop. One day I saw this dude snatch this lady's chain in the train station. The chain didn't pop and he was dragging the lady down the steps. Her knees got all scraped up.

The amount of violence risked in chain snatching, however, is still less than that involved in armed robbery. The chain snatcher need not risk either an actual stabbing or shooting or being convicted for possessing a weapon. Chain snatching requires a willingness to risk some violence and the ability to run fast. In this regard, it tends to occur in an individual's career after non-confrontational crimes like burglary, picking pockets, and shoplifting and before armed robbery.

The risk of being convicted for robbery, after being apprehended for chain snatching, however, changed during the summer of 1980 as the police took note of the new crime phenomenon and altered some of their procedures. In the early stages of the spread of chain snatching, the police tended to treat the crime like purse snatching and to charge formally as "larceny against the person," a felony but a less serious crime than robbery. As chain snatching became a more serious problem, the police concentrated more on trying to bring robbery charges against chain snatchers. Lucky Giles learned of this change in procedures through personal experience:

Lucky Giles: I had snatched a little chain once before. I got caught for that, but they let me go. That's when it was grand larceny. Now if you snatch a chain, it's robbery.

Despite the facts that chain snatching took them farther from home and provided a relatively plentiful source of fast money, however, chronic chain snatching, like the knifepoint robberies of the La Barriada youths, eventually led to apprehension, conviction, and, for these youths, substantial incarceration. Lucky Giles spent four months in jail for his first robbery conviction and came back to the neighborhood with three years probation. He was convicted again a few weeks later and received a prison term. Ben Bivins spent two years in prison on a burglary charge, though his friends' assessment is that his prior arrests for shoplifting and chain snatching contributed to his receiving such a stiff sentence for burglary. Jerry Barnes also received a prison term after he was convicted of robbery when he lacerated a woman's neck during a chain snatching. Larry Jefferson was still only fifteen when his mother, after seeing him arrested on several occasions for chain snatching and finally discovering that he was stealing from her, filed a petition to have him placed under state supervision in a home for juveniles.

These outcomes show clearly the limits of confrontational street crimes as a source of income. One, two, even several crimes may be perpetrated with impunity, but continued involvement in such visible and violent crimes does lead to serious sanctions. Some other data from Projectville confirm the

suggestion in the New York Times article that the ones who really profited from the wave of chain snatchings were the dealers in stolen gold. Several of the small restaurants and shops that were the targets of a police campaign against buyers of stolen gold were located in the Projectville area, although such establishments were by no means the only receivers. Lucky Giles reported selling stolen gold right in the midst of Manhattan's major jewelry district:

Lucky Giles: I sold it right in Midtown.

Int: You mean in the big stores? Aren't they supposed to ask you for a certificate?

LG: Some do, some don't.

Int: You just keep trying until you find one?

LG: I know where to go.

The Project also interviewed some older individuals hanging out on the commercial streets in Projectville who made a business of buying gold right on the street. A twenty-two year old professional drug dealer who had grown up in the projects told of a business offer he had received from some associates in the drug business who had branched out into the stolen gold business:

Sky Wilson: I went to check out some people I know yesterday. They owed me some money. Now they have a new thing. They buy and sell gold. They stand in front of the jewelry store and catch people on the way in and say, "I'll give you top dollar." They have a kit with acid, a pennyweight scale, just like a jeweler. They check the prices every day. Of course you got to have money to make money. He said you need about five, six hundred dollars a day to do

this. But the other day he bought a bracelet for seven hundred and resold it for fifteen hundred. That's all profit.

Another individual working the street corner in Projectville explained his operations in more detail:

Field Notes: He explained to me, "Since the price of gold went up, the kids and the pawnbrokers have kept right up with the changing economy." He said he buys gold from the hustlers in the neighborhood. He carries a mini-scale with him and buys it right on the corner. When he gets a certain amount, he takes it inside the store where his friend who works inside lets him store it. In return, he keeps an eye out for shoplifters from in front of the store. He says he has to worry about buying from young kids. Sometimes kids will steal from their mothers and the mothers come looking for the buyer, which is trouble. He also has to watch out for the cops, "If the cops see you on the same corner day after day, they figure you're buying gold." He claims the cops often pick up young kids and, if they have gold on them, the cops keep it for themselves. He himself sells the gold to a licensed pawnbroker who switches it for legitimate gold with certificates that people have pawned. When they come back for their gold, he gives them the stolen gold. The corner buyer told me he has been to court many times but nothing has ever happened to him.

In gold snatching, as in most youth crime, youths take the big risks while older people profit from their crimes with virtually no risk.

**G. Projectville: Drug Selling**

The preceding section of this chapter has shown how the ability of the youths from the Morton Houses clique to make money from crimes of direct predation -- burglary, larceny, and robbery -- began to diminish rapidly in their middle and later teens. Their predatory crimes saturated both the local and wider urban environments and sanctions for these crimes began to accrue too rapidly for such crimes to continue as a regular source of income. At this point, the youths in the Morton Houses clique either moved away from crimes of direct predation or continued for a further period of more intense and violent involvement yielding higher returns for a time but ending with substantial periods of incarceration or institutionalization.

The Project also documented another pattern of economic crime among Projectville youths, that of marijuana selling, which contrasted sharply with patterns of predatory crime in that it involved direct recruitment of youths by older people, higher levels of organization, and the possibility of advancement to more lucrative and less exposed criminal roles with age and experience. The earlier stages of this career progression are examined here with reference to one of the Morton Houses youths, Johnny Singleton, and the later stages are examined with reference to three young men in their early twenties who lived or had lived in other parts of Projectville.

During the summer of 1980, when some of the youths he had grown up with were participating heavily in the wave of chain snatching precipitated by skyrocketing gold prices, Johnny



Singleton discovered that he could make steady money without participating in distasteful and risky violent acts, by selling marijuana in Central Park in Manhattan. His initial discovery of the possibilities for making money by selling marijuana occurred almost by accident:

Int: Do your friends put pressure on you to commit crimes? I mean, if you're walking along the street and there's somebody you could rip off and they say "Let's do it," what do you do?

Johnny Singleton: They say, "Let's go get paid" you know, but it all depends on what they mean by "getting paid." If they talking about ripping off somebody, I don't even talk about it with 'em. I just go the other way. Most of the time, I be right in Central Park, sellin' reefer. That's what I call "gettin' paid," not tryin' to rip somebody off or snatch somebody's mother's pocketbook. That's messed up. That could be somebody, like you might know their son, or it could be their last money. My mother told me about that. She told it to all of us.

Int: How often do you go to Central Park?

JS: Every day. If I wasn't here now, I'd be out there.

Int: How much do you make on that a day?

JS: I spend fifteen dollars on the reefer and I make fifty to sixty-five dollars back.

Int: That sounds like pretty good money.

JS: I know.

Int: How long have you been doing this now?

JS: I just started recently, no more than a month ago, in May sometime. That's when I found out that's where the money's at, instead of . . ., you know, going out and tryin' to kill somebody for a couple of dollars, for a fifty-fifty chance of no money.

Int: How did you find out about it?

JS: We went out there one day, right, and we only had trey bags [three dollar packages] of reefer. We

sat down on a bench and started rollin' up skinny joints. This dude came up to me and said, "Y'all sellin' reefer? Ya'll sellin' joints?" So we said yeah and sold him ten joints for a dollar apiece. Then this lady saw us sellin' to him and came up and bought the last three. We was really happy cause we ain't have no money to get home. So then we went and bought some more and just kept rollin' it and sellin' it, rollin' it and sellin' it.

Int: I've heard about guys getting ripped off doing that. Did that every happen to you?

JS: Nah.

Int: Do you go alone?

JS: My friend Jerry go with me, but he stands on one side and I'm on the other.

Int: How do you get the reefer? Do you have someone who you depend on for it?

JS: It's a reefer store, only a couple of blocks from my house, but I can't depend on him, unless I got money to buy it.

Int: You mean you don't always pay for it when you get it?

JS: Right, sometime he trust us and we pay him when we get back.

Johnny Singleton's drug selling career came to a halt at the end of the summer when his mother, after talking it over with him, had him placed in a residential institution out of the city where he remained for the next year. By that time Johnny was no longer speaking to his partner Jerry Barnes since Jerry had given Johnny's brother's name to the police. Many of the elements of getting into the marijuana business that he described, however, also appear in the biographies of individuals from all three study neighborhoods. Consignments from older dealers to youths for street sales and work in the "reefer stores" or "smoke shops" provided occasional to steady

sources of income for some individuals in each neighborhood. The rest of this section traces career progressions and the social context of such activity in the lives of three young men in their early twenties who lived or had lived in other sections of Projectville.

Like Johnny Singleton, these older respondents had learned from experience the limits of petty stealing as a source of regular income and had found it easy to enter into marijuana selling through the informally organized recruitment provided by the consignment system and the "reefer stores." Unlike him, however, these older individuals had stayed in business long enough to encounter the constraints on the drug business posed by the police, by suppliers, by competition, and by predatory criminals who know that drug dealers carry money and drugs and are not protected by the police. As a result, each of the three had developed different ways of dealing with these problems and had found different places in the web of vertical and horizontal relationships which organize drug distribution.

When the Project first contacted Juice Baker, he was twenty-three years old and living with his mother and one younger brother in Projectville's Simpson Houses. His mother had worked in a day-care center for many years. He had finished high school and also completed a year and a half of college. At that time, he was working for a maintenance company on a daily shape-up basis. He had already experienced several kinds of jobs and several kinds of crime, making a success of none of them. He had worked in gas stations,

factories, and messenger agencies and had quit or been fired from all of the jobs, usually after disputes with supervisors over working conditions or attendance. When he was younger, he had engaged in larceny and also some armed robberies. He now considered himself too old for those types of crime:

Juice Baker: Yeah I used to boost. I call 'em "snatch dudes" . . . like go down to the garment district, grab a rack, and go. I've done stickups too, caught 'em comin' out of the bank . . . but you end up runnin' away from the police too much. I don't know . . . as you get older you get out of the runnin' part.

Baker's only arrest at that point had put an end to a short-lived career in auto theft. He had arranged to steal cars and deliver them to a receiver who would then pay him fifty dollars for the car. The third time he did it, he ran a red light and was stopped in a stolen car with no license:

Juice Baker: Dumb move. I didn't have a record so they threw it out, but that was the end of that.

Baker has also tried various other hustles including stealing checks from mailboxes and buying stolen goods from younger "snatch dudes" and then reselling them for a profit. His main hustle, however, had been selling marijuana on the street. He started right in his own neighborhood but then learned that he could make more money if he went into Manhattan and sold "loose joints" to office workers coming outside at lunch time. He had made regular money doing this off and on for a couple of years, but he had also run into various difficulties:

Juice Baker: You pick yourself a good spot, you stand out there for a couple of days, you get a steady customer, he spreads the word, and you start to get the clientele. Like they say, "Clientele will tell."

Int: You have one regular spot?

JB: You got to drift. I had one good spot, I used to try to stay there, but it got too hot. Too many people around, other dealers start showing up, soon there's a crowd, people start asking' "What's going on over there?" and then the next person askin' that question is gonna be The Man.

Int: I'm confused. First you said you have to pick one spot, then you said you have to drift.

JB: If you visit one spot regularly, you build up a clientele. In the beginning you gotta stay out there, but, once you known, you can just move, they'll look for you. You got to keep movin'.

Int: Did you ever have trouble like that with the police?

JB: Well, yeah, out here in the city [Manhattan] they get kind of foul. Back home [Projectville] they'll pick you up, but out here basically you get ripped off. The cops take your product, they take your money . . .

Int: You mean they take the money out of your pocket, and they don't arrest you?

JB: Yeah, they take everything, and then they say, "Tough luck, now you got to start all over again."

Int: How many times has this happened to you?

JB: It happened to me twice. That's when I learned how to move around. It happened to me twice because they knew I'd be back: "Well, his clientele's here, he'll be back." That's when I learned that if I move around he can't get me like that. So I moved further downtown and then, when he comes, you know he goes through his little journeys and he sees I'm not there any more and then while he's looking at somebody else, I'll come back and be there for just that amount of time and then just get back out. I can't let him be takin' my stuff you know, 'cause sometimes I get things on consignment. You get somebody to throw you something like that, they don't want to hear about you gettin' busted. When they put you out

of business . . . say you had a quarter of a pound that cost you a yard and a quarter [\$125], right. Now they put you out of business, you gotta pay the yard and a quarter to the man who give it to you on consignment and you gotta take another yard and a quarter for the next one . . .

Int: Why, if you're paying him back?

JB: 'Cause you got popped for the first one, which means he'd be takin' a risk.

Int: But how does he know you got popped?

JB: Because you won't be bringing him the money that night. If you're gonna be late, you better tell him too, because . . . well, anything could happen.

Int: Over marijuana?

JB: Come on, man. People get shot for coats out there.

Int: Would you say this has been your main source of income for awhile?

JB: Yeah, basically, for about the last three years. I had to let go of the cars, so yeah, a couple of little things, a few stick-ups, but basically herb.

By this point, however, Baker was beginning to suffer from his reverses in marijuana selling and was again trying legitimate work at the maintenance agency. During this period, the Project also contacted a friend of his who also sold drugs and had been supporting himself this way for several years. Sky Wilson had lived with his aunt in Projectville's Simpson Houses between the ages of twelve and fifteen. Unlike Juice Baker, Sky Wilson had no history of teenage theft and had not held a job since he left school in the eleventh grade. Part of the reason for Wilson's relative lack of both work experience and teenage stealing was that he grew up in a more affluent

family situation. Wilson says, "I never had to steal cause I had money in my pocket." Another reason that he never stole, however, was that he began selling marijuana in the streets soon after dropping out of high school and prospered. In a series of interviews over the next year he described in some detail his methods of doing business and the reasons why he had prospered when many of his associates, like Juice Baker, had not. During that same period of time, he also changed his business considerably in response to a series of crises that eventually drove him off the streets and from the marijuana market into the cocaine market.

Sky Wilson's first connection into the drug business came through a woman, an older woman with whom he lived for a year when he left his aunt's house. He took his first consignment of marijuana from a male friend of this woman's sister when he was nineteen. He had previously bought and sold small amounts from time to time working with a friend his own age. He describes this as a period of his life in which he had very little money and that was "pure hell." He says he had already become a "connoisseur" and that his ability to recognize quality drugs had always helped him in the business. He was then approached about taking consignments for more sustained selling by the older dealer who "knew I was into something." Unlike Juice Baker, Wilson was able to accrue in a few months enough working capital to protect himself against embarrassment in case of being robbed or having his merchandise confiscated by the police.

Wilson attributed much of his success to the fact that he sought out and learned from older hustlers from whom he learned good business values and who provided him with business opportunities. Much of his contact with these older individuals occurred in the context of after-hours social clubs throughout New York's inner-city neighborhoods:

Field Notes: Wilson began to describe the after-hours places: "When I say after-hours, I mean some of these places don't even open up until three o'clock in the morning." He said that a lot of what goes on in these places has to do with cocaine. People go there to buy, sell, and take cocaine, mostly to take it. Given the hours of these places, most of the clientele are hustlers. I asked "What kind of hustles are we talking about: gambling, prostitution, organized theft, drugs?" He said, "Some of all of that, but mostly drugs." I asked, "What kind of drugs?" He said "All kinds of drugs. These places are like trade schools in the drug business."

When he first tried to get into these places, he was refused because he was too young. Many had rules limiting entrance to those over the age of twenty-five. He began to dress up in suits to make himself look older and had also gotten to know some of the older hustlers through taking consignments and working for them in the reefer stores. By these means he began to gain admittance to the "spots" and he continued to cultivate the older hustlers. As he showed himself to be reliable and respectful, his opportunities expanded:

Sky Wilson: Once you get into hustling, there's a lot of things you can do. You go from one thing to the next.



Between the ages of nineteen and twenty-one, Wilson worked the streets in good weather and also worked in the smoke shops owned by some of his older associates during the winter. Of the two forms of work, he preferred the streets:

Int: How does working in a store compare to working for yourself?

Sky Wilson: Well, it gets cold in the winter, you might decide to move inside. But it's like that nine to five thing. It's a job in itself, just like in a numbers joint. Somebody's got to open up. Somebody's got to be there when the people come. Somebody's got to sweep the place out. Reefer store's the same way. After a while, you decide to move on. I like the open air.

After alternating between the streets and the stores in this manner for about two years, he got the chance to open his own storefront operation. He fixed up an abandoned building and stayed there for about three months:

Sky Wilson: It was nice. We made money there. The city marshalls chased us out finally. We had already stayed there too long.

After this experience, he went back to selling in the streets. By the time we met him, he had established several business procedures designed to maximize his clientele while minimizing his exposure to arrest and competition. He refused to sell around the Simpson Houses where we first met him, because people had known him since he was small. Instead, he travelled to the central business districts on weekdays to sell to office workers and concentrated on the avenues of Brooklyn later in the day on weekends to sell to the working people of the inner city.

During this period, he was still selling mainly marijuana. He also sold cocaine in the spots, mostly to pay for what he himself consumed. He refused to sell cocaine on the street, however, considering that too risky. He also specifically disassociated himself from any participation in heroin traffic, although his connections provided him with opportunities to do so. His avoidance of selling heroin was partly based on moral grounds:

Sky Wilson: Like an older hustler once told me, "Dope [heroin] kills," and I ain't about that. I provide a service. Go back to prohibition, people like the Kennedys made their money selling booze. Now they're respectable businessmen. I sell coke and smoke, and I wouldn't sell anything I wouldn't take myself.

His moral objections to the heroin trade, however, were also accompanied by perceptions of heroin traffic as involving much more money, competition, violence, and danger. One day he reported that Juice Baker had been arrested while transporting a large amount of heroin:

Sky Wilson: I heard they're going to put him away for a long time. He got in over his head. He just wasn't ready to get mixed up in something like that. Now I ain't sayin' nothin' against him, but that's the kind of guy he was and that's what happened to him.

Wilson also said that he had seen other similar cases which had kept him away from the heroin business:

Sky Wilson: I knew another guy. They called him the Invader. He got big real young. He was only eighteen or nineteen. He had a crew of about thirty

people working for him, coke and dope. He had three Mercedes. He was dead before he was twenty-one. I don't want to make it like that.

In contrast to Juice Baker and the Invader, Wilson stressed that he did not trade in heroin, worked at a level where hustlers cooperated with each other, had established himself as trustworthy with both customers and business associates, paid attention to older hustlers and learned from them, and avoided violence.

He referred to being a reliable businessman as "diplomacy" and said that the lack of this quality rapidly thinned out the ranks of aspiring hustlers:

Sky Wilson: You know, everybody can't hustle. Some guys just don't make it. They may have money, good drugs to start with, but they still don't make it.

Int: What do you need to make it as a hustler?

SW: Let me see, what's a good word? Just call it diplomacy: be trustworthy, consistent. You and I make a deal. We're both happy. Let's keep it that way. Do it the same way next time. A lot of people out there are knuckleheads. You would never do business with them the second time.

Wilson also claimed that he made a practice of avoiding violence, again both on moral grounds and as a matter of good business practice:

Sky Wilson: I'm a hustler, not a gangster.

Int: How do you mean? What's a gangster?

SW: A gangster is like Al Capone, might makes right. But like an older brother told me, "you live by the sword, you die by the sword." There's a lot of shooting out there. A lot of people my age are caught up in something that's not real. They go too

fast and they get killed. I don't want to make money like that. What they say is "If the money is funny, so is the honey." I'm a hustler. I provide a service. That's why I can survive. Life ain't about getting killed, it's about being able to go to your brother and say "help me out." There's a lot of people out there who take care of me and I take care of them.

Some of our field observations confirmed the cooperative nature of Wilson's associations with other hustlers. One of his selling spots in the central business district was informally considered the territory of a small group of regular hustlers:

Field Notes: When I arrived today, Sky wasn't there yet, but the other regulars were all out there. A little altercation was just ending when I got there. The people who work in the same area as Sky were arguing with this guy, telling him he couldn't sell there. They referred to him as an "independent operator." The situation almost got violent before the independent succumbed to their demands and moved on.

When Sky got there I asked him if he was in business with these guys. He said, "No, we just get together to protect ourselves because these guys only come in one or two days a week and steal our business. We're here every day."

In a subsequent interview, Wilson described how these informal associations originate and are maintained:

Int: How does a new man get established in one of these situations?

Sky Wilson: There's no room for a new man, now. I was the last one in and I closed the door. There's only a certain amount of money to go around.

Int: How did you get in?

SW: Well, I heard about it, at first, in a joking kind of way. I didn't say nothing. I let them come to me. By that time, I already knew something about them. You'd be surprised. It's a very close knit

thing among hustlers. You meet someone you've never met before in a place you've never been before, you find out you know someone they know. They may even have heard of you.

Field observations around this time also documented the relationship between this loose network of drug sellers and the police:

Field Notes: I met Sky today and he took me into the park over to the part where he and his friends work. Just as we got there, a white man in a business suit carrying an attache case came over and asked Sky where he could buy a half ounce of reefer. Sky asked the man to sit down on the bench and wait. After a few minutes, Sky walked over and they made a transaction. Afterwards I asked him why he did that. He said, "Because the police are always around here." Sure enough, there were two policemen stationed about eighty yards away from where all this was going on.

In interviews, Wilson spoke at more length on his manner of dealing with police:

Sky Wilson: The thing is, you just have to give him respect when he's around. Wait till he turns the corner. Don't do it right in his face. You got to show him that respect.

Int: Have you ever had your stuff confiscated?

SW: Just recently as a matter of fact. I was having an argument with a guy who was selling T-shirts. I knew him, I was just arguing about the price, but we got loud and the cops came over. I told them it was alright because we were friends. But then he found my bag on the ground with the drugs in it and said, "This makes it different, doesn't it?" He said to his partner, "What can we do? It was on the ground so we can't arrest him." So they just confiscated it. I waited for a while and then I bumped into the guy about an hour and a half later outside the park. I tried to buy it back from him. The drugs in there were worth about seven or eight hundred dollars to me. I would have paid him a hundred and fifty to get it back, but he said, "Sorry, there were witnesses and besides it's been a slow night. But next time I'll make sure you don't take the fall."

Int: I was wondering if you were feeling more heat out there with the Democratic Convention coming up?

SW: Yeah, I've been feeling it. That always happens, like if the Pope comes to town or Castro. It affects prostitutes, numbers, drug dealers, gamblers. But the black market never goes away. It's always there. It just gets a little harder for a while. I'll tell you something: they could clamp down on all this shit tomorrow if they wanted to. I know that. They could arrest everybody or make it impossible for us to operate.

Int: Why do you think they don't?

SW: There's too much money involved. So it just goes in cycles. Right now the heat's on. There's been too many killings.

A few days after this interview, he became involved in a series of incidents which demonstrated the limits of his being able to avoid violence, the mobilization of the hustler's network, and the limits of being able to coexist with the police. While dealing in the same area just described, he was robbed at knifepoint by a customer who stole the bag containing his drugs as well as all his money and gold jewelry. The next day, before Wilson arrived, this same individual reappeared. Wilson's associates attacked him and beat him severely. The customer pressed charges against one of his assailants. Wilson then pressed charges against the customer for the original robbery. In court, the judge and prosecutors had little patience with the evasions and countercharges and both cases were thrown out. As it turned out, however, Wilson's robber had several outstanding warrants and remained in custody.

That would have been the end of the whole affair except that it focused police attention on the dealing area. A week later, as Wilson and some of his associates were sitting on a

bench waiting for business, the police appeared, found a weapon in a bag underneath the bench, and arrested Wilson and some others near the bag on a weapons charge. This was the first serious arrest of his life. Previously, he had only been arrested once, for smoking marijuana, a misdemeanor for which he paid a fine. Now he was involved in a major case which dragged on for the next several months.

In interviews after these incidents, Wilson talked more about the role of violence in the drug business. He maintained that there was no basis to the charge against him, since he did not carry weapons. He had owned and carried weapons in his life, he said, but he no longer carried them with him in order to avoid just this sort of incident. He preferred to handle threats of violence in other ways. His counter-complaint to the police was one way. Letting his associates retaliate was another. After some experience in the underworld, a person does not necessarily have to handle violence personally:

Sky Wilson: There's a lot of people who respect me. That knucklehead who ripped me off should have known better. It's like an unwritten law. I know people who would kill for me. I would do the same for them. I've known lots of gangsters, but I don't believe in all that shoot 'em up. When your brother needs you, though, you got to be there. It doesn't matter if it's money or trouble. I give people money, drugs, whatever. I don't expect them to pay me back. I know they probably will, but it doesn't matter if they don't. That's not why I do it. White people are always counting every penny, but it's not about that. It's about taking care of your brother, your woman, whoever, and you know they're going to take care of you when you need it.

Besides the fact that in this case his associates retaliated for him, he was also taken care of by one of his older asso-

ciates from the after-hours spots, an owner of several reefer stores for whom he had often worked and who bailed him out and provided him with a private lawyer.

After these incidents, Wilson began gradually to move away from selling in the streets. At first he merely gave up his sales to office workers and concentrated on the avenues of Brooklyn where he encountered less police presence. He also began to depend more on sales of cocaine in the spots for income. In addition, he began to look for a straight job as cover should he have to go to trial, although he was unwilling to take the low-level messenger jobs which were most readily available to him and he eventually gave up looking for legitimate work.

He next tried to open his own smoke shop again, hoping to establish a source of income which would not expose him directly to robbery or arrest. He and four "junior partners" invested three thousand dollars and opened a shop in an area where there were already several similar establishments. They hired local handymen to install a heavy door and create a plexiglass window in the interior through which marijuana could be exchanged for money. The junior partners staffed the place along with extra help which they paid on a daily basis. Wilson only came by occasionally to check on the operation.

The police busted the establishment on the third day. Two of the junior partners were arrested. Wilson himself was not arrested and only lost a little money since the operation had almost broken even in two and a half days. He subsequently



evaluated this operation, the factors that had led to its demise, and how he would do it differently next time:

Sky Wilson: It was in a heavy drug area. I knew it might get raided, but then I knew there would be a lot of clientele. It got totally raided too. The police busted the door right out of the frame, a steel door. Probably we got busted because we were too busy. We had cars lined up in front of the place. That was a mistake. Next time I'll have somebody to steer the cars somewhere else to park. Either the cops noticed the cars, or somebody dropped a dime on me. Probably it was the tenants. That's why abandoned buildings are good, but then you could get burned out. Basements and storefronts are good because the clientele don't have to walk past the tenants. I anticipated a problem with the tenants too, but I thought it would last longer than it did. Next time I won't do it in a high drug area. No senior citizens or long-time residents. I know people who have spots where the tenants look out for them. They don't call the cops and they keep the crowds out.

This incident occurred several months after his arrest while his case was still dragging on with no progress. Shortly after his store was raided, he was arrested again, this time in one of the after-hours spots, for possession of cocaine. At this point, he began to get seriously worried about going to jail. His older partner again bailed him out. This time, he did not go back to the streets at all. He no longer sold marijuana for income but relied solely on cocaine sales in the spots. Previously he had claimed that he only sold casually in the spots and went there to hang out, only making sales incidentally. Now he reversed the pattern, cutting down on the time he spent inside and maximizing his sales.

He eventually was convicted of both charges. Somewhat to his own surprise, he received probation on both convictions.

One reason that he received probation was that he had no prior felony convictions. He also received some last minute support in the form of letters from some prominent politicians which the mother of one of his women friends arranged for him. At the age of twenty-three, he found himself in a difficult situation. He was making a lot of money. Estimates derived from interviews over a period of several months would put his income at between five hundred and a thousand dollars a week untaxed and not including the considerable quantities of his own expensive drugs that he consumed himself. Yet, as his troubles with violence and the police multiplied, he talked more and more about getting out of New York and out of the drug business:

Sky Wilson: I'm a good businessman, no doubt about it. I know how to buy and sell. But I've been ripped off, cut, and arrested. Now I'm on probation and I won't get off so easy next time. But how am I gonna get a job now? I know I could run lots of kinds of businesses, but I can't go up to somebody and say, "Listen, I know how to buy and sell. I've been buying and selling drugs for years." And I sure don't want to be no messenger, not after the money I'm used to. What I'm trying to do now is get enough money together to start my own business, maybe a boutique or a penny arcade. Something that has nothing to do with drugs.

His only hope for raising a large amount of money, however, lay in the drug business, and he had become increasingly reluctant to take risks. He reported turning down offers from his older associates to do large cocaine deals or operate another reefer store. He referred to his current place in the drug business as the "middle echelons" and was reluctant to move down or up:

Sky Wilson: It's getting bad out there. Too many power struggles, too many people getting killed, people shooting each other over territories.

Int: What about territories?

SW: Well, that's for cocaine and heroin. With reefer it doesn't matter except for large operations. It doesn't really affect me because I have clout in a couple of places. Also, I don't do it that often and I move around a lot, so I'm not a threat. I could be moving on into the higher echelons of things, but I'm staying away from it. When you get seriously involved in the drug business, there's thousands of dollars at stake. It's a lot more pressure, a lot more hassles. You have to worry about people making deals with the DA. You could get bumped off. People think you're moving in on their territories. They rip off your workers, your spots. They be diming on you. I really don't have to worry about that at my level.

The final field material on the drug business to be presented here concerns a third individual from Projectville who has worked on and off in the drug business. Sly Landers was twenty-three when contacted. He was living in a small section of Projectville still occupied by private houses. His was a wide open block where gambling and street drug sales flourished, drawing many customers from the nearby housing projects. When first contacted, he was working a few days a week for a furniture store, loading their truck and making deliveries as needed. He had made his living from temporary work of this sort in combination with petty theft and low-level work in the drug business since he was fifteen years old. Although he reported serving as a lookout for some armed robberies in his late teens, most of his thefts were work-related. He was generally non-violent and avoided robberies after a few experiences:

Sly Landers: Most of the guys I did that with are dead or in jail now. I won't do that now. As you get older, the scenery changes.

His work in the drug business had included selling marijuana on the street and working as an attendant in heroin "shooting galleries." None of these endeavors, legal or illegal, alone or in combination, had ever yielded him much income. Both his legal and illegal work had always been irregular and poorly paid. Though he had never been a heroin addict, he described himself as having been a borderline alcoholic and heavy user of marijuana and hallucinogens for several years.

During the period of several months over which he was in contact with the Project, he continued this pattern of gaining income. He first left the furniture store and worked through a temporary agency steadily for about four months, still supplementing his income with on-the-job theft when possible. After a quarrel with the agency, he began working for two local "stores." One establishment sold marijuana and the other took numbers bets and sold marijuana, food, and "bootleg" liquor (commercially produced but sold without a license and usually after hours). He obtained these jobs on the basis of being known as a neighborhood regular, even though he had only lived in the area for a few months. His working shifts at these establishments were at night and paid about forty dollars for eight hours work, untaxed. This rate of pay was better than the minimum wage (\$3.35/hr. or \$26.80 before taxes) paid at the temporary agency, although the availability of work varied from seven to two nights a week and he had to worry about being

robbed, burned out, or arrested. Neither as careless a worker as Juice Baker nor as ambitious and upwardly mobile as Sky Wilson, Sly Landers treated both low-wage legitimate jobs and low-wage tasks in the drug business as interchangeable, short-term employment.

The experiences of these individuals in the drug business contrasts sharply with the experience of younger individuals engaged in predatory crimes. Both stealing and dealing are viable ways of gaining income, but dealing, unlike stealing, or at least the relatively unorganized and spontaneous stealing typically committed by teenagers, can be sustained over time. Whereas youthful stealing relatively quickly saturates the environment and becomes less possible with increasing age and involvement, selling drugs can lead to sustained and expanding income opportunities. The material presented here has examined the sequencing of youthful predations and drug selling experiences within individual careers and has identified several aspects of technique and social organization which help to account for these career patterns.

#### H. Hamilton Park: Crime

The field contacts in Hamilton Park were among a group of youths who had all grown up together in the neighborhood and who represented a cross section of the several different ethnic sections, principally Irish, Italian, and Polish, which make up this neighborhood. These youths also tended to live in the geographical center of the neighborhood where the more established and affluent residents live and where there is not such a strong concentration of single ethnic groups as on the borders of the neighborhood where there are heavily Italian and Polish areas.

Hamilton Park bears certain ecological similarities to La Barriada, particularly in the close proximity of residential buildings and factories which often co-exist within the same block. The Hamilton Park youths, however, did not live in an isolated part of the neighborhood but right near the intact and busy major shopping streets. Instead of the stone old-law tenements in La Barriada, the primary type of housing in Hamilton Park was that of wood-frame row houses many of which even pre-dated the old-law tenements.

Beyond these ecological similarities and differences, however, Hamilton Park differed greatly both from La Barriada and Projectville in economic level and social organization. Most of the households in which the Hamilton Park youths lived were supported by adult men who worked in relatively high-paying blue-collar jobs, with the addition of other income from working wives and children. Most families owned their own homes,

though the homes were not expensive and might belong to the eldest of three generations living on three different floors. The higher economic level of the neighborhood, the presence of adult men in most households, and the presence of well-organized church groups and block associations all contributed to a type of public order in this neighborhood quite different from that in the two poorer minority neighborhoods. Hamilton Park residents used both the police and informal social control methods to prevent and sanction the occurrence of street crimes within the neighborhood. As a result, Hamilton Park appeared in official police statistics as a low-crime neighborhood and had a reputation as a place where the streets were relatively safe both day and night.

The Project's observations and interviews, however, belie in many respects the neighborhood's reputation as a low-crime area. It is true that we found very few street robberies by local youths, but we also found a considerable amount of other types of crime among these youths, including some types of crime similar to those found in the other neighborhoods as well as some types of crime, notably those connected to local organized crime, which were not apparent in the other neighborhoods. As was noted earlier in this chapter, patterns of non-economically motivated violence were basically similar among all three neighborhoods. The Hamilton Park youths fought over their "turf" during their mid-teens just as often and just as violently as did the youths in the other neighborhoods. As they reached their later teens, they continued to fight in bars

and discos. They also participated in income-motivated crimes such as burglary, larceny, and even some robbery, which were ostensibly similar to the adolescent theft patterns found in the other neighborhoods.

Closer examination of their theft patterns, however, shows that the Hamilton Park youths differed from the youths in the other neighborhoods both in their motivations for and in the intensity of their involvements in economic crime, particularly during the mid-teen years. During the early and mid-teen years, the Hamilton Park youths did a certain amount of breaking into local factories and shoplifting from local stores. As they reached the ages of sixteen and seventeen, they also began to steal automobiles. None of them, however, went on to become involved in systematic theft as a primary source of income. By the mid-teen years, most of them were already working, even if only part-time and off-the-books. They were also earning better than minimum wage. Wages, not theft, provided their primary source of income during the mid-teen years. The way that they committed theft reflected this lack of dependence on stealing for income. Thrills rather than the pursuit of income often seemed to dominate their motives for breaking into factories, stealing cars and occasionally mugging Polish immigrants. Those who did steal for profit were more likely to do so from the workplace, which they were able to do because, unlike the minority youths, they were employed during the mid-teens. As they reached their later teens, some of them did in fact come to rely on illegal sources of income, as a supplement



rather than substitute for wages, but these sources of illegal income were from drug selling and doing "errands" for local adult organized crime figures rather than from the high-risk, low-return thefts so prevalent among the minority youths.

The rest of this section presents the age-graded progression of involvements of the Hamilton Park youths in burglary, robbery, auto theft, work related theft, drug selling, and organized crime. These crime patterns are analyzed in terms of their contribution to individual and household income at various points in the life cycle, the neighborhood's specific structure of illegal opportunity, and the similarities and differences between these patterns and those found in the other neighborhoods.

The initial experiences of Hamilton Park youths with factory burglary were quite similar to the experiences of the La Barriada youths. Like the La Barriada youths, the Hamilton Park youths also lived quite near many factories and their first exploratory break-ins were often carried out as much in a spirit of play as in pursuit of income. Most of the Hamilton Park youths interviewed admitted breaking into factories occasionally when they were around the ages of thirteen to fifteen:

Peter Murphy: When I was younger, I never used to, like, get into sports. I always used to climb roofs and hang out. Down right around my block there are factories. I used to climb roofs, go into some of them, sometimes, you know, rob some things.

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Charlie Gaberewski: You go down the street from where I live and there's where the lots and factories

are. I know the rules over there like a book. There's this one trucking company, we used to hang out in the trailers during the winter and outside during the summer and we used to climb around on the roofs all smashed out of our minds, drinking and smoking or sometimes, you know, take a little mescaline or acid. One time we were running around and one of my friends fell through the skylight and we got a rope to pull him out and he goes "I don't want to leave. There's toys down here, bicycles, everything." So we tied up the rope and we were pullin' the stuff up through the roof.

Int.: What did you do with it?

CG: We sold most of it. Some of it, the big guys came and stole it from us. We sold some of it right on the street: "Hey, you want a bicycle frame, ten dollars. . . ."

These accounts reveal the same sort of mixture of expressive and economic motives found in the accounts of initial factory break-ins by the La Barriada youths, only the expressive component seems if anything more pronounced in these cases. Comparison of later developments among the two groups reveal even more pronounced differences. Whereas the La Barriada youths went on to commit systematic burglaries in pursuit of income and developed specialized criminal methods and skills, the Hamilton Park youths were deriving most of their income from wages during these same mid-teen years and did not develop into systematic burglars. Besides the fact that they had alternative sources of income, the Hamilton Park youths were also constrained differently by the local social control environment. In their neighborhood there existed little of the social separation between local residents and factory owners and managers that characterized La Barriada. Many of these managers lived right in the neighborhood and knew the local

youths. As a result they had access to local sources of information. Some incidents recorded in the field material show how factory personnel used this information to sanction local youths who had gone too far in their break-ins.

Peter Murphy and his friends were identified by the owner of a factory which burned after the youths had left a lit candle behind them:

Peter Murphy: When I was about twelve, I almost got arrested for a fire. Me and Mike and Billy lit it. Billy ratted on us. The guy that owned the factory said "I'll give you a hundred bucks if you tell me who did that." So Billy told him it was me.

Int.: The guy who owned the factory, he lived right there in the neighborhood?

PM: Yeah, right around the corner from me. The factory was right there too. So, Billy said it was me. I went to my uncle, he's a cop, not in the precinct here, but he knows everybody there. So my uncle said, "Ah, you did it," and I told him Billy did it too and my uncle went to the guy and told him that. So Billy ended up getting blamed for it. I think Mike got away.

This incident reveals two kinds of differences between the local social control environment in Hamilton Park and the social control environments in the other two neighborhoods. Not only were Hamilton Park residents more willing and able to use the criminal justice system to control youth crime, youths who were in trouble were also more able to influence the criminal justice system through personal ties. In this instance, the confrontation between victim and offender ended in a stalemate. The very fact that the offender was identified and had to resist sanctions, however, demonstrates the greater effec-

tiveness of the Hamilton Park social control environment in comparison to those of the other two neighborhoods.

Another incident in which local youths were sanctioned following a factory burglary shows yet another side of the social control environment:

Field Notes: Carl Deutsch and his brother's girlfriend and I went out to the park. We were sitting on some benches when Carl's friend Kenny came up to us and told us about an incident that had happened a couple of weeks before. He said that he had been walking home from work when a couple of guys ran out of a factory and grabbed him. They accused him of robbing their factory and they forced him inside. He said one of them hit him in the face and another started beating him with a stick. He showed us a big bruise under his arm where he caught one of the blows from the stick. Finally, he managed to raise some doubt in their minds that it had really been him and they asked him if he knew another guy. He said he knew the guy but didn't hang out with him. They put him in a van and made him take them to where the other guy was hanging out, jumped out and grabbed him. Then they went back to the factory, tied this guy up and started hoisting him up by his feet. They told Carl's friend to get lost.

Once they have identified the offender through local information networks, Hamilton Park residents are quite as likely to exercise informal sanctions as they are to use the criminal justice system. Another incident in the field material also concerns a would-be burglar who was hung by his heels, this time from a lamppost near the Italian section of the neighborhood:

Field Notes: Charlie told me the guy was badly beaten and nearly unconscious when they found him. Charlie said that the mafia is quiet over there, but when someone tries them, to see if they're still around, they find out the hard way that they are.

Still other field notes record the offering of a \$1,000 reward by a local social club after they were burglarized, together with the assurance that no police would be involved.

As a result both of effective formal and informal social control and of the availability of safer alternative sources of income, both legal and illegal, none of the Hamilton Park youths developed into systematic burglars of the local factories. Most of the accounts of factory break-ins concern only early to mid-teen experiences and are characterized by a predominance of expressive over economic motivations. After a few experiences with the ability of local factory owners to discover and sanction break-ins, most youths desisted.

Accounts of auto theft by the Hamilton Park youths follow this same general pattern. Several of them reported having stolen cars, but they did so mainly for joyriding:

Charlie Gaberewski: One year, we were about sixteen, seventeen, this guy Mark started stealing cars, and, everybody else started stealing with him and shit like that, right, and finally he got caught and everybody else stopped. Like everybody learned his lesson.

Int: So what did you do when you stole cars?

CG: Just cruise around. Some cars were nice, some were shitty. Most of the time you steal a shitty car because that's the one you can get into. We weren't professional or anything like that. Like we'd steal one car and take a ride out on Long Island, then steal another one there, leave the first one, and bring that one back and drive it around here for awhile. Sometimes you'd make out on a deal, like, take the radio, the spare tire, sell them. That guy Mark did it for profit most of the time, until he got caught.

This pattern of auto theft differs from that described in La Barriada, in which initial experiences with joyriding quickly developed into systematic theft for profit, the development of specialized criminal skills, and connection to regular buyers of stolen cars and parts. There is one reference in the field notes to an organized auto theft operation in the Hamilton Park neighborhood. Charlie Gaberewski said that he knew of such an operation but that it was very quiet, specialized in very expensive cars, and did not involve teenagers. He was unsure whether or not it had any connection to "the mafia."

Although their criminal activities did not generally include street robbery, in striking contrast to the crime patterns in the other two neighborhoods, the Hamilton Park youths did engage in one specific kind of person-to-person predation. Hamilton Park has a sub-population of very recent and frequently undocumented immigrants from Eastern Europe, mostly but not exclusively from Poland. Even though many of the youths we interviewed were themselves the grandchildren of earlier immigrants from Poland, they referred to the recent immigrants as "refugees" and "polacks" and sometimes beat and robbed them, knowing that undocumented aliens are unlikely to go to the police. These attacks on immigrants generally occurred on weekends when the immigrants, often men living several persons to a room in order to save money and send for their families, made themselves easy targets by getting very drunk and staggering down the streets with a week's pay in cash in their pockets. Local youths moving from bar to bar themselves preyed upon the immigrants:

Pete Calderone: There's a lot of dumb polacks in my neighborhood, I mean dumb because they're just from Poland, they don't know any better about anything in America. They drink a lot. They become targets to get hit on Friday, Saturday night. You know, you see a drunken polack, always have a lot of money. Don't have to do much to them, just grab him from behind, grab his wallet . . . a lot of guys are into that.

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Int: Do a lot of people get ripped off in this neighborhood?

Charlie Gaberewski: It's not like everybody gets ripped off, it's just these stupid polacks. They work all week and then they go out on the weekend with a full paycheck and they get smashed, out their mind, where they can't even walk no more. They're sitting there on the stoop, three or four kids walk by, say "Hey, you got a dollar?" He takes out a wad of bills, you gonna take them you know. I did it a couple of times myself, like last year. Like I didn't even need the money. You get a little stoned and shit like that, just hanging out and this stupid polack walks by, just for being stupid he gets beat up. While you're there, you take his money.

Although this kind of behavior was characteristic of Hamilton Park youths in their late teens, the predominance of expressive over economic motivations recalls their factory burglaries in their early and mid-teens and differs from the more systematic, income-motivated robberies reported by youths in the other two neighborhoods. It is essentially similar, however, to the robberies of Hispanic undocumented aliens reported by the La Barriada youths during the period when they had begun to de-intensify and become more selective about their income-motivated crimes after they began to get jobs in their later teens.

The patterns of burglary, auto theft, and robbery just described among Hamilton Park youths all differed from osten-

sibly similar crimes in the other neighborhoods in that the Hamilton Park youths were less motivated by purely economic considerations and did not continue to engage in these crimes on a systematic basis as a substitute for employment. This does not mean, however, that they did no more stealing after their mid-teens, only that they did not become involved in high-risk, low-return street crimes as a primary source of income. Some of them such as Pete Calderone and Charlie Gaberewski did in fact claim that they no longer stole. Others such as Barney and Teddy Haskell described themselves as unlikely to steal unless they just happened across a particularly good opportunity. Most of them who engaged in theft after the age of sixteen stole not on the street but from the workplace, a crime pattern to be discussed below. One faction among them, however, did engage in a series of highly risky burglaries of jewelry stores when they were around the age of seventeen. The activities of this group bear the closest resemblance to the patterns of systematic theft found in the other two neighborhoods. Even in the case of this group, however, expressive motivations play a large role. Whereas the burglary, larceny, and robbery patterns described for the other two neighborhoods involved a wide cross section of local youths, these jewelry store burglaries among the Hamilton Park group involved only a few youths who were among the most violent and also the heaviest users of drugs in the neighborhood. Also, unlike the minority youths whose peak involvement in theft occurred before they had entered the labor market, the Hamilton Park jewelry



store burglars were active after they had had several legitimate jobs, although they were unemployed at the time. Peter Murphy and Brian Grady were the two youths interviewed who were part of these burglaries. Their accounts suggest considerable personal disorientation as a result of heavy drug use and also downplay the economic motive:

Peter Murphy: I got arrested five times that summer. That was the worst year of my life. The last time I got busted was the worst. We went into Manhattan. I was high on Quaaludes, did two, then another one. I don't know why I went that time. I had a whole bunch of change in my pockets. I went to jail with \$50 in my pockets. Plus, when we busted the window I stuck my head under the glass and a big piece fell down on my neck and I was bleeding all over the place. I couldn't even find my way back to the car, so the other guys left without me.

Peter Murphy's and Brian Grady's willingness to take greater risks than the rest of their peers was evident not only in these daring commercial burglaries but also in other aspects of their behavior. Peter Murphy was the heaviest drug user of the entire group. He had been taken to the hospital several times after overdoses of barbiturates and had been in and out of drug programs since his mid-teens. Brian Grady came from a family with a criminal tradition. His father had spent several years in prison for an armored car robbery and had given his son a gun for his eighteenth birthday. That same day, Brian Grady shot two people in a distant neighborhood. The shootings were not part of a robbery or other income-motivated crime. Both youths had acquired and enjoyed reputations for being the wildest, most dangerous, and most unpredictable young men in the neighborhood.

The final pattern of youthful theft encountered in the Hamilton Park neighborhood was that of work-related theft. Unlike the jewelry store robberies, but like the exploratory factory burglaries and weekend muggings of immigrants, work-related theft was common behavior among most of the youths interviewed as well as among many adults in the neighborhood. Work-related theft differs substantially from most of the theft patterns described thus far for this and the other neighborhoods. Work-related theft in La Barriada, for example, was the crime pattern that those youths grew into as they grew out of the high-risk street crimes of their jobless mid-teens. Work-related theft is generally much less risky than street crime, since it is frequently not discovered and, even when it is discovered, may not be sanctioned through the criminal justice system. Employers have more immediate sanctions at their disposal in their ability to fire employees who steal. Despite the predominance of youths among arrests for theft, it is likely that the bulk of theft is committed by adult workers rather than by youths.

Since they had access to more employment at earlier ages, the Hamilton Park youths also had more opportunity to steal from the job. Work-related theft began for them in their mid-teens. The earliest recorded instance in the notes concerned two brothers, Otto and Carl Deutsch, who kept all the proceeds from the paper route they had when Otto was only ten years old. They told their boss they had been robbed and relinquished the job. Several years later, they continued to evaluate their various jobs for potential theft opportunities:

Field Notes: Otto told me he used to work in a factory which made fancy baby clothes. I asked if he ever had a chance to take anything while he was working there. He said that the security was too tight at that place. Then he told me that his brother was working in a clothing factory in Manhattan, one that made nice velours and other things. He said his brother had been cleaning up selling velours he brings home from work.

Not all jobs, as this example shows, offer the same opportunities for theft. The kinds of jobs held by Hamilton Park residents, both youths and older people, however, are often the kinds of blue-collar jobs that involve handling merchandise and thus do present good opportunities for theft. Barney Haskell worked for a few weeks during the research period on a truck that delivered meat products. Each evening he went around the neighborhood asking people he knew if they wanted to buy canned hams. Brian Grady worked in an auto shop before he embarked on his jewelry store burglaries and used to steal hub caps and auto parts from his employer. The traffic in stolen goods in Hamilton Park was pervasive though not as open as in La Barriada where youths and also older heroin addicts used to peddle their goods openly in the street.

Although the Project did not concentrate its research on the older residents of the neighborhood, some data do suggest that work-related theft is as common among older residents as among employed youths. Otto Deutsch's sister-in-law, a woman in her late twenties with a five-year-old daughter, came home from work one day lamenting the fact that the inventory procedures at her retail job had just been tightened up:

Field Notes: She said that she could have fixed up the paperwork in such a way as to be able to ship large amounts of goods to her friends and relatives without the company finding out about it. She had been working there such a short time, however, that she was afraid to risk it. Now the company was starting to become more strict in their accounting.

The field data from Hamilton Park confirm the conclusions of other researchers (Klockars, 1974) that theft is endemic to many blue-collar work roles. As such, work-related theft is more properly seen as a crime typical of adults than one typical of teenagers. The Hamilton Park youths had much more access to this type of theft simply because they had more access to employment.

The accounts of income-motivated crimes committed by the Hamilton Park youths thus far have all dealt with various forms of theft and have demonstrated that, although most of the youths have stolen, few of them have ever depended on theft as a steady source of income but rather indulge in the less risky forms of theft when opportunities arise. By far the major source of illegal income for these youths derived not from theft but from selling drugs. Drug selling in Hamilton Park as in the other neighborhoods was a form of illegal enterprise which, unlike most youthful theft, involved the recruitment of youthful workers by adult entrepreneurs. The remainder of this section examines first drug selling and then other forms of adult-recruited illegal enterprise by youths.

The selling and consuming of illegal drugs were quite as pervasive in Hamilton Park as in the other two neighborhoods, although they took place in a quite different social control

environment. Like the youths interviewed in the other neighborhoods, the Hamilton Park youths consumed mostly marijuana. The Hamilton Park youths, however, also consumed a wide variety of other drugs that were not as common in the other neighborhoods. These included amphetamines, hallucinogens, barbiturates, and PCPs ("angel dust"). As in the other neighborhoods, a number of slightly older residents, men in their middle to late twenties, were heroin addicts. By the end of the research period, some of the youths interviewed, most of whom were in their late teens, were also beginning to use heroin, in contrast to the groups in the minority neighborhoods which included no heroin users.

Despite the pervasive use of drugs in Hamilton Park, and the apparently greater variety of drugs used, however, public drug use and drug sales were vigorously sanctioned by local residents acting both informally as well as through organized community groups and the local police. Observations and interviews in the neighborhood indicate an ongoing struggle in progress for several years between local youths and older residents over these issues. Several youths described to us the history of one of the local parks:

Field Notes: While I was walking down the avenue Friday night, I ran into Teddy Haskell, Carl and Jake Deutsch. They had been inside the bar there and come outside to smoke a joint as they usually do. It was raining slightly so they had to stand under an awning. They started telling me about the park across the street. Jake said that about ten years ago the park had been "very cool." All the kids used to hang out there with their radios all blaring the same station in unison, about fifty radios in all. At that

time, the park was the biggest drug marketplace in the area. Some people they knew had made a lot of money there. Apparently, after a couple of years of this, the local community decided to crack down and the local police started to come down hard. One of the biggest dealers even had the FBI after him, quit dealing, and joined the Hare Krishnas in Manhattan.

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Pete Calderone: Right now the cops are being real hard-ass. I guess it's because people in the neighborhood want to straighten things out. You could be hanging out on the corner now just drinking a beer and the cops'll come along and give you a summons, take you down to the station. You walk out, rip it up, it's a hassle.

Int: Is this pressure from the police recent?

PC: It was always like that but now it's really heavy. Block associations, coalitions, civilian patrol, you know, you're hanging out on the corner, your neighbors make a complaint. So that's it, people getting on their backs, the cops get on our backs, they're just doing their jobs.

At the time of the field research, the situation in Hamilton Park with regard to public drinking, drug sales, and drug use was something of a stalemate. The teenagers still used the parks for these activities but they did not dominate the parks. David Henry, whose mother was actively involved in the block associations even though he and his brother had sold marijuana and amphetamines in the local parks, described the changes in one section of the park:

David Henry: They used to call it needle park over there, my own brother OD'd there a couple of times. My mother still calls it that, "needle park." She says, "What are you hanging out in needle park for?" I say, "It ain't needle park." When I was there, there was no needles. That was in the sixties. Now, forget about it, it's all baby carriages.

The Project's observations showed the absence of heroin addicts and the presence of both mothers with small children and groups of teenagers taking and exchanging soft drugs, each group keeping to one end of the small park.

Not only did the teenagers not dominate the parks, they engaged in continual shifts in the location of their activities in order to avoid periodic police sweeps. The youths' special nemesis was one particular police officer by the name of O'Connor who had embarked on a personal crusade against public drinking, drug use and drug selling:

Charlie Gaberewski: You know, I've done a few things, but I never really got caught by the cops. I'm too sneaky. The only times have been this guy O'Connor. He's a real big guy, he's enormous, and he's a boxer so nobody wants to fuck with him. You could be hanging out and drinkin', you see the cop car, everybody throws their beers away. So one day I was sittin' by the checker tables, we didn't see him come up, he sneaks up behind us, and then, you can't throw the beer right in front of his face, he'll get you for littering too. He dumped the beer out on us that time and says, "I'm giving you a warning. My name's O'Connor, and I'm telling you I'm cleaning up this park." Everybody laughed at him when he got back in his car. But, after that, if he caught you just sittin' next to a beer, he'd take you all the way down to the station, just to give you a summons. Nobody pays 'em. It's just to ruin your night, that's what it is. I remember he brought down a paddy wagon and loaded everybody into it. That's bad news.

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Field Notes: As I was coming out of the hamburger place, I saw a police car on the corner with three teenaged boys crowded around it. The cops were giving them a summons for drinking in public. It was a game to them. They were all trying to hide their beers so they could salvage them after the police left. One of them told me after he was trying to hide his "cheeb" (as he called his marijuana) under a car. They were all familiar with the game: the

first summons is a \$5 fine, the second time it's \$25. Two of them said they had over \$200 in fines, which they had never paid and had no intention of paying. I asked them if one of these cops was O'Connor. They said no, it wasn't his time on duty (they knew his schedule), but that he had started this aggressiveness by the cops and the others had followed his lead.

Another sign of local efforts to limit public drug selling was the absence of the "reefer stores" or storefronts selling marijuana. No such establishments existed within the neighborhood. One bar sold small amounts for a while and a pizza stand did so for a very short while, but both were rapidly closed down by the police. Unlike the minority youths, who usually bought marijuana and pills from storefronts, (in La Barriada right on their block and in Projectville a few blocks away from the projects), the Hamilton Park youths made their purchases either in the parks when the police were absent or privately through personal networks. A few reefer stores did exist past the edge of Hamilton Park bordering an adjacent, much poorer Hispanic neighborhood. The Hamilton Park youths only patronized these establishments when their local sources went dry.

The drug selling involvements of the Hamilton Park youths were shaped both by this social control environment and by the context of their other economic opportunities. Unlike the youths from Projectville and La Barriada who worked in the reefer stores and travelled into Manhattan to sell "loose joints" in the streets and parks to office workers, the Hamilton Park youths did most of their selling in the context of their own neighborhood, either in the parks between police



sweeps or in their own homes where they often encountered conflicts with their parents. Some also sold at their jobs. During the summer, when many people from Hamilton Park went to their bungalows near the municipal beaches, much of the traffic moved to the beaches. None of these youths worked in reefer stores, and none of them sold full-time on the streets of Manhattan, though a couple of them did a little selling in the Manhattan parks on their lunch breaks from work.

Although most of the Hamilton Park youths interviewed had sold marijuana and/or pills on more than an occasional basis, most of them did so while they also held legitimate jobs. Although their profits from drug selling were considerably more regular than those from their occasional acts of theft, the income gained served as a supplement to rather than a substitute for wages. The consignment system evident in Projectville also existed here though it was not as prevalent. The Hamilton Park youths more often were expected to pay their wholesalers in advance. Since they depended on their wages for front money, their drug selling could suffer during times of unemployment, rather than expanding to fill the gap.

The Project's most detailed documentation of this pattern of drug selling as a supplement to wages focused on Otto Deutsch. He and his girlfriend Bonnie O'Brien were both working when first contacted by the Project. Together they bought from one-quarter to one-half pound of marijuana a week which Otto resold in smaller quantities, making as much as fifty to one-hundred dollars profit or perhaps only enough to support

their own consumption. At this point, Otto was only working part-time and devoting part-time to selling. When first contacted, they were trying to save enough money to buy larger amounts and "get a good start" on their competitors by being the first ones in the park with plentiful supplies of good marijuana for the first warm days of the spring. Shortly afterward, Otto lost his job and his marijuana selling suffered for a couple of weeks, during which time he only sold when he managed to get one quarter pound on consignment. Otto then found a good, full-time job doing building maintenance work. Not only did he now have the front money to sell again, he also was working the night shift. It was now summer, and he began going to the beach during the day. He greatly increased his sales, though he had some trouble at his new job as a result of burning the candle at both ends. He and his girlfriend had a falling out during this period, but they continued to put their money together on marijuana deals. Several months later, after they had become reconciled, they quit both consuming and selling marijuana and withdrew from the street scene.

Many of the other youths interviewed reported similar patterns of low volume sales, sometimes during periods of unemployment, more often during employment, as a secondary earning strategy to that of pursuing and maintaining employment. The field data on the selling activities of other individuals is not as detailed as that for Otto Deutsch, but most of the youths interviewed had engaged in selling marijuana or pills at some time. Charlie Gaberewski and John Gutski sold marijuana

and amphetamines respectively on their lunch breaks from their jobs in Manhattan. David Henry had sold marijuana extensively while he stayed with a brother and worked in a supermarket in California for two years. He returned to Hamilton Park only when he got into a dangerous dispute over a drug deal. When interviewed, he was between jobs and selling fairly regularly in the local parks with Carl Pollini. Neither Henry nor Pollini had had much experience with theft. John Gutski claimed that he had occasionally made profits of over a thousand dollars selling "angel dust." Despite Gutski's reputation for exaggeration, several other youths also confirmed that "angel dust" was only sporadically available and highly popular, with the result that they could make a lot of money if they could get it. Although observations in the local bars revealed considerable use of heroin and cocaine in the neighborhood, most of this use and traffic did not involve the youths in their late teens who confined their activities to marijuana and pills.

These youths were all about nineteen years of age during this period, but the field data also indicate similar patterns of drug selling among slightly older people. In fact, the youths in their late teens made some of their best deals by connecting slightly older, more stably employed neighborhood residents to suppliers. The youths in their late teens had more experience with drugs and more connections to suppliers while the older people had more money to invest:

Field Notes: I saw Austin today. He told me that yesterday he made an easy fifty bucks. He had set up Joe, the guy who runs the corner grocery, to buy five pounds. I was surprised when I heard who the buyer was. Joe is a really clean-cut guy, about twenty-seven years old. Apparently he doesn't even smoke pot, because Austin said he brought along two 16-year-olds to test it for him.

Another individual who sometimes bought marijuana from the youths in their late teens was a friend of Charlie Gaberewski named Jesse Grandin who was twenty-six years old, a postal employee, and who supported his wife and two small children. He sold as much as twenty pounds a week. He also consumed some but claimed that he sold in order to supplement his income.

This pattern of selling regularly but at a relatively low volume and as a sideline to legitimate employment was the more common pattern among the Hamilton Park youths. Two individuals, however, were more heavily involved. Teddy Haskell and Brian Grady appeared to depend on drug sales as a major source of income. Both these individuals came from families with crime traditions and themselves were involved in other aspects of professional and organized crime. Grady and Haskell controlled one section of a local park where most of the day in and day out traffic occurred, in between police sweeps. Otto Deutsch's younger brother Carl was a close friend of these two who also sold drugs himself, yet Carl Deutsch was not allowed to sell in their section of the park unless he was working for them. At various times, Haskell and Grady, both nineteen years old, also had youths of about sixteen working for them. During the period of field research, Haskell was "employed" part-time in a job that also involved other kinds of crime and Grady was

unemployed, having been in and out of drug programs for several years. Both of them appeared to depend on drug sales as a major source of income and were involved in other illegal activities as well. Both also began using heroin toward the end of the research period.

Brian Grady's and Teddy Haskell's greater dependence on illegal income in comparison to their peers also reflected their family backgrounds. Both youths came from families which mixed legal and illegal income to a greater extent than the families of the other Hamilton Park youths. Brian Grady's father had served several years in prison for armored car robbery and had sold cocaine, though in large quantities and not at the street level. As mentioned earlier, he had given his son a gun for his eighteenth birthday which Brian promptly used to shoot two people. In this case, the son's involvement in drug dealing, drug abuse, and random violence seems to have grown more out of his father's example than out of his father's direct encouragement. The father did not approve of his son's wildness and took back the gun after the shootings. The father also did not approve of his son's street-level drug dealing.

In the case of Teddy Haskell, however, the family tradition was one of organized rather than professional crime. Both Teddy Haskell and his brother Barney had sources of illegal income that were directly provided for them through family connections. These illegal activities did not involve drugs. In fact, the Haskells' father strongly disapproved of drug use and did not like his son's selling in the park, even though some of the father's friends also did higher level drug deals.

The Haskells' father had been a construction worker for many years but had carried gambling slips when he was younger. He still retained many of his associations from those days, and the crime opportunities he passed along to his sons were those associated with such traditional organized crime activities as gambling, loan sharking, fraud, and violence for hire. Such crime opportunities were not present in the other two study neighborhoods. The more organized forms of crime in those neighborhoods were auto theft, in La Barriada, and drug selling, in Projectville. Both the auto theft and the drug selling operations described in those neighborhoods involved relatively loose and low levels of organization and constant shifts in location in response to constant pressure from the police. The organized crime operations in Hamilton Park, in contrast, were those associated with more established crime organizations of the sort known in the neighborhood and elsewhere as "the mafia." These activities were rarely even known to the police. Hamilton Park did not have a reputation as a major center for this sort of activity, and most youths interviewed knew of it only indirectly.

Both the Haskell brothers had had a weekly "job" carrying gambling slips, as their father had done when he was younger. Barney Haskell had also worked as a debt collector in the same gambling operation, a job for which he was qualified by virtue of his experience as a boxer:

Barney Haskell: I used to run numbers and collect a little money.

Int: Was that for the Italians?

BH: Yeah. I used to collect money for them. Me and this other guy. Like, if you owed \$50 and you didn't wanna pay, we'd have to talk to you.

Int: How did they pick you for these jobs?

BH: See, I used to box a lot . . .

Int: So you were well known?

BH: Yeah, but see, I'm not a troublemaker. I don't look for fights, but, if they come, fuck it . . .

Int: So how come you stopped running numbers and collecting?

BH: I'm getting older now, not that I'm old, but when you go in front of a judge . . . if you get caught doing anything, he's not gonna look at you if you're sixteen.

Barney was the older of the two brothers and had passed on the job of carrying gambling slips to his brother Teddy, two years his junior, when he became too old. This task involved only a few minutes each week and paid a regular seventy-five dollars.

Besides the Haskell brothers, only one other youth interviewed reported involvements of this sort. John Gutski had been recruited for similar activities through his association with a social club operated by his brother-in-law. Unlike Barney Haskell, Gutski was very much a "troublemaker" who was involved during his mid-teens in peer-recruited theft, including armed robbery, and violent fights. He reported having been recruited for various assignments while hanging out at a local social club. At this point he was still in his mid-teens and also involved in occasional peer recruited burglaries:

John Gutski: I used to rob cars too.

Int: What do you mean?

JG: I did insurance jobs for a lot of rich people. I got paid good. \$200, \$300, \$500. Used to rob the cars, drive 'em to the river, dump 'em in the river.

Int: How did you get hooked up with these people?

JG: I got connections, the mafia, dope dealers, people who are into anything that's illegal. I used to have a club, like a social club, it was my brother-in-law's but I used to have some money in it too, the money I made from angel dust. Anyway, most of the time, whenever they wanted me they used to come to me there. Like, most of the time I used to make my money with fighting. They used to tell me, "Here's \$50. Go fuck up this guy." I used to say, alright, get the address, go right to the door with two or three guys, beat the shit out of him. Walk out. There's a lot of bookies I know, they take bets, numbers, this, that, sometimes people don't pay. . . . One time this lady gave me \$400 to beat up this guy who had been bothering her. We went up to him, four of us and said, "Look, if you ever bother her again, you're dead." Then we beat him up.

John Gutski had gotten into serious trouble at the age of sixteen, having been arrested on various charges of robbery, burglary, and assault. He had received probation and left the country for a few months to visit relatives in Europe. Since his return, he had largely ceased participation in these violent, income-motivated crimes and confined his illegal activities to occasional and largely inept drug dealing.

Although Barney Haskell ceased his involvements in violence for hire before he was ever arrested and John Gutski did not cease his involvements until after, their places in the organization of these illegal enterprises were essentially similar. As in the cases of auto theft operations in La Barriada and drug selling in Projectville, teenagers carried



out the riskiest and most exposed jobs in enterprises organized by adults. When the youths became too vulnerable to the police and courts, either because of accumulating sanctions or simply because they had gotten too old to expect leniency, they were replaced with younger operatives.

Whether or not any of these youths with experience at the lower levels of organized crime are likely to advance to higher levels is difficult to assess. John Gutski's generally wild and unpredictable behavior did not make him a likely candidate, and, in fact, his crime opportunities appeared to be diminishing rather than increasing as his reputation for personal disorientation and untrustworthiness grew. The Haskells were more businesslike but also had more opportunities for legitimate employment. Barney Haskell was a full-time college student and his brother Teddy had been promised an opening in the construction unions by their father. Teddy Haskell was the most likely of the three to continue into adult crime, depending on the progress of his heroin use. Besides his extensive involvement with drug dealing, Teddy Haskell also sold guns. He also worked with his cousin in a business that involved quite a bit of illegal activity:

Field Notes: Teddy told me that he is now working with his cousin. He said that the business they're in is a real scam. They service fire extinguishers for businesses, only they spend most of their time ripping people off. Customers pay them \$60 to \$80 to take care of each fire extinguisher, but sometimes all they do is take them outside to the truck, wipe them off and take them back in. Besides that, the cousin buys replacements that are hot from some people he knows. Then Teddy started telling me about

all the times they have ripped off customers. He said the first thing they do when they go into an establishment is to check out the office. They go through purses, drawers, open safes. They look for hiding spots, pry open desks, closets, sealed boxes, drawers, and so on. Teddy describes his cousin as a great "bullshitter." If someone disturbs them as they are casing a place, the cousin just starts trying to sell him fire extinguisher service. More often than not, they make more money stealing than from the actual work they do. Sometimes the places they go to service extinguishers are chosen more on the basis of opportunities for rip-offs than for the likelihood that they need their extinguishers serviced. He told me about one time they almost ripped off a butcher for \$1,800 in cash. The butcher thought Teddy's cousin was the guy from the meat plant and handed him the receipt to sign for the cash just as the real guy walked in. Of course, they realized that this guy was trying to rip them off, but there was nothing they could do about it.

Even in this case, however, Teddy Haskell seemed dissatisfied with working for his cousin. Sometimes he made good money, but the work was too irregular and he disliked waiting by the phone to hear if he would get work each day. If the Haskell brothers do continue with adult crime, it seems more likely that their criminal activities will be a sideline to legitimate jobs, as has been the case with their father, rather than full-time membership in organized crime.

Despite these various criminal involvements, few of the Hamilton Park youths interviewed had ever spent more than a few days in jail. Their ability to escape serious consequences for their acts was in part the result of the types of crimes in which they engaged. For the most part, they did not become involved in repeated high-risk street crimes as did many of the youths in the poorer, minority neighborhoods. The minority youths also were able to escape serious consequences for their

first few acts of theft but encountered arrest, conviction, and jail or probation as they continued to pursue theft as a major source of income. The Hamilton Park youths did not generally become so deeply involved in these types of crime since they had more income available to them from employment. Their income-motivated crimes tended towards safer enterprises like drug selling. If they did steal, they did so either in response to a good opportunity, or on the job, where theft is less likely to be sanctioned through the criminal justice system.

Besides these differences in the types and levels of their criminal activity, they also had resources for dealing with the criminal justice system that were not available to the youths in the other neighborhoods. When they did get caught, they sought to manipulate the system and they were often successful in doing so. The resources that they used for this purpose were of two sorts: money and personal connections.

Although Hamilton Park residents were not wealthy, they were considerably better off economically than the residents of La Barriada and Projectville. The families of the Hamilton Park youths generally owned their own homes and had some money in the bank. As a result, their children were able to make bail and hire private attorneys. John Gutski and Brian Grady, for example, were the Hamilton Park youths interviewed who had been most involved in theft and were the most similar to the youths from the other two neighborhoods in their criminal activities. Both Gutski and Grady were arrested for these

crimes. Gutski, at sixteen, faced charges of burglary, robbery and assault. Grady, at seventeen, faced several charges of burglary. Neither of them ever received an incarcerative sentence, and one reason was that they both were able to make bail, thus escaping the pressure to plead guilty to serious charges which confronted the incarcerated defendants from the other neighborhoods. They also knew how to find experienced criminal lawyers and were able to pay for them:

John Gutski: Yeah, I was in jail too, but I was only in there for a couple of weeks. Then I called up my sister and told her to bail me out 'cause I was going crazy. So she came and bailed me out.

Int: Did you have a private lawyer?

JG: Yeah, about \$3,000 I paid for that lawyer. I still owe money on that, I got to pay my sister off for that too.

Gutski actually spent two years on probation, the only Hamilton Park youth to report a felony conviction. Brian Grady cited legal expenses, rather than fear of incarceration, as his reason for ceasing to break into jewelry stores:

Brian Grady: That's why I stopped. Cost me too much money.

Int: You needed to hire a lawyer and all that?

BG: Yeah. A lawyer that my mother's friend knows. He used to be a DA, so he knew everybody in there. Still charged me \$1,000 you know, but if it was somebody else it woulda been \$2,000.

Perhaps even more potent than their financial resources for dealing with the criminal justice system, however, were their personal connections to criminal justice system person-

nel. When in trouble, many of them went immediately to relatives in the police force or the courts for advice and aid. When he was suspected of having burned down a local factory, Peter Murphy went to his uncle, a police officer in another precinct, who managed to get the blame turned around against Peter Murphy's associate who had also been involved and who had accused Murphy. The most extensive family connections to the criminal justice system were reported by the Haskell brothers:

Barney Haskell: We got it all wrapped up. My cousin's a cop, right? His brother's a district attorney. My other cousin was a lawyer in the Navy, now he's a lawyer out here. He just married a lawyer and he's gonna be a judge in another two years. All wrapped up. If any of us ever gets in trouble, my old man goes down to the precinct and works it out. He knows the captain; shit, the captain eats over my house.

In another instance, Otto Deutsch had an acquaintance who was something of a local legend for having stabbed a police officer and gotten away with it:

Field Notes: When we got into the park, Otto called for a friend of his to come over. I say friend, although Otto says he doesn't much like the guy. Anyway, the guy started telling us about the time he got busted a couple of months ago. He said the cops caught him with all kinds of drugs, including a big bag of mescaline. He got into a fight with them and slashed one of them with a knife. He started talking about his connections (Otto says "mafia" connections) and said that as a result he got all the drug charges thrown out and was only charged with assault. He felt very lucky.

Six months later, whenever this individual walked by, someone would comment about the fact that he was still walking down the street after having stabbed a cop.

Besides having direct family connections to the police and courts, some Hamilton Park youths were also able to gain leniency through neighborhood politicians. When David Henry was caught joyriding in a stolen car, his mother, head of a local block association, was able to get him released on recognizance. Barney Haskell was arrested, mistakenly, for arson while he was doing odd jobs for a man who had run for local office:

Barney Haskell: I was loadin' these cases when the cops came in and clapped handcuffs on me. My boss was a big man in politics, you know, and he starts yellin' "You take them cuffs off him unless you got a warrant to come in my place."

As a result of their resources and knowledge of the criminal justice system, Hamilton Park residents did not react passively to the workings of the criminal justice system. They used the system both to control their environment and also to fight back when they were themselves the objects of control. Teddy Haskell, after being beaten by a police officer in the course of an arrest occasioned by a drunken car chase, instituted a lawsuit for fifty thousand dollars which he seemed well on his way to winning. Several youths who had been the victims of Officer O'Connor's campaign to clean up the parks went to court to charge him with harassment:

Pete Calderone: A few of them have tried to bring him to court, like, say, "I got 18 summonses in one month, this guy is hassling me," and a few times it's worked. The judge says, "you're hassling people."

Despite its reputation as a low-crime neighborhood, Hamilton Park does in fact accommodate a certain amount of criminality from its youthful and other residents. The types and amounts and sequences of criminal involvements among its youths, however, differ considerably from those found in the other neighborhoods.

Conclusions: Continuities and Variations among the Study Neighborhoods in Youth Crime Patterns

This chapter has described how motivations and opportunities for illegal income are sequenced with age in three different neighborhood environments. Several features of these crime patterns are essentially similar among all three of the study neighborhoods. These continuities are as follows:

Levels and severity of non-economic violence. Although non-income-motivated crimes are not the focus of this research, the finding concerning the underlying similarity among the study neighborhoods in the prevalence of adolescent street fighting does establish a baseline from which to compare the extent to which youths from different neighborhoods then go on to apply violence to the pursuit of income. Since street fighting peaked well before the age of peak involvement in income-motivated crime and was equally common across the different neighborhoods, it must be assumed that all these youths had an equal capacity for violence. The fact that the youths from the two poorer, minority neighborhoods went on to participate in much more robbery must then be explained with reference to the context of their alternative legal and illegal opportunities for gaining income.

Common patterns of peer-recruited, exploratory theft during the early and middle teens. Most of the youths in all three neighborhoods had done some stealing between the ages of thirteen and sixteen. These exploratory acts of theft had several features in common. They were generally conceived and carried out within the context of the adolescent peer group and



not as a result of recruitment or direction by adults. These thefts generally occurred within a mile of the youths' residences. They involved at least two or more youths. The motivations for these early thefts involved some element of thrill seeking in addition to the pursuit of income.

Each neighborhood offered ready markets for stolen goods. Not only did youths from each neighborhood engage in exploratory acts of theft, they also all found that some local adults were willing to buy stolen goods. This indirect yet essential support for youthful theft provided one element of reinforcement for their stealing, without which these youths could not have progressed with age from stealing for thrills to stealing for profit.

Progression with age from "sneaky" forms of theft (burglary, larceny) in the early teens to robbery in the middle and late teens to drug dealing, work-related theft, and participation in adult-recruited and directed criminal operations in the later teens and thereafter. Although the proportion of local youths who became involved in each of the various crime types varied considerably among the neighborhoods, the progression in participation from one type to the next at various ages followed a uniform sequence, one influenced by differing opportunities, motivations and capacities associated with age. This progression forms an inverted U-shaped curve with respect to the application of violence to the pursuit of income. Younger teenagers are reluctant to engage in violent crimes for money because they have not yet developed sufficient capacity for

violence. Older and more professional criminals, who have developed considerable capacity for employing violence, apply this capacity as sparingly as possible in order not to interrupt "business." Peak involvement in street robbery, and other crimes that involve the regular use or threat of violence for relatively uncertain and low monetary returns, generally occurred in the middle to late teens.

The lack of broad-based neighborhood support for youthful theft and the eventual aging-out of street crime by the late teens. The three study neighborhoods differed considerably in the types and amounts of crime they would and could tolerate, but none of the neighborhoods easily tolerated the youthful thefts that typically occurred within a few blocks of the offender's residence. Such acts were universally feared, condemned, and sanctioned, with the result that even those youths who continued to pursue income from illegal enterprise as they reached their twenties shifted the types of crime they committed away from localized predation.

Beyond these common characteristics, the neighborhoods varied considerably in the amounts, types, and sequences of opportunities for local youths to gain illegal income. The single most striking difference among the neighborhoods in patterns of youth crime was the concentration in the two poor, minority neighborhoods of sustained involvement in high-risk, low-return theft as a primary source of income during the middle teens. This pattern was not only more prevalent in La

Barriada and Projectville than in Hamilton Park, it was in fact the common experience of most of the youths from those two neighborhoods whom we interviewed. The primary causes for this greater willingness of the Projectville and La Barriada youths to engage in desperate, highly exposed crimes for uncertain and meager monetary returns were the greater poverty of their households and the specific and severe lack of employment opportunities during these same mid-teen years. Although the Hamilton Park youths engaged in similar amounts of exploratory thefts during the early teens and similar amounts of non-economic violence, most of them did not go on to engage in regular acts of burglary, larceny, and robbery as a substitute for employment. For the Projectville and La Barriada youths, theft amounted to a short-term occupation that was their major source of income for a few months or years until their criminal activities eventually saturated their environment.

Besides this major difference among the neighborhood-specific youth crime patterns, this chapter has also documented a number of other differences among the neighborhoods. These differences are summarized here in terms of the comparative neighborhood characteristics introduced in Section C.

### 1. Ecology

The physical isolation of Projectville from factories, stores, and old, easily entered housing was related to a relative lack of burglary by local youths. The role of social organization in modifying the opportunities presented by the physical environment is evident in the different intensity of

involvement in factory burglary between cliques from La Barriada and Hamilton Park. Both these neighborhoods were characterized by close proximity of residential and industrial buildings, and youths from both neighborhoods engaged in exploratory factory break-ins during their early teens. The Hamilton Park youths, however, did not pursue these break-ins to the same extent as the youths from La Barriada, both because they had more alternative sources of income and also because the Hamilton Park factory owners and managers were more integrated into the neighborhood and thus were better able to sanction local youths.

## 2. Local Markets for Illegal Goods and Services

Although stolen goods and drugs were sold widely in all the neighborhoods, there was considerable variation in the particular combinations of diffuse and specialized markets and in how openly these transactions took place. La Barriada contained by far the most open and diverse of these markets. Heroin was sold only behind closed doors, but other drugs and stolen goods were sold on the sidewalks and in the middle of the street to all sorts of customers, including some of the block's more respectable residents. The local "reefer store" was located right on the block. Such activities could not be carried out as openly within the public housing projects of Projectville because of the presence of the housing authorities, the housing police, and a group of tenants with more middle-class values who would complain to the authorities if such activities became too visible. In Projectville, the

"reefer stores" were located a few blocks away from the projects in the neighborhood's few remaining blocks of tenement houses. The buyers of stolen gold chains worked the nearby, rapidly deteriorating commercial avenues. No "reefer stores" could maintain operations within the boundaries of Hamilton Park, and stolen goods were sold there exclusively behind closed doors and through personal networks.

### 3. Social Organization of Criminal Operations

The role of the adolescent peer group as the primary recruiting ground for youthful theft has already been discussed as a common feature of all three neighborhoods. The greater intensity of involvement in peer-recruited youthful theft, particularly robbery, of the youths from the two poorer minority neighborhoods has also been discussed as the most striking difference among the neighborhoods. The neighborhoods also differed in the availability to local youths of participation in adult-recruited criminal enterprise. Such opportunities were available in each of the neighborhoods, although they involved only a few youths from each clique.

Drug selling was common to all three neighborhoods and was by far the most prevalent kind of opportunity for involvement in adult-recruited crime. The members of the La Barriada clique had the least involvement in drug selling, although some of them also worked in the "reefer stores" like the Projectville youths. Some Projectville youths showed the greatest involvement in drug selling and went on with age to become involved in drug markets that extended far beyond their local

neighborhood. Many of the Hamilton Park youths sold drugs, but they generally did so as a sideline to legitimate employment and they also confined most of their selling to their own neighborhood.

The other types of adult-recruited youth crime discussed were highly neighborhood-specific. La Barriada's auto theft industry is closely intertwined with its legitimate auto repair industry and provides diverse opportunities for illegal income to both youths and adults. The auto theft operations are fairly loosely organized and shift continually in location and organization in response to police pressure. The organized crime operations in Hamilton Park, though not extensive, are of a more established and sheltered kind. They involve gambling and loansharking activities that rarely come to the attention of the police.

In all cases of adult-recruited youth crime in all three neighborhoods, youths are assigned the most risky and least remunerative tasks while adults reap most of the profit.

#### 4. Social Control Environment

La Barriada residents had the least resources for controlling their criminally involved youths, yet the thefts committed by their youths also were the most redistributive in terms of channeling a flow of cheap goods into the neighborhood from outside. The openness with which stolen goods were sold in the streets in La Barriada partially reflected the fact that these goods were coming from factory and car owners who had little connection to the neighborhood. When local youths

struck too close to home, however, La Barriada residents did respond, although they were the least likely to resort to the criminal justice system for redress. Projectville residents attempted to control the criminal activity of their local youths by bureaucratic means, but they were largely unsuccessful as a result of the concentration of so many poor and jobless youths in such a heavily populated and anonymous environment. Hamilton Park residents made the most extensive use both of the criminal justice system and also of informal methods of control, with the result that their local youths were much more quickly deterred from localized predation. The ability of Hamilton Park residents to control local youth crime, however, was closely intertwined with the sheltering of local organized crime elements and also with the ability of local residents to manipulate the criminal justice system when they were accused or arrested.





## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS: CONTINUITIES AND VARIATIONS AMONG THREE NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS IN RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC CRIME

#### Introduction

The preceding chapters analyzed the development with age of involvements by schooling, work, and crime among three localized groups of youths. Those analyses have implied or stated a number of continuities and variations among the three groups in their career patterns. This chapter reviews those findings and also examines directly the relationships between employment and crime in the careers of individuals. The aim of the chapter is to describe continuities and variations within and among the three groups in the career-patterning of employment and crime relationships.

The theoretical aim of this analysis is to discover the social patterning of economic rationality in this population's "choices" among legal and illegal ways of making money. The introduction to this report described gaps in the existing knowledge of employment and crime relationships produced by the divergent theoretical perspectives of economists and sociologists and by the lack of individual-level data on employment and crime relationships. The ethnographic data presented here make possible the comparative analysis of both economic and socialization processes as they are intertwined in different local settings. Since the number of individual cases is small and the three neighborhoods are all part of the same inner-city

area, no attempt is made here to infer frequency distributions from this sample to a larger population. Rather, this study seeks to describe the processual interrelationships of economic and social factors in the career-patterning of employment and crime involvements within a limited range of variation in social context.

This study differs from many previous ethnographic studies of delinquency and youth crime in its explicit focus on economic opportunities and strategies. This study differs from many economic studies in that the perceived thrills and/or "noxiousness" of crime, the social distribution of "leisure" by age and place and perceived returns to legal and illegal forms of labor are all described and compared with reference to the same individuals and groups. The comparison of career patterns both within and between groups allows consideration of both structural and individual factors, as has not been possible within the theoretical and methodological limits of most previous studies.

The analysis here focuses specifically on the career-patterning of different possible types of relationship between employment and crime indicated by the Project's review of existing literature (Thompson, Sviridoff, McElroy, et al., 1981) and pilot interviews with inmates in New York City jails (Sviridoff and Thompson, 1983). Whereas early economic studies, and to some extent existing popular stereotypes, suggested a model of "tradeoffs" between employment and crime as competing and mutually exclusive sources of income, both the

indeterminacy of more sophisticated economic models and the Project's pilot studies pointed to a number of additional ways in which employment and crime can be related. Employment and crime may be mutually exclusive economic pursuits for some, while others mix the two. Mixing of employment and crime may occur either as alternation between the two or as an overlapping involvement in both at the same time. It is also possible that some people engage in neither employment nor crime and allocate their time to "leisure." The following analysis describes variations by age and neighborhood in patterns of work, crime, and "leisure," including the use of "leisure" to invest in education or job training.

These patterns of relationships between employment and crime involvements are summarized here both with respect to "point in time" correlations of various activities as well as with respect to the way in which employment and crime involvements develop over time, as careers, either apart or in combination. The preceding chapters have analyzed separately the development over time of involvements in schooling, employment, and crime. This chapter examines the interrelationships of these activities, their sequences and combinations. Where the analysis shows functional compatibility or incompatibility among various activities, for example, that they do or do not compete for time allocation or that they are or are not compatible in terms of social identity, the nature of the functional relationship is also described and analyzed.

The analyses presented in this chapter, like those preceding, pay a great deal of attention not only to the mere presence of employment or crime involvements but to the types of employment experience and crime in question. Many of the patterned relationships described here are between a particular type of employment and a particular type of crime. If these data were presented without consideration of these qualitative factors, many relationships would disappear and the results of the comparative analysis would appear much more indeterminate, in the manner of existing economic and survey studies.

A. Continuities among the Neighborhoods in Relationships between Employment and Crime

A number of continuities are apparent both within and among the three neighborhood groups in their employment and crime patterns. Most of these continuities are related to changes with age. Crime involvements generally preceded work involvements and continued through early employment experiences. With age, crime generally ceased or moderated while work greatly increased, with the exception of one or two individuals in each neighborhood group who became involved in full-time crime to the exclusion of employment. These common patterns are described in more detail below.

Crime preceded work. Most respondents from all three neighborhoods reported gaining income from theft before entering legitimate employment. These acts included both petty acts such as stealing fruit from local groceries or coins from parents in childhood as well as more serious acts such as burglaries and picking pockets between the ages of ten and thirteen. Such exploratory crimes for economic gain before any experience of legitimate employment appear to have been quite widespread within each neighborhood group.

Occasional crime for economic gain continued through early employment experiences. Early employment experiences were generally irregular and thus easily combined with exploratory crimes, which also occurred irregularly. Even at this stage, however, employment appeared to produce some moderating effects. Within each group there were some who ceased crimes for

money during their early employment and others who reported one or two crimes. Differences among the groups in the development of systematic crimes for money during the mid-teens were considerable, however, and are discussed below.

Most members in each local group moderated economic crime involvements as they grew older and began to work more steadily. Most members of each group were in the labor market and working more often than not by their late teens. Some ceased engaging in economic crime altogether at this point, while those who did not cease altogether shifted to less severe, risky, and frequent crime. This process was much slower, however, in the two poorer, minority neighborhoods, as is discussed in more detail below.

A small minority of each group became involved in full-time crime to the exclusion of work during the late teens. One or two individuals from each group did not fit the above patterns, increasing rather than moderating their dependence on crime for income as they aged. These individuals, however, also shifted away from their early acts of unskilled theft to involvement in ongoing criminal enterprises which were safer, more lucrative, and capable of providing a steady source of income in lieu of wages from legitimate employment.

B. Variations among the Neighborhoods in Relationships between Employment and Crime

The two halves of the major variation among the neighborhoods in relationships between employment and crime have already been stated separately in the conclusions to the separate preceding chapters on employment and crime. The single most striking difference among the neighborhoods was the greater amount of employment and lesser amount of systematic economic crime during the middle teen years among the Hamilton Park group in comparison to the two poorer, minority groups.

As a comparison at the group level, this contrast is pervasive. Most of the members of the groups from La Barriada and Projectville reported systematic involvement in criminal activity, generally unskilled theft, and very little work during their middle teens. Both these groups at these ages fit West's (1974) classification of "serious thieves" involved in "short-term careers." Crime, not wages, accounted for most of their income during the middle teens. Though most entered the labor force and had some employment during this period, the difficulties in finding work when they did seek jobs were such that they spent most of this period in their lives either unemployed or out of the labor force. In contrast, most of the respondents from Hamilton Park reported considerable employment during their middle teens, usually part-time and off-the-books, and their criminal involvements tended to be more infrequent and expressive in motivation. The Hamilton Park youths were also far less involved in the violent crimes for money in which

most of the youths from each of the other two groups were involved during this period.

These differences in career patterns among the groups suggest an influence of employment on crime that is much stronger than might be apparent for individuals at any given time. As noted before, early employment experiences did not necessarily lead all individuals to cease crime altogether in any of the groups. Even some of the Hamilton Park youths engaged in occasional "drunk-rolling" on weekends when they were employed. Though early employment experiences did not necessarily preclude all crime, however, the differences among these groups suggest that the greater amount of mid-teen employment in Hamilton Park did have an effect of limiting the development of involvement in systematic economic crime as a primary source of income. The Hamilton Park youths, though still barred from most full-time, on-the-books employment during their middle teens, had much more work much earlier than their peers in La Barriada and Projectville.

Neighborhood differences in youthful career patterns cannot, however, be solely ascribed to the employment experiences of individual youths. The youths from the minority neighborhoods also lived in much poorer households in which adults suffered significant employment problems. Youth employment problems were particularly severe, but they were embedded in much higher levels of general poverty, unemployment, and underemployment. Neighborhood-wide differences in levels of poverty and employment also contributed to differences in local social



control environments which in turn contributed to differences in patterns of delinquency and youth crime. The intensive criminal involvements during the middle teens of the youths from La Barriada and Projectville were the result not only of their severe employment problems but also of their greater and earlier need to procure income as well as the inability of their parents and neighbors to control their crimes, even though the local community was generally the locus of their youthful predations.

With increasing age, the crime patterns of the three groups converged somewhat. The minority youths greatly decreased their reliance on criminal income as they found more work and faced mounting sanctions from the criminal justice system. Most of those in each group who continued to engage in economic crime restricted themselves to relatively low-risk activities which entailed much less chance of their becoming involved in the criminal justice system. The main crimes reported during the period of the later teens in each of the three groups were theft from the workplace and drug selling as a part-time supplement to wages. The groups differed primarily in that the Hamilton Park youths began to develop these patterns earlier and to maintain them more securely while the minority youths still faced much more unemployment and attendant possibility of continuing or reverting to their reliance on criminal income.

In addition to these major differences between the Hamilton Park group and the two poorer, minority groups, there were

also other more subtle and qualitative differences among the groups. Although the work and crime patterns of the groups from Projectville and La Barriada both contrasted with the experiences of the Hamilton Park group, there were also patterned differences between the two poorer, minority groups in types and sequences of work and crime.

Several of the youths from La Barriada showed a preference for types of both work and crime which involved manual labor. Members of this group engaged in much more burglary and auto theft than their peers in the other neighborhoods. Many of their early and subsequent experiences of legitimate work were in building maintenance, factories, and auto shops. Some of them displayed a considerable amount of manual skill. Though they had had some shop classes before they left school, they had acquired most of these skills informally, through work, crime, and contact with older males in the neighborhood.

This qualitative dimension of their careers, cross-cutting schooling, work, and crime, also affected the sequence of their involvements. The unskilled manual jobs which were so prominent in the careers of these youths and their older relatives and neighbors offer some of the lowest pay in this regional labor market, do not require much formal education or even necessarily a knowledge of English, and employ many women and immigrants, documented and undocumented, on a seasonal basis. As a result of these conditions within their community, these youths were the earliest among the three groups to leave school and to enter the job market in earnest. They were out of

school and seeking work earlier than the Projectville group, though their entry into the job market resulted primarily in unemployment at first. Their short-term careers in serious theft also lasted longer than among the Projectville group, partially because their proportionately greater involvement in non-confrontational manual crimes entailed less risk of arrest or incarceration.

Their careers in youthful theft also were prolonged by the fact that their neighborhood was the most isolated from the police and other official agencies. Many of their early predatory crimes, though committed close to their residences, brought goods and money into their community. Local residents felt little threatened by the losses of factory and car owners. As these youths grew older and began to work more, they no longer had the time to plan and execute these manual crimes and began to go farther afield to commit street robberies. At this point, they began to encounter much more serious sanctions and were forced to moderate their criminal activity.

The Projectville youths, in contrast, showed comparatively little interest in either manual work or manual crime. Their crimes were more often those that involved personal contact, either as violent predation or in selling drugs. They frequently described or fantasized about con games in interviews, though they maintained that cons usually required an older person since youths could not gain the necessary trust. The legitimate jobs they desired and began to acquire were clerical

and service sector jobs which also involve more personal contact than manual skill.

These qualitative patterns of work and crime affected the sequence of work and crime and involvements by prolonging the period of schooling and hastening the end of systematic predation, relative to the careers of their peers in La Barriada. Clerical and service sector jobs require more formal education than low-level manual jobs. The most desired jobs among this group were government jobs which require at least a high school diploma. Formal education also appeared to be highly valued for its own sake in this neighborhood, as part of the heritage of the civil rights and black pride movements. These factors were associated with a tendency of the Projectville youths to stay in school longer and to return after periods of interruption in their schooling, with some degree of success. This prolonged involvement with schooling and training kept them out of the labor market longer and more than the youths in La Barriada. Community factors contributed to this process also, both in terms of demography and of ecology. The neighborhood's physical isolation exacerbated youth joblessness. Projectville also had some moderate-income families better able to support children attending school. In addition, even the Projectville families who were primarily dependent on welfare maintained more stable residences than the families in La Barriada, somewhat facilitating continuity in schooling. Most of the Projectville families had been in the projects for years, while families from La Barriada were much more transient, their

residences having almost entirely burned down by the end of the study period.

The Projectville youths' briefer careers in systematic predatory crime, in comparison to those of the youths from La Barriada, were related to their proportionately greater involvement in crimes involving personal confrontation, particularly the snatching of gold chains. They also committed their early crimes close to home, but, in this neighborhood, with its enormous concentration of public housing and very little else, their victims were more often their neighbors. At first, the anonymity of the massive projects provided the youths with some measure of protection, but they could not continue committing confrontational crimes close to home for very long. Though Projectville residents were more separated from police and other official agencies than Hamilton Park residents, Projectville was a more controlled environment than La Barriada. The projects provided more stable residence and also a more bureaucratically regulated existence than did the block of old tenements in La Barriada.

The Projectville youths preying on their own neighbors in this environment encountered localized sanctions, often involving the housing authority and the housing police as well as informal retaliation and the city police, more quickly than La Barriada youths whose early victims were also physically proximate but more socially distant. Like La Barriada youths, but sooner, Projectville youths went farther from home to commit larcenies and robberies and began to encounter serious sanc-

tions as they did so. Several of the Projectville youths were incarcerated or institutionalized for substantial periods of time, further delaying their participation in the job market. Those in the Projectville group who managed to stay out of prison and/or acquire diplomas did face somewhat broader labor market prospects than those in La Barriada confined to low-level manual jobs.

The comparative analyses presented thus far have concerned continuities and variations among groups of individuals. The question of variation within groups has yet to be addressed directly. Within each of the three groups of a dozen youths, there were some individuals whose career patterns were somewhat different from those of their immediate peers. Some of these internal variations have been described in the earlier chapters, inasmuch as they pertained to experiences with schooling, employment, or crime separately. For example, the orientation towards manual work was not uniform among the youths from La Barriada. Those of their group who had gone further in school and had better English-language skills tended to seek and find clerical and service sector jobs. Additional variations within the groups with respect to relationships between employment and crime are discussed below.

Two individuals among the group from La Barriada reported never having engaged in any serious crimes for money. Both described themselves, and were described by the others, as "different," though in opposite ways. Julian Acosta fathered a child when he was sixteen and three more by the time he was

twenty-one. He lived with the mother on a welfare budget and openly tried to avoid work, though at his wife's prodding he did take factory jobs for short periods. He was an object of ridicule for his extreme passivity. Carlos Hernandez was the youngest of several siblings, all the rest of whom had been involved in crime. His family had made money on a small business, moved out of the neighborhood and invested their money and care in supporting their youngest's education. He completed a master's degree, yet even this upwardly mobile youth reflected his peer group's occupational orientation. His master's degree was in construction management.

One member of the group from La Barriada did manage to obtain a high-paying, skilled, unionized construction job. Mario Valdez went through involvement in systematic theft in his mid-teens, moderated and then ceased his criminal activities in his later teens. During this latter period, he looked continuously for work, with only periodic and temporary success. A government-sponsored program gave him steady employment and trained him in construction skills for a year, but then failed to place him in a private job. He went to his family's village in Puerto Rico to look for work, failed, and then returned to New York. He eventually found a private construction job through his former supervisor in the job program.

Within the Projectville group, the major variation concerns the extent of involvement in repeated acts of violent predation. The crime chapter noted a split within the group as several became involved in regular gold chain snatching and

others began to cease their involvement in crime or sell marijuana rather than steal. The employment chapter noted the effects of being in prison or youth homes for extended periods of time in keeping these youths who had been involved in repeated violent theft out of the labor market during their later teens.

One individual from Projectville also reversed the work and crime patterns of his peers. Sky Whitney was making a lucrative living selling cocaine by his early twenties and had been doing so for about three years. Yet he was the only member of this group who reported several part-time jobs and no theft in his mid-teens. He attributed both his early non-participation in high-risk theft and his subsequent participation in lucrative crime to the fact that his family had had more money than the families of his friends. "I always had money in my pocket," he explained. "I didn't have to steal; and when I got older, I had money to buy drugs to sell."

Family intervention also made some difference within the groups from La Barriada and Projectville in the extent of careers in systematic theft during the mid-teens. Family cohesiveness made little difference within these groups in preventing the early involvements in serious crime reported by most of the youths in these two groups. Some families, however, even very poor families, had more influence than others on their sons after the crisis of arrest. In La Barriada, Arturo Morales and Mario Valdez reported moving away from crime primarily in response to their families. Both these families managed to locate jobs, albeit very undesirable jobs, for their



sons after arrest, in addition to exerting emotional pressure. In Projectville, Johnny Singleton and Larry Jefferson both, after discussions with their mothers, voluntarily entered youth homes in order to "get out of the neighborhood and stay out of trouble."

One individual from Hamilton Park did report systematic and sometimes violent theft during his middle teens. John Gutski was the only individual in this group who reported such crimes or a felony conviction, though he also reported a great deal of work during this same period. His more intensive criminal involvements were perhaps related to the fact that his family were recent immigrants from Europe, poorer than the families of the other youths in this group, and lived in a more rundown section of the neighborhood.

The Hamilton Park group also included one individual who reported never having committed any crimes for money. This same individual compared his own job networks unfavorably to those of his friends, worked in low-level factory jobs, and expressed frustration at not knowing how to get a better job.

Except for these cases, the careers of the rest of the members of each group fit the patterns of continuity and variation described earlier.

### Theoretical Conclusions

The theoretical intent of this study has been to increase understanding of the interrelationship of youthful work and crime involvements in individual careers as these are shaped by economic and socialization processes. The small size of the sample studied here prevents generalization of frequency distributions within the sample to the general population, but the detailed analysis of social process presented here does contain several implications for future conceptualization of and research into relationships between employment and crime. The implications of this study for some of the theoretical questions posed in the first chapter are discussed here, with respect first to economic and then to sociological theories.

This study suggests that the indeterminate results of work with the economic model of crime may in fact obscure some more pronounced patterns of work and crime. When types of employment experience, types of crime, and sub-populations by age and area are specified in more detail, more definite patterns emerge. This report highlights especially the concentration of systematic predatory street crimes among poor, jobless, urban youths in their middle teens.

Recent sociological debates have concerned the relative contributions of age, social control, social class, and social area to patterns of delinquency and youth crime. This study had uncovered and compared some empirical patterns in the holistic interrelationship of these factors which should help to clarify some of these questions. With respect to age

(Greenberg, 1977; Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983), this study has found that criminality does peak at similar ages in different places, but that the frequency, severity, and also the type of criminality do vary according to identifiable features of the neighborhood environment, including general poverty and employment levels as well as patterns of social organization.

This study accords great importance to social control as a process which influences delinquent and criminal careers but which cannot easily be incorporated in micro-economic models. Social control is conceptualized quite differently here, however, than in survey analyses measuring "attachments" (Hirschi, 1969). Social control is portrayed here not in terms of the internalized attachments of individuals but rather in terms of the social organization of resources for physical control within different neighborhood environments.

This study re-emphasizes the importance of social area, interactive neighborhood environments, in the socialization of workers and criminals. This emphasis returns to the theoretical work of Cloward and Ohlin (1960), but draws quite different empirical conclusions from those suggested in that speculative work. The local neighborhood is shown throughout this report to be of extreme importance in presenting its residents with a localized subset of the structure of opportunities. Rather than finding separate groups in separate places either fighting, using drugs, or stealing, however, this study has shown fighting, stealing, and drugs as common elements which fit differently into the careers of individuals from different places.



## APPENDIX

### PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFYING RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY

During the past few months, Project staff have given a lot of thought to the kinds of protection we owe our research informants. Similar discussions have been conducted by staff and Vera management and members of Vera's Board of Trustees. While we regret not having written guidelines for field researchers sooner, the delay has been useful to all of us in exploring and clarifying precisely what obligations we incur with our research informants, and how we may best fulfill them. These obligations are as follows:

- Research informants should have full knowledge of the objectives, procedures, potential risks and conditions of participation in our study. This obligation arises from the respect we have for the dignity of each and every respondent. The person's participation in our research is voluntary, and therefore, it is necessary that each informant have all the information about the project he needs to make a self-interested choice about whether or not to participate.
- It is clear that a research participant runs potential risks by his decision to participate in the study. While actual damage from these risks is unlikely, its remoteness must be balanced against its seriousness, namely, the risk of arrest and conviction if information about their past crimes -- or even about their present whereabouts -- fall into the hands of prosecution or police authorities, or if information about their future crimes is divulged to us by the informant and by us to the authorities. We are obliged to point out these risks of participation, and to seriously think about how to minimize them in our daily research activities. "The Notification to Subjects" below spells out why these risks are real, though unlikely, and how we intend to make sure that they are not realized.

Earliest disclosure of the objectives and risks of the study makes good methodological sense. The fewer surprises about the study the informant encounters in the course of the research relationship, the more willing he might be to trust field researchers. Furthermore, early conversations about the objectives and risks of the study may be used as an opportunity for training participants, alerting them to the fact that we are looking for detailed but not personally identifiable information. Just as we hope that some research informants will identify with the study and in effect become agents of the Project, we also hope that they become sensitive to questions of disclosure and risk in their presentation of the Project to other research informants.

To fulfill these obligations, we will continue the practice of frequent discussions between the supervising ethnographer and field researchers of events in the field and problems that have come up. It is important that the field researchers reveal their observations fully in these discussions. If there are problems in the field, or if a researcher has become aware of impending crimes, it is very important that the supervising ethnographer be made aware of them. It is only through the supervising ethnographer that Project management and Vera management can be brought in on the problems. When that happens, the best interests of everyone involved will be considered in resolving the problems. As we have indicated in conversations, if a serious problem arises, Project staff will meet immediately with Vera management and,

if necessary, with members of the Board to consider how to resolve it.

In addition, two procedures are given below for fulfilling these obligations to research informants. The first one is a draft "Notification to Subjects" listing the items of information about the study that we need to communicate to all research informants. This notification should be communicated orally and in language comfortable to you and the research informant, but it should be as faithful to the written notification as possible.

The second procedure details the manner and timing of communicating project information to research informants. The procedure recognizes that a field situation may prevent complete disclosure of all items of information at one time and on first contact. We should review the implementation of these procedures to make sure that they correspond to the reality of field contacts. But their intent should be clear: field researchers should take the aim of full and immediate disclosure as a serious responsibility of their job. As a corollary of this responsibility, be assured that a subject's refusal to participate after this disclosure will not be viewed as a failure on the part of the researcher.

### Notification of Subjects

Before I ask you any questions, it's important for both of us that I go over with you a few things about the kinds of questions I want to ask you and about the confidentiality of your answers.

I work for a place called the Vera Institute. We are currently doing research in this neighborhood on crime and unemployment to see what problems young people have finding jobs and why some of them do crimes. We also want to know what kinds of jobs and education you and your family have had. In general, we want to know about your life and about what goes on in this neighborhood. We get funded by the Federal government to do this research. In the future, it is possible that the Federal government could create new job programs or educational programs which could help the neighborhood as a result of our findings.

My job is only to do research. I am not a cop or a social worker. I am only trying to get information. Any questions that I ask you that you think are too personal, you don't have to answer. You have the right to stop giving me information any time you want. In order to keep your identity confidential, we will make up a name for you (or you can tell us what you want to be called). We will also change the names of streets and of the neighborhood in our reports. All this is done to keep things confidential. Federal law says that any information you give me can only be used for research. It is possible that a law enforcement agency might still try to get some of that information. If that happens, we will fight it in court. Of course, there is always a chance we could lose, but we think that is unlikely.

I would also like to tell you that if you plan to commit a crime in the future or if you know of someone else who is, I do not want to know about it, because the federal law I just mentioned does not protect future crimes.

I realize that the things I have just told you may sound a little complicated, but I'll be glad to answer any questions about what I've just said or go over it again in the future if you want me to.

#### Procedures for Timing of Notification to Subjects

The Project's general aim is to give the potential informant all information contained in the "notification" upon first contact. Recognizing that such an aim might not be practicable in some field situations, the guidelines below try to specify the appropriate forms of Project information that may be revealed on first and subsequent contacts:



During initial and extremely casual contacts, researchers may refrain from mentioning that they are researchers or that they are studying crime under sponsorship of LEAA if, in the judgment of the individual field researcher, such identification would immediately preclude any further contact. It is desirable, however, for the researcher to identify himself at least in general terms as a researcher as early in the relationship as possible. The researcher should always avoid deceiving research subjects. It is expected that many of the subjects we seek may not be particularly knowledgeable about social research. Under these circumstances, a general presentation such as "I'm helping to write a book" may constitute the most understandable answer.

If the researcher has not made his general research identity known during the initial contact, he should do so as soon as possible. Initial self-presentation as a researcher should include informing the subject that his cooperation is voluntary and terminable at any time, and that information will be used only for research or statistical purposes.

By the point at which an initial contact seems to be turning into a continuing relationship, the researcher should explain aims, sponsorship, and anticipated results of the research to the subject. This turning point may vary, but by the time the second substantial -- perhaps even the first -- conversation is underway, the researcher should let the person know that he is being considered as a subject of the research.

The researcher should respond honestly to subjects' expressed need to know about the purposes and procedures of the research. At this point, all specific assurances and cautions should be offered, as are indicated in the "Notification for Subjects," above. You should understand that, from Vera's perspective, it is better for potential subjects to terminate relationships with you than for them to be misled about your purposes, and ours, in trying to establish this relationship.

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