

Defining and Measuring Delinquency

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Purpose

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

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Defining delinquency

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

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Legal Definitions

- Juvenile Court Jurisdiction
 - Children who violate the (adult) criminal law
 - Status offenders: children who violate laws prohibiting conduct for children (e.g., truancy, runaway)
 - PINS/CHIPS: "persons in need of supervision"/ "children in need of protection or services" (MN)
 - These children do not have to have violated the law to be within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court
 - Juveniles can be waived to adult court or excluded from the juvenile court based on age and offense criteria
- Juvenile delinquency
 - Law violation by persons who have not yet reached the age of majority

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Sociological Definitions

- Concept of childhood
- Rules of age-appropriate behavior
- Formal institutional reaction to violation

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The "Police Picture" of Juvenile Crime

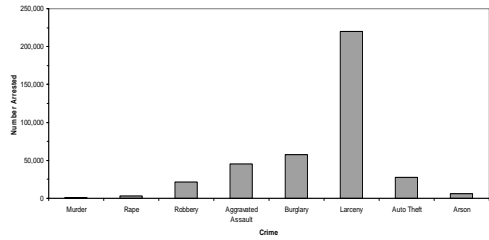
(Uniform Crime Reports)

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Distribution of Juvenile Arrests for Index Crimes, 2005

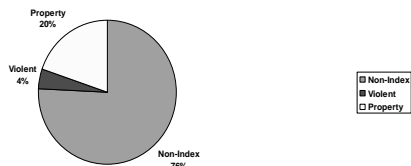


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Percent Distribution of Juvenile Arrests by Crime Category, 2005

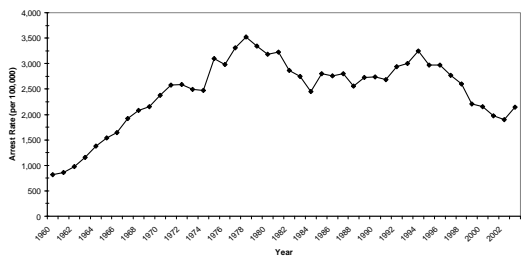


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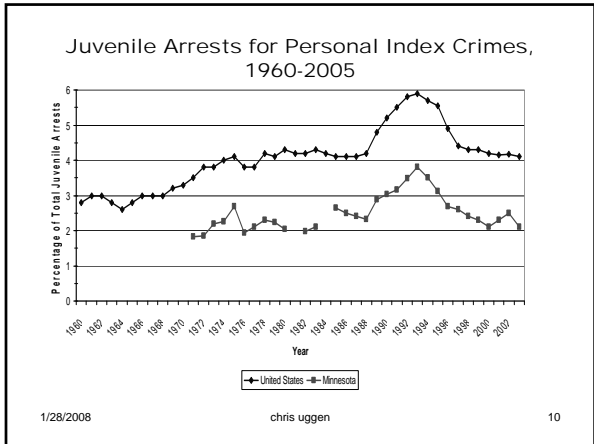
Juvenile Arrest Rate per 100,000, 1960-2005

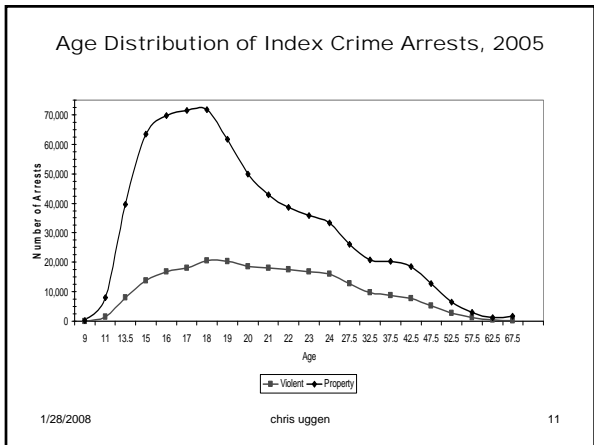


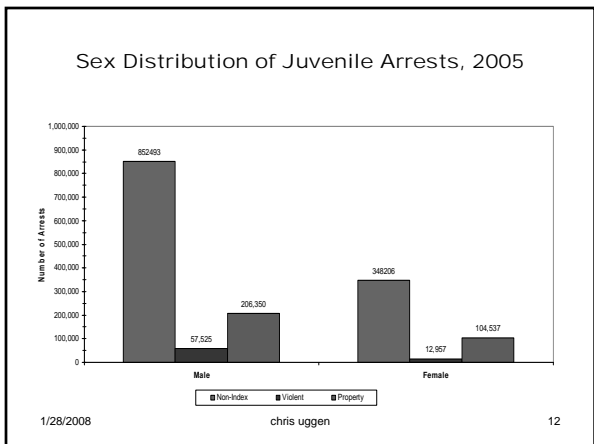
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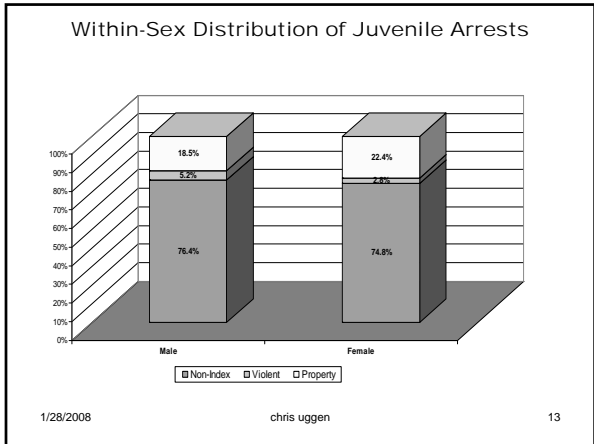
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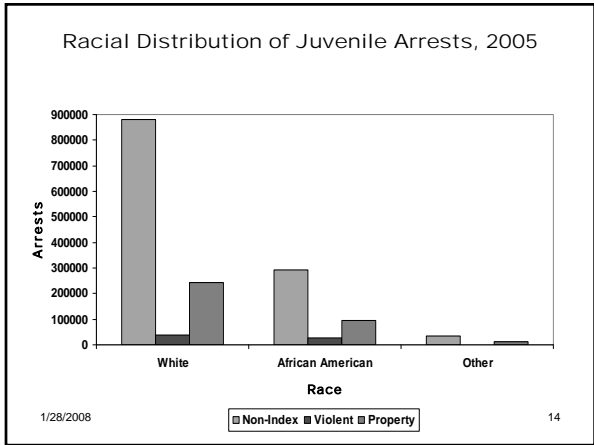
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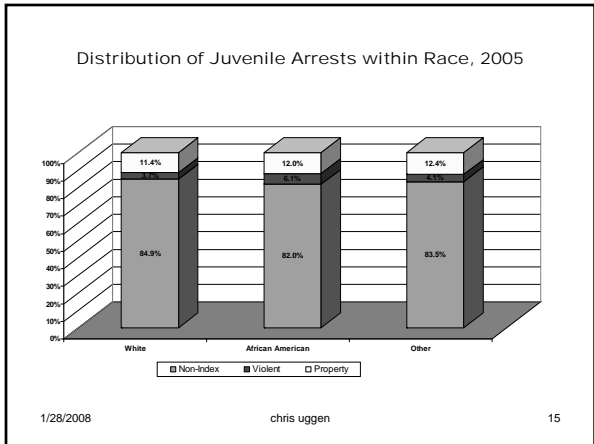




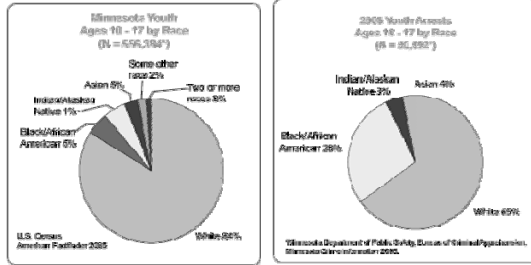








Minnesota race distribution of juvenile arrest

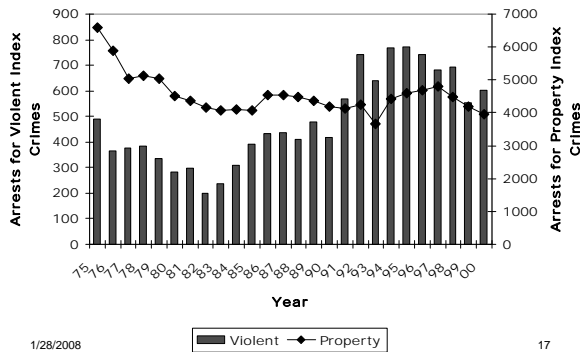


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Juvenile Arrests for Index Crimes in Hennepin County, 1975-2000



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Extent and Nature of Delinquency

- Rec: BURFEIND & BARTUSCH 3: MEASUREMENT
- CHESNEY-LIND 2: EXTENT OF FEMALE DELINQUENCY
- CROSS 3: MEATBALL OF THE MONTH

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