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**DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR, OFFICIAL DELINQUENCY AND GENDER:
CONSEQUENCES FOR ADULTHOOD FUNCTIONING AND WELL-BEING**

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Abstract

The general aim of this paper is to evaluate the consequences of both self-reported juvenile delinquency and institutionalization as a juvenile delinquent on the quality of adult functioning and well-being, with a specific focus on gender differences. Data were gathered from two related data sources: a sample of previously institutionalized offenders (n = 210) and a sample of individuals living in private households (n = 721). Males and females in both samples were interviewed initially in 1982 when they were adolescents and re-interviewed in their late twenties. Results showed that having been in a juvenile delinquent institution seriously compromises multiple life domains in adulthood, especially for females. Also, results suggest that an official delinquent status and a high involvement in delinquency during adolescence each have their own consequences for males and females adult functioning and well-being. Institutionalization in the juvenile justice system is strongly predictive of adversity in the socioeconomic, relational, and emotional domains, but much less predictive of behavioral outcomes. On the reverse, a high level of delinquency involvement in adolescence is predictive of difficulties in the behavioral domain in adulthood, but tends to have no direct effects on adversity in other life domains. These results are mostly invariant across gender.

Key words: Juvenile Delinquency, Adult Functioning, Gender Differences, Longitudinal Study

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is an important stage in the personal and social development of youths. A normative pathway towards adulthood implies that youths finish school, integrate themselves into the work force, partner with a significant other and start a new family. However, the reality of this transition is complex and the normative pathway is not easily followed by some youths, either by choice or circumstance (Giordano, Cernkovich & Lowery, 2004; Laub & Sampson, 2003). In fact, youths do not all develop under the same conditions or at the same pace as they progress towards adulthood. For some youths, the period of emerging adulthood presents its share of adverse conditions, be it in the work, relational or health domains. In this respect, youths involved in delinquency, because they often are exposed to a variety of adverse conditions, are particularly at risk for an early and premature entry into adulthood, and consequently are in jeopardy of experiencing a variety of negative consequences such as low educational attainment or early parenthood (Giordano, Cernkovich & Lowery, 2004; Krohn, Lizotte & Perez, 1997; Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter & Silva, 2001). However, and as noted by Pajer (1998), very few studies have analyzed the longitudinal relationship between juvenile delinquency and adult functioning in multiple life domains. In fact, longitudinal studies tend to focus more on criminal careers and desistance from crime than on the adjustment to social institutions (e.g., workplace, family) and the well-being of young adults (Moffitt et al., 2001). Yet, evaluating broader life domains is important if we are to better understand the long-term effects of juvenile delinquency. As Sampson and Laub note (1995: p. 123): “the linkage between childhood misbehavior and adult outcomes is found across life domains that go well beyond the legal concept of crime”.

In a reanalysis of the Glueck data, Sampson & Laub (1995) observe that, when compared to non-delinquents, males who were involved in delinquency during adolescence are less likely to

finish school, and more likely to face employment instability and to receive public welfare between the ages of 25 and 32. Sampson & Laub (1995) note that IQ, neighborhood socioeconomic status and ethnicity are unable to account for these differences. Farrington (1996) found similar results using the Cambridge Study in the Delinquent Development sample. Male juvenile delinquency is predictive of employment instability, poor cohabitation history, problems with children, mental health problems, involvement in fights, substance abuse, self-reported offending and convictions during young adulthood. Farrington (1996) estimates that 49% of juvenile delinquents are socially dysfunctional during adulthood, compared with 18% of non-delinquents. While these are important findings, it is important to note that these three well-known longitudinal studies limited their analyses to males. Few longitudinal studies evaluate the adult consequences of juvenile delinquency among females. However, available studies conclude that early and single parenthood, poverty, low educational attainment, weak integration into the job market, and domestic violence figure among the adverse conditions that females with a history of juvenile delinquency face as they enter young adulthood (Bardone & al., 1996; Fergusson & Woodward, 2000; Giordano, Cernkovich & Lowery, 2004; Lanctôt, 2005; Pajer, 1998).

Even if longitudinal studies indicate that male and female juvenile delinquency is associated with adverse conditions in adulthood, namely in the educational and work domains, very few studies assess whether these outcomes vary across gender. Studies conducted with the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study sample, a birth cohort of a 1000 males and females followed from ages 3 to 21, report that adolescent antisocial behavior is associated with such difficulties as poor educational achievement, work related problems, early parenthood, social welfare use, conflicted and mutually violent relationships, mental health problems and

drug use for both genders at age 21 (Caspi, Wright, Moffitt and Silva, 1998; Miech, Caspi, Moffitt, Wright and Silva, 1999; Moffitt et al., 2001). Nevertheless, although outcomes are mostly of a similar nature across gender, Moffitt et al. (2001: p. 182) note some gender differences in their intensity:

[...] antisocial behavior among young men is significantly more likely to be associated with subsequent problems in work, substance abuse, and legal arenas, whereas antisocial behavior among young women is significantly more likely to be associated with relationship problems, depression, tendency to suicide, and poor physical health.

Moreover, focusing specifically on turning points, Krohn et al. (1997) report that drug and alcohol use in early adolescence increases the risk of premature cohabitation and teenage parenthood among both males and females in the Rochester Youth Development Study. However, males were characterized by more precocious transitions to adult roles than females, since their substance use was also associated with a premature timing of other transitions, such as getting someone pregnant and dropping out of school.

These studies notwithstanding, very little research attempts to analyze the relationship between gender, juvenile delinquency, and global adult functioning. The lack of research in this area can be explained in two ways. On the one hand, “a surprisingly high proportion of the literature is based on studies of just males, or just females, with speculations based on other research (usually on quite different samples) to draw inferences on what the supposed sex difference might mean” (Rutter, Caspi, and Moffitt, 2003: p. 1094). On the other hand, studies examining gender differences in the consequences of delinquency involvement focus mainly on externalized and internalized problems, generally ignoring other life domains. Indeed, it is well

documented that males persist more in delinquency than their female counterparts (see Lanctôt and Le Blanc, 2002 for a review). Numerous studies also indicate that delinquent females are at high risk of developing internalized problems, such as depression and anxiety, during adulthood (Robins, 1989; Wasserman et al., 2005). However, more systematic assessments of the consequences of juvenile delinquency are needed to better capture the nature and extent of gender differences in the coping strategies associated with the transition to adulthood. In particular, and as reported by Pepler and Craig (2005: p. 22), researchers must assess indicators that are appropriate for females, “with a particular focus on the quality of their relationships”. With this charge as a guide, the first objective of the present paper is to evaluate a variety of adult outcomes associated with adolescent involvement in delinquent behavior, with a focus on gender differences. More specifically, this objective will focus on the nature and extent of the difficulties faced in adulthood by previously institutionalized delinquent males and females, in comparison to their counterparts who had no formal contact with the juvenile justice system.

Comparing individuals from institutionalized and representative general youth samples is important since scholars have long suggested that both “the behaviors of individuals and the behavior of law” must be assessed in order to better understand the consequences of crime and delinquency (Uggen & Kruttschnitt, 1998: p. 339). For instance, studies show that juvenile delinquency jeopardizes future occupational status and functioning not only among youths convicted of an offense and/or institutionalized within the juvenile justice system, but also among youths from representative samples (Davies & Tanner, 2003; Farrington, 1996; Tanner, Davies & O’Grady, 1999). However, Bushway (1998) reports that the subsequent job instability among men with records of arrest is better predicted by these official records than by their actual criminal involvement *per se*. Using only the male sample from the Rochester Youth

Development Study, Bernburg and Krohn (2003) add that even after controlling for adolescent delinquent behavior, police and juvenile justice system interventions between the ages of 13.5 and 16.5 reduce the chances of graduating from high school, as well as diminish employment opportunities. Moreover, research by Giordano, Cernkovich & Rudolph (2002), based on qualitative narrative accounts of formerly institutionalized offenders, has shown that some individuals viewed their institutional experience as a positive one in the sense that it served as a “wake up call,” or because they received some sort of effective treatment while incarcerated (Laub & Sampson, 2003, report similar findings). However, another theme in the narratives was that incarceration had a marginalizing effect on the lives of the respondents in that it negatively affected their ability to find decent employment, influenced the characteristics of their social networks, and restricted their ability to attract a prosocial partner. Congruent with a developmental labeling perspective, these studies claim that official interventions trigger a process of social exclusion from conventional networks, and propose that the resulting delinquent stigma limits opportunities for reintegration (Becker, 1963; Paternoster & Iovanni, 1989). As stated by Sampson and Laub (1997: p. 148): “Arrest, conviction, and imprisonment are clearly stigmatizing, and those so tarnished face structural impediments to establish strong social ties to conventional lines of adult activity – regardless of their behavioral predispositions”.

Such research notwithstanding, many questions remain unanswered. First, the impact of a delinquent stigma on adult functioning had been studied almost exclusively in the domain of employment (Bernburg & Krohn, 2003; Davies & Tanner, 2003). While some studies focus more on relational outcomes, they rely mostly on symbolic interactionist models that highlight informal labels from significant others and self-reflected appraisals (Bartusch & Matsueda, 1996; Giordano, Cernkovich & Rudolph, 2002). Second, whether a delinquent stigma has a differential

effect as a function of gender remains an unanswered empirical question (Bernburg & Krohn, 2003). In fact, few studies have evaluated whether or not official labeling has different long-term consequences as a function of gender. Using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Tanner, Davies and O'Grady (1999) as well as Davies and Tanner (2003), report that for males and females, juvenile incarceration has a strong, cumulative and damaging labeling effect on individuals' educational attainment and labor market success. They find, however, that official delinquency has a weaker effect on female than on male occupational outcomes (Tanner, Davies and O'Grady, 1999). Our second objective in the present research will address these two gaps. It will examine whether being labeled as an institutionalized delinquent has negative influences on a variety of adult outcomes, independently of the extent of juvenile delinquency *per se*, and it will focus on gender differences in the consequences of labeling. In brief, the present research continues the line of inquiry of a related study that revealed differences between institutionalized and household males and females on several adult outcomes (see Giordano et al., 2004). However, while the latter examined adult functioning in relation to adulthood criminality, the present research focuses on the relationship between adult functioning and adolescent delinquency.

Method

Participants

Two related data sources are the basis for this study: (1) a sample of previously institutionalized offenders and (2) a sample of individuals living in private households. Respondents in both samples were interviewed initially in 1982 when they were adolescents. The interview used was the *Juvenile Attitude and Behavior Study* (see Cernkovich, Giordano and

Pugh, 1985). Interviews were conducted in individual face-to-face settings that averaged 75-90 minutes in length and queried youths about a variety of family, peer, school, work, attitudinal and behavioral issues. These youths were interviewed again as young adults in 1992 (the household sample) and 1995 (the institutional sample) as part of the *Ohio Young Adult Survey* (Cernkovich, Giordano and Rudolph, 2000). The individual face-to-face Time 2 interviews averaged about two hours in length and included a wide variety of questions concerning family, marital, peer, relationship, job, mental health, child rearing, and behavioral issues.

The institutional sample was drawn from the populations of three male juvenile institutions in the state of Ohio (127 males), and from the entire population of the only female juvenile institution in the state (127 females). Most of the respondents were referred to these four Ohio Department of Youth Service institutions from juvenile courts in Ohio's major cities (Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton and Toledo), although respondents from smaller cities, towns and rural areas were represented as well. Participants were 16.3 (SD = 1.4) and 29.3 years old (SD = 1.4) at Time 1 and Time 2, respectively. At Time 2, 210 of the original 254 institutional respondents were re-interviewed; 63% of these respondents were white. The Time 2 sample includes 80% (n=101) of the males and 86% (n=109) of the females from the original sample. Informed consent and written permission was obtained from each respondent prior to the Time 2 interview. Because the respondents were minor wards of the state at Time 1, informed consent from the Ohio Department of Youth Services (via their IRB and each institution's superintendent) was obtained and was deemed by the university's IRB to be the equivalent of parental consent. Informed consent from the youths was also obtained prior to their participation.

The household sample was comprised of 942 youths 12-19 years of age living in private households in the Toledo, Ohio metropolitan area. A multi-stage modified probability sampling procedure was employed, in which area segments were selected with known probability. The most recent census data available at the time were used to stratify the sample by racial composition and average housing value. Within area segments, eligible household respondents were selected to fill specified sex and race quotas; no specific age quotas were allocated, although the ages of respondents were tracked as the interviews were conducted to ensure adequate representation of all age groups (mean age = 15.3, SD = 1.9). The respondents were equally divided among males and females and blacks and whites. The neighborhood respondents were re-interviewed in 1992 with an overall completion rate of 77% of the original sample (adjusting the base rate for 10 confirmed deaths). Of the 721 respondents interviewed at Time 2, 45% were male and 47% were white. The subjects ranged in age from 22 to 29 years, with a mean of 25.3 years (SD = 1.9) at the time of the re-interview. Informed consent and written permission was obtained from each respondent prior to the Time 2 interview and, because the respondents were minors at Time 1, consent was obtained from both the respondent and his/her parent or guardian prior to the interview.

For both samples, logistic regression modeling of response/non-response indicated that follow-up respondents were slightly more likely to be white and female, although there were no significant social class or age differences between the two groups. Further analysis revealed no differences in prior delinquency involvement among those who participated in the re-interview and those who did not.

Measures

With the exception of self-reported juvenile delinquency and official delinquent status (institutionalized or not), all of the variables and scales are derived from the Time 2 interview period, when most of the respondents were in their late twenties.

Self-Reported Juvenile Delinquency is based on a modified version of Elliott and Ageton's (1980) self-report delinquency scale. It is measured at Time 1 as the self-reported involvement (over the past 12 months) in a variety of status, property, and violent offenses. Responses were coded from 0 (never) through 6 (2-3 times a week or more). Each offense item was assigned a ratio-score seriousness weight derived from the National Survey of Crime Severity (Wolfgang, Figlio, Tracy, & Singer, 1985:46-50; also see Cernkovich and Giordano, 1992). The 27 items were weighted and a total delinquency score calculated. The score represents the mean of the sum of the products of each item's frequency and its seriousness weight (institutional alpha = .88; household alpha = .78).

Official Delinquent Status is a dichotomous variable indicating whether the respondent had been institutionalized or not as a juvenile delinquent, and is based on the respondents' sample identity (institutionalized = 1, household = 0).

Socioeconomic Disadvantages is a cumulative index of five dichotomous variables for which the most disadvantaged position is coded 1. *Educational Attainment* indicates whether respondents have (0) or do not have (1) a high school diploma. *Occupational status* is a seven category general prestige ranking ranging from service workers and laborers (coded 1) to private household workers/machine operators/transporters, protective services/precision production/craft/repair, sales/technicians/military, administrative support/clerical/farm, professional, and executives/administrators/managers (all coded 0). *Employment Status* is a

binary variable which asks respondents whether or not they are currently unemployed. *Family Income* is a measure of total household income. A low family income had been fixed as being less than \$18,000 annually. *Public Assistance* connotes whether respondents have received public assistance for a minimum of one year. Index scores range from 0 to 5, with high scores representing the most disadvantaged socioeconomic circumstance.

Turning Points are indexed by two key life events believed to influence adjustment and behavior. Respondents were asked how old they were when they first started living with a partner (*Age Living with First Partner*) and *Age at First Birth* (computed by subtracting the age of the respondent's oldest child from the respondent's current age). Early transitions to these two life events are indicative of premature entry into adult roles and responsibilities.

Instability is indexed by three variables. The *Job Tenure* measure indicates the longest period of time during which the respondent had any single job. Responses ranged from "less than six months" (1) to "ten or more years" (8). Low scores reflect short job tenure and thus high instability. *Number of Partners Lived With* is a count variable of how many different partners the respondent has ever lived with. High scores reflect high instability. *Number of Unintended Pregnancies* refers to the number of times respondents report that they (or their partner) were pregnant and "did not want to be" or "wanted to be but not then". High scores reflect high instability.

Caring and Trust from Significant Others assesses the nature of the respondent's relationships with family, peers, and romantic partner. All responses were coded along a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). High scale scores reflect high levels of bonding. *Family Caring and Trust* was measured by the following six items (institutional alpha = .75; household alpha = .72): My parents often ask about what I am doing at

work or in college or during the day; My parents give me the right amount of affection; One of the worst things that could happen to me would be finding out that I let my parents down; My parents are usually proud of me when I've finished something I've worked hard at; My parents trust me; and I'm closer to my parents than most people my age. *Peer Caring* was measured by the following four items (institutional alpha = .72; household alpha = .74): I feel comfortable calling my friends when I have a problem; I can trust them - I can tell them private things and know they won't tell other people; They're easy to talk to; and They care about me and what happens to me. *Partner Caring* is indexed by the degree to which the respondent agrees/disagrees with the following five statements about their spouse/partner/girl or boyfriend (institutional alpha = .73; household alpha = .72): He/she gives me the right amount of affection; He/she sometimes puts me down in front of other people (reverse coded); He/she sometimes won't listen to me or my opinions (reverse coded); He/she seems to wish I were a different type of person (reverse coded); and I am closer to my spouse/partner than most people I know are to theirs. Our measures of parents caring and trust have been shown via factor analysis in previous research (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987) to be conceptually and empirically distinct from such other dimensions as parental supervision and control, parental communication and parent-child conflict. In addition, previous research using this measure has shown it to have considerable construct and predictive validity (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987, 2001; Giordano, Cernkovich & DeMaris, 1993). These factor analytic and validity findings hold true for the peer and partner caring and trust measures described above (Giordano, Cernkovich & DeMaris, 1993; Giordano, Cernkovich, Groat, Pugh & Swinford, 1998; Giordano, Cernkovich, & Holland, 2003).

Emotional Well-Being is assessed by two scales. *Depressive Symptomatology*:

Respondents were asked how often during the past 12 months they: wondered if anything is

worthwhile; been in low spirits; had trouble sleeping; had periods of time when they could not get going; felt that things never turn out right; had trouble remembering things; felt irritable, fidgety or tense; felt restless (institutional alpha = .84; household alpha = .87). Responses were recoded along a 6-item scale from 1 (low) to 6 (high). Items for the depressive symptoms scale were taken from the psychological distress instrument developed by Mirowsky and Ross (1989). The authors also used depression items from the CES-D and the Diagnostic Interview Schedule (DIS) and anxiety items from the Langer Index and the DIS. High scores are indicative of high levels of depression. *Self-Esteem* is based on items from Rosenberg's self esteem scale (Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, & Rosenberg, 1995). The following six items comprise the scale (institutional alpha = .72; household alpha = .67): I am able to do things as well as other people; I feel that I have a number of good qualities; I feel I do not have much to be proud of; at times I think I am no good at all; I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others; I take a positive attitude toward myself. Responses were coded along a five-point Likert scale with high scores reflecting high levels of self-esteem.

Domestic Violence consists of both perpetration and victimization scales. The *Perpetrator of Intimate Partner Violence* scale is comprised of 12 items taken from Straus' (1979) Conflict Tactics Scale asking respondents how often during the past twelve months they had done the following (institutional alpha = .90; household alpha = .92): insulted or sworn at your spouse/partner; ridiculed or criticized your spouse's/partner's values or beliefs; damaged something belonging to your spouse/partner on purpose; threatened to hit or throw something at your spouse/partner; hit or thrown something at your spouse/partner; pushed, grabbed or shoved your spouse/partner; slapped your spouse/partner; kicked, bit or hit your spouse/partner with your fist; hit or tried to hit your spouse/partner with something; beat up your spouse/partner;

threatened your spouse/partner with a knife; used a knife on or fired a gun at your spouse/partner. Responses range from “never” to “almost daily.” High scale scores reflect high level of violence. *Victim of Intimate Partner Violence* indexes the degree to which the respondent was victimized by his/her partner in any of the ways noted in the Perpetrator of Intimate Partner Violence scale (institutional alpha = .91; neighborhood alpha = .90). Responses to the twelve items range from 1 through 8, with high scores indicating high levels of victimization.

Adult Antisocial Behavior is indexed by three scales. *Drug Related Problems* is a measure of the degree to which drug use causes various problems for the respondent and/or those with whom s/he interacts (institutional alpha = .84; household alpha = .91). Respondents were asked to report how often, from “never” (1) to “more than once a day” (9), the following resulted from their drug use: not felt so good the next day because of using drugs; felt unable to do my best job at work or school because of using drugs; gotten into trouble with my relatives or friends while using drugs; hit one of my family members because of my using drugs; gotten into fights with others because of my using drugs; stolen money or other things in order to get cash to buy drugs. High scores on this scale represent high levels of drug related problems. An *Alcohol Related Problems* scale was constructed and scored in the same fashion as the Drug Related Problems scale, but refers specifically to alcohol use (institutional alpha = .73; household alpha = .88). *Adult Criminal Involvement* is a modified version of Elliott and Ageton’s (1980) self-report delinquency scale. It indexes the respondent's reported level of involvement in property and personal crimes, as well as in drug and alcohol offenses, during the past year (institutional alpha = .90; household alpha = .78). Items were deleted which would have been inappropriate for an adult sample (i.e., status offenses). Responses were coded from 0 (never) through 6 (2-3 times a

week or more). Each offense item was assigned a ratio-score seriousness weight derived from the National Survey of Crime Severity (Wolfgang, et. al. 1985:46-50; also see Cernkovich and Giordano, 1992), ranging from 1.42 for drug use to 25.85 for rape. The adult criminal involvement score for a respondent is the mean of the sum of the products of each item's frequency and its seriousness weight.

Analytical strategies

For each adult functioning and well-being outcome, a 2 X 2 factorial ANOVA will be performed to assess differences by gender and by official delinquent status (i.e., institutionalized vs. household respondents). Thus, in addition to a basic gender comparison, individuals who are particularly at risk for a difficult transition to adulthood – the institutionalized respondents – will be compared to those facing considerably less risk – those living in private households – as they transition to adulthood. In addition, this initial analysis will examine whether gender and official delinquent status interact in their effect on the adult outcomes.

During the second stage of our analysis, ANCOVAs will be conducted to control for the extent of self-reported involvement in juvenile delinquency. This will allow us to evaluate whether institutionalization as a juvenile delinquent (i.e., official delinquent status) has an impact on adult functioning and well-being, net of the level of delinquent behavior *per se*. Each ANCOVA includes gender, official delinquent status, self-reported juvenile delinquency, and interaction terms with gender (gender x official delinquent status and gender x self-reported juvenile delinquency). Thus, in order to isolate the effects of official delinquent status, controls for gender and self-reported juvenile delinquency are included in the model since these two indicators are known to independently impact the quality of adult functioning and well-being (see studies cited above).

Findings

Table 1 provides information on the nature and extent of the difficulties faced during young adulthood by formerly institutionalized delinquent males and females, in comparison to their counterparts who were not formally processed by the juvenile justice system.

*** Insert table 1 ***

Having been institutionalized is associated with a disadvantageous socioeconomic profile in young adulthood, especially for females. The main effect of official delinquent status reveals that previously institutionalized males and females have significantly more socioeconomic disadvantages than their household counterparts ($F = 153.49$; $p < 0.001$). Also, the significant main effect of gender ($F = 36.83$; $p < 0.001$) indicates that females are more likely than males to face adverse socioeconomic conditions during young adulthood. The interaction term between delinquent status and gender is not significant, however, indicating that this gender difference is similar regardless of official delinquent status. More detailed analyses (not shown) reveal a significant difference between previously institutionalized females and other respondents regarding the length of time during which public assistance was received. On average, the institutional females reported that the longest period of time they were on government assistance was between three and four years, while this period lasted for less than a year among males in both samples and for around a year among the household females.

Next, the data in Table 1 show that turning points marking the beginning of adulthood came earlier for respondents who were official delinquents during adolescence than for the household respondents. Independent of their gender, formerly institutionalized delinquents lived with their first partner a year earlier their non-institutionalized counterparts ($F = 24.99$; $p < 0.001$) and they

had their first child from over three to four years earlier ($F = 190.25$; $p < 0.001$). Only age at first birth varies across gender -- females in both samples had their first child a year earlier than males ($F = 24.09$; $p < 0.001$). It is important to note that previously institutionalized females are the only respondents having an average age at first birth during their teenage years.

The adult life of former official delinquents is also characterized by instability: jobs are held for shorter periods of time ($F = 41.46$; $p < .001$), especially among females generally ($F = 25.69$; $p < .001$) and institutionalized females in particular ($F = 4.26$; $p < 0.05$). Females who were institutionalized also present the most problematic profile in term of the number of unintended pregnancies they had, as shown by the significant interaction effect ($F = 10.14$; $p < 0.01$). Being institutionalized as a juvenile increases unintended pregnancies among females, while it decreases the number of times males' reported that their partners had pregnancies that were unintended. In addition, number of partners lived with is higher for the formerly institutional respondents ($F = 198.64$; $p < 0.001$). However, females cohabited, overall, with fewer romantic partners when compared to their male counterparts ($F = 8.19$; $p < 0.01$).

In addition to these objective outcomes, young adults who had been in juvenile institutions also report the most negative relationships with their significant others. Previously institutionalized males and females perceive less caring and trust from intimate others, whether it is from their parents ($F = 88.14$; $p < 0.001$), peers ($F = 19.72$; $p < 0.001$) or partner ($F = 8.73$; $p < 0.001$). Overall, gender differences are also observed. Females from the institutional sample, but not those from the household sample, report less caring and trust from their parents ($F = 8.69$; $p < 0.01$), while males from both samples indicate less caring and trust in their peers relationships ($F = 30.47$; $p < 0.001$). Bonding to partner also differentiates males and

females in both samples, with females perceiving less caring and trust from their romantic partner.

Poor emotional well-being also figures among the negative outcomes faced by the previously institutionalized respondents. As compared to their household counterparts, males and females who have been in juvenile institutions report higher scores for depressive symptoms ($F = 35.25$; $p < 0.001$) and lower ones for self-esteem ($F = 23.73$; $p < 0.001$). Females from both samples report higher levels of depressive symptoms ($F = 13.70$; $p < 0.001$) and lower self-esteem ($F = 4.42$; $p < 0.05$) than do males. The worst profile for depressive symptoms is observed among the previously institutionalized females ($F = 5.28$; $p < 0.001$), but there is no significant interaction between gender and official delinquent status for self-esteem.

Furthermore, violence between romantic partners, whether as the perpetrator ($F = 12.91$; $p < 0.001$) or as the victim ($F = 10.59$; $p < 0.001$), is more frequent among the young adults previously institutionalized. In both samples, females report the highest incidence of violence perpetrated against a romantic partner ($F = 5.47$; $p < 0.05$), while males report the highest rates of victimization by a romantic partner ($F = 3.85$; $p < 0.05$). Finally, respondents with an official history of juvenile delinquency display more adult antisocial behaviors than their household counterparts. Regardless of their gender, they face more problems because of their drug ($F = 137.80$; $p < 0.001$) and alcohol ($F = 81.27$; $p < 0.001$) use, and they are involved in more criminal activities ($F = 91.89$; $p < 0.001$). No gender differences are observed within the two samples for drug related problems, but males report more problems in their daily life because of their alcohol use ($F = 27.06$; $p < 0.001$). Males are also more involved in criminality than females ($F = 19.35$; $p < 0.001$). The gender gap in adult criminal involvement is larger among the formerly institutionalized respondents as compared to their neighborhood

counterparts ($F = 7.61$; $p < 0.01$). That is, the most negative adult criminal behavior profile is observed among formerly institutionalized males.

These comparisons by gender and sample suggest that the quality of adult functioning and well-being is seriously compromised among young adults who had an official history of juvenile delinquency. Overall, this conclusion is especially true for females. Yet, these analyses do not evaluate whether the difficulties faced in multiple life domains by previously institutionalized males and females are mainly a consequence of their prior delinquent behavior, or whether they are the result of their passage through the juvenile justice system. Thus, Table 2 examines whether official delinquent status continues to negatively influence male and female adult outcomes, once the extent of self-reported juvenile delinquency is taken into account. Gender also is included in the models, as well as its interaction with the official delinquent status and self-reported delinquency.

First, the results of this analysis show that when controlling for self-reported juvenile delinquency, being institutionalized during adolescence remains strongly associated with socioeconomic disadvantages ($F = 79.51$; $p < 0.001$), premature transitions to cohabitation ($F = 10.27$; $p < 0.01$) and parenthood ($F = 108.16$; $p < 0.001$), as well as to instability in the job ($F = 34.01$; $p < 0.001$) and conjugal ($F = 68.56$; $p < 0.001$) domains. Instability in the reproductive domain remains significant, but its relation with delinquent status is weaker ($F = 5.86$; $p < 0.05$). The negative effect of previous institutionalization also remains significant in the relational and personal domains. In fact, net of the influence of self-reported juvenile delinquency, an official delinquent status is still predictive of a perceived lack of caring and trust from parents ($F = 35.34$; $p < 0.001$) and peers ($F = 15.03$; $p < 0.001$), and of depressive symptoms ($F = 8.23$; $p < 0.01$) and low self-esteem ($F = 7.46$; $p < 0.01$). However, when it comes to behavioral outcomes,

the effects of an official delinquent status are no longer significant or diminish considerably when controlling for self-reported juvenile delinquency. Previous institutionalization is no longer predictive of domestic violence, and its impact on adult antisocial behaviors remains strong only for drug related problems ($F = 24.71$; $p < 0.001$). Significant relationships also are found for alcohol related problems ($F = 5.70$; $p < 0.05$) and criminal behaviors ($F = 5.76$; $p < 0.05$), although they are substantially weaker.

On the other hand, the data in Table 2 show that self-reported juvenile delinquency has a significant and enduring effect almost exclusively on adult behavioral outcomes. Over and above the influence of institutionalization within the juvenile justice system, respondents who were the most involved in delinquency during adolescence are exposed to more domestic violence in adulthood, either as perpetrators ($F = 23.11$; $p < 0.001$) or victims ($F = 7.14$; $p < 0.01$). They also experience more drug ($F = 35.92$; $p < 0.001$) and alcohol ($F = 49.22$; $p < 0.001$) problems and participate in more criminal activities ($F = 58.18$; $p < 0.001$). As for the other life domains, only two significant coefficients are observed, and their significance levels are weaker than the ones observed for official delinquent status: number of partners lived with ($F = 12.01$; $p < 0.01$) and depressive symptoms ($F = 5.53$; $p < 0.05$). It is worth noting that self-reported juvenile delinquency has a similar impact on adult outcomes for males and females, when controlling for the official delinquent status. Only one significant interaction term is observed for gender and self-reported juvenile delinquency, and this coefficient is relatively weak. Being highly involved in delinquency during adolescence is more predictive of drug related problems in adulthood among males than among females ($F = 4.70$; $p < 0.05$). This general absence of interaction effects means that the strong relationships observed between self-reported juvenile delinquency and adult behavioral outcomes hold for both genders.

These effects of official delinquent status and self-reported delinquency notwithstanding, it is important to note that gender still has a significant influence on several of the adult outcomes. Whether or not they have been institutionalized within the juvenile justice system and whatever the extent of their delinquent behavior, females face more socioeconomic disadvantages ($F = 15.31$; $p < 0.001$), have their first birth earlier ($F = 6.54$; $p < 0.01$), hold jobs for shorter periods of time ($F = 9.12$; $p < 0.01$), and report being more violent towards their romantic partners ($F = 5.18$; $p < 0.05$) than males. Significant interaction terms between gender and delinquent status are observed for perceived caring and trust from parents ($F = 5.28$; $p < 0.05$) and depressive symptoms ($F = 4.09$; $p < 0.05$). These results indicate that previously institutionalized females face more difficulties in these domains than do their male counterparts. Males, on the other hand, remain more dissatisfied with the levels of caring and trust that characterize their peer relationships ($F = 13.89$; $p < 0.001$).

Discussion

The general aim of this paper was to evaluate the consequences of both self-reported juvenile delinquency and institutionalization as a juvenile delinquent on the quality of adult functioning and well-being, with a specific focus on gender differences. Two specific objectives were identified: 1) to evaluate the extent of the difficulties faced in adulthood by previously institutionalized delinquent males and females, in comparison to their counterparts who had no formal contact with the juvenile justice system, and 2) to examine whether being labeled an official delinquent has negative influences on a variety of adult outcomes among males and females, independent of the extent of juvenile delinquency *per se*.

The results of our analyses showed that among the 16 indicators of adult functioning and well-being under study, all but one were significantly more problematic among the previously institutionalized respondents than among the household respondents. Having been in juvenile delinquent institution seriously compromises multiple life domains. When compared to household respondents, former adjudicated males and females experienced more socioeconomic difficulties, earlier transitions to adulthood, more instability in work and romantic contexts, less caring and trust in their relationships with significant others, less emotional well-being, and more problems resulting from their involvement in antisocial behaviors.

With regard to gender comparisons, many differences in outcomes were observed. Among the 16 outcomes that were assessed, 5 were more problematic for males and 9 were more problematic for females. Gender differences were observed in every life domain. While the institutionalized respondents reported poorer adult outcomes than the household respondents in each life domain, these results also indicate that previously institutionalized females face the most adverse conditions during young adulthood. Indeed, among the five significant interaction terms that were observed, four were in disfavor of these females.

Focusing specifically on the institutional females, our results showed that they have difficulties coping with adulthood, notably because they experience more socioeconomic disadvantages. More detailed results show that these females are less integrated into the workforce and more dependent on government assistance than any other group. Also, these institutional females transit to parenthood at an earlier age than males and household females, they have more unintended pregnancies, and most had their first child when they were still in their teenage years. Although these institutional females reported few adult antisocial behaviors, many conditions negatively affected their functioning. In addition to their poor socioeconomic

conditions, the lack of caring and trust they perceived from their parents and romantic partner, their use of violence against romantic partners, their depressive symptomatology, and their low self-esteem all represent conditions compromising their quality of life. The accumulation of such adverse conditions place these young women at high risk for social isolation and persistent negative emotionality. In addition, it is reasonable to assume that the personal and social development of their children may also be negatively affected.

On the other hand, previously institutionalized males also face many of the difficulties observed among their female counterparts. These adverse conditions are, however, not as acute. Difficulties that are more characteristic of these males are notably their criminal activities and the problems they face because of their alcohol abuse. Surprisingly, from the perceptions gathered, drug abuse does not cause more problems for males in comparison to females. Rather, our data suggest that both males and females experience problems in their relationships and daily functioning because of their drug abuse. Previously adjudicated males also endure negative experiences within the domestic sphere: their romantic relationships tend to be unstable (they lived with many partners), and their romantic partners are often threatening them as well as using verbal and physical violence towards them. In addition, these males reported lower levels of caring and trust from their peers.

These results are congruent with those observed in prior studies (Bardone et al., 1996; Fergusson & Woodward, 2000; Giordano, et al., 2004, Krohn et al., 1997; Lanctôt, 2005), even though some were conducted on male only samples (Farrington, 1996; Sampson & Laub, 1995). Difficulties faced by previously institutionalized females during adulthood are mostly observed in the socioeconomic and emotional domains, while for males, these difficulties appear more as externalized problems (Moffitt et al., 2001; Pajer et al., 1998, Robins, 1989). In addition, the

present study allows for a better understanding of the consequences of juvenile delinquency by assessing life domains that go beyond objective outcomes (such as educational and occupational level) and behavioral problems (externalized vs. internalized responses). Perceptions gathered from these young adults about the quality of their relationships with significant others were enlightening. Specifically, abilities to develop and maintain healthy and sound relationships with significant others are clearly lacking among the previously institutionalized respondents. Our results also suggest that adult outcomes among prior delinquents may be not entirely consistent with popular stereotypes. One example of this is that problems within the domestic sphere are not specific to females, as males have their share of problems in this domain as well. Also, even if the previously institutionalized males develop fewer internalized problems than their female counterparts, their well-being is nevertheless more compromised in comparison to household males.

Analyses also were conducted on the relationship between prior institutionalization in a juvenile facility and adult outcomes, while controlling for self-reported juvenile delinquency and gender. Results suggest that an official delinquent status and a high involvement in delinquency during adolescence each have their own consequences for males and females adult functioning and well-being. On the one hand, institutionalization as a juvenile is strongly predictive of adversity in the socioeconomic, relational, and emotional domains, but much less predictive of behavioral outcomes. On the other hand, a high level of delinquency involvement in adolescence is predictive of difficulties in the behavioral domain in adulthood (i.e., domestic violence, drug and alcohol related problems, and criminal involvement), but tends to have no direct effect on adversity in other life domains. These results are almost invariant across gender, with but few exceptions. Previously institutionalized females are at greater risk than their male counterparts of

being dissatisfied with the quality of their relationships with their parents in adulthood and they are at greater risk of reporting depressive symptoms as adults. As for the impact of juvenile delinquency *per se*, results do not vary as a function of gender, except for drug related problems which are more frequent among males than among females who were highly delinquent in adolescence.

These results indicate that it would be misleading to interpret the gap between the institutionalized and the household respondents as a direct effect of the greater delinquency involvement of the former. For many outcomes, negative conditions faced in adulthood by previously institutionalized males and females were better explained by their official status as juvenile delinquents than by the incidence and seriousness of the delinquent acts they self-reported during adolescence. Our research has been limited in its examination of such indirect effects of delinquent behavior on adult outcomes, and further assessment of these mechanisms is clearly warranted. What remains unclear are the specific processes by which and contexts within which institutionalization and delinquent behavior impact adult outcomes. The good news is that many theoretical models are worthy of guiding an exploration of these mechanisms, including those pertaining to strain, low self-control, low social control, routine activities, self-reflected appraisals, and adherence to gender roles.

Furthermore, the research reported herein did not include the respondents' perceptions of the effects of their institutional experience. However, previous research conducted with the same sample as the one used in the present study, but based on qualitative narrative accounts provided by the respondents (Giordano, Cernkovich & Rudolph, 2002), is quite informative on the ways in which institutional history impacted the lives of some individuals. For example, one male reported that he did not see himself changing as a result of his institutionalization, but remarked

on the marginalizing impact resulting from the experience when asked: “Do you have goals. . . about learning a trade and doing the straight life thing?”

I don't have no interest in it. I can't communi . . . I have a hard time, it's, it's a hard ability to even to, to communicate with people that, that, that ain't never been locked up, or ain't never, you know experienced or been through the same things that you been through. It's really hard. All my juvenile life and all my young adult life I've been locked up. And them the times I wasn't locked up, I was running with criminals. So it's hard you know, you just feel out of place and weird. You feel like a [deleted] at a Klan meeting. You feel out of place. You just don't feel right... (Giordano et al., 2002: 1030).

Even though the aim of our research was not to test theories, our results clearly support the life-course theory of cumulative disadvantage (Sampson & Laub, 1997). In this regard, two theoretical perspectives are relevant to understanding the poor transition to adulthood among the institutionalized respondents. First, and based on social control theory, involvement in serious delinquency does not favor the development of strong social bonds with members of society nor commitment to prosocial institutions. Delinquency also reinforces antisocial values and association with deviant peers. In turn, this deterioration of personal and social controls mitigates against a successful transition to adulthood. Second, labeling theory highlights the negative consequences of a delinquent stigma. As stated by Sampson and Laub (1997 : p.148): “Arrest, conviction, and imprisonment are clearly stigmatizing, and those so tarnished face structural impediments to establish strong social ties to conventional lines of adult activity – regardless of their behavioral predispositions.” The statement made by the respondent highlighted above nicely illustrates the marginalizing effects an official label often has, and the obvious difficulties it poses for a successful transition to conventional adult roles and responsibilities.

Taken as a whole, our results stress the importance of assessing multiple life domains to better identify the risks and needs of adjudicated juvenile clientele. Programs should first and foremost aim to reinforce social bonding and prosocial values, as well as to increase social skills, rather than to focus primarily on the repression of delinquent behaviors. Giving prime importance to re-adaptation also supports the capacity of many individuals to make successful adaptations in adulthood, even if they experienced adverse circumstances during childhood and adolescence. The processes of individual resiliency and recovery under such circumstances certainly need more research attention, as demonstrate notably by Werner and Smith (2001). Research has shown that some individuals assume a very active role as they seek to change the direction of their lives. This shift towards conformity and successful adaptation is facilitated by an openness to change, by exposure to “hooks for change,” by the construction of a new identity, and by a transformation in the way the individual views antisocial behavior and its attendant lifestyle (Giordano et al., 2002). Thus, programs delivered to juvenile offenders should offer them opportunities to restructure their cognitive process in such a way that change is seen as possible, facilitate access to such “hooks for change” as stable employment and meaningful community involvement, as well as opportunities to enlarge and consolidate their prosocial networks. Finally, agents of social control and the general public alike must be made aware, before processing youths within the juvenile justice system, of the many negative consequences that are likely to result. This awareness is particularly important when adjudicating adolescent females, insofar as they still tend to be sentenced to juvenile institutions for their “own good” rather than for the protection of society (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 1998). Concerns “for their own good” might be more beneficial by deploying improved social services than by proceeding with formal justice system interventions.

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Table 1 : ANOVAs with two fixed factors (official delinquent status and gender) and gender-delinquent status interaction

Variables	Institutionalized sample				Household sample				Main effects		Interaction
	Males (n = 101)		Females (n = 109)		Males (n = 323)		Females (n = 398)		Delinq. status	Gender	Delinq. status * Gender
	mean	S. D	mean	S. D.	mean	S.D.	mean	S.D.	F	F	F
Socioeconomic disadvantages											
Cumulative Index	2.22	1.21	2.99	1.29	1.11	1.20	1.58	1.38	153.49 ***	36.83 ***	2.36
Turning Points											
Age living with first partner	19.10	3.13	19.05	4.04	20.47	2.54	20.18	2.45	24.99 ***	0.48	0.25
Age at first birth	20.59	3.66	18.94	2.65	23.91	2.54	22.95	2.92	190.25 ***	24.09 ***	1.69
Instability											
Job Tenure	3.87	1.74	2.97	1.58	4.41	1.63	4.04	1.46	41.46 ***	25.69 ***	4.26 *
Number of unintended pregnancies	1.42	1.78	2.21	1.30	1.72	1.16	1.67	0.81	0.86	8.11 **	10.14 **
Number of partners lived with	2.39	1.56	2.02	1.78	1.01	1.58	0.87	1.42	198.64 ***	8.19 **	1.62
Caring and Trust											
From parents	3.54	0.73	3.23	0.77	3.87	0.58	3.85	0.63	88.14 ***	11.16 ***	8.69 **
From peers	3.70	0.62	4.01	0.62	3.96	0.59	4.17	0.57	19.72 ***	30.47 ***	1.14
From romantic partner	3.58	0.62	3.35	0.90	3.65	0.70	3.62	0.79	8.73 ***	4.57 *	2.75
Emotional Well-Being											
Depression	3.09	0.99	3.55	1.11	2.81	0.62	2.91	0.87	35.25 ***	13.70 ***	5.28 *
Self-esteem	3.90	1.05	3.83	1.05	4.10	0.82	4.01	0.92	23.73 ***	4.42 *	0.07
Domestic Violence											
Perpetrator of intimate partner violence	0.66	1.08	0.90	1.23	0.48	0.90	0.58	0.93	12.91 ***	5.47 *	0.96
Victim of intimate partner violence	0.98	0.43	0.83	0.56	0.73	0.47	0.59	0.47	10.59 ***	3.85 *	0.02
Adult Antisocial Behaviors											
Drug related problems	0.99	1.63	0.87	1.65	0.13	0.40	0.11	0.49	137.80 ***	1.09	0.51
Alcohol related problems	1.37	1.56	0.93	1.42	0.66	0.73	0.36	0.58	81.27 ***	27.06 ***	0.95
Adult criminal involvement	11.58	7.76	9.32	5.99	7.68	2.80	7.16	2.45	91.89 ***	19.35 ***	7.61 **

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

Table 2: ANCOVAs with two fixed factors (official delinquent status and gender), one covariate (self-reported juvenile delinquency), and interactions with gender

Dependent variables	Delinq. status (F)	Self-rep. JD (F)	Gender (F)	Gender * self-rep. JD (F)	Gender*delinq. Status (F)	R2
Socioeconomic disadvantages						
Cumulative Index	79.51***	0.75	15.31***	0.26	0.70	0.17
Turning Points						
Age living with first partner	10.27**	0.81	0.1	0.27	0.30	0.03
Age at first birth	108.16***	0.41	6.54**	1.45	0.02	0.27
Instability						
Job Tenure	34.01***	1.51	9.12**	0.25	1.16	0.07
Number of unintended pregnancies	5.86*	3.78	1.02	1.32	0.66	0.05
Number of partners lived with	68.56***	12.01**	1.77	0.01	0.12	0.19
Caring and Trust						
from parents	35.34***	2.66	5.86*	0.03	5.28*	0.10
from peers	15.03***	0.57	13.89***	0.11	0.46	0.06
from romantic partner	3.24	0.63	0.49	1.38	0.27	0.01
Emotional Well-Being						
Depression	8.23**	5.53*	8.53**	0.00	4.09*	0.05
Self-esteem	7.46**	2.04	2.7	0.00	0.00	0.03
Domestic Violence						
Perpetrator of intimate partner violence	0.17	23.11***	5.18*	0.07	1.55	0.05
Victim of intimate partner violence	0.50	7.14**	0.54	0.35	0.18	0.02
Adult Antisocial Behaviors						
Drug related problems	24.71***	35.92***	1.73	4.70*	1.55	0.16
Alcohol related problems	5.70*	49.22***	3.31	3.62	0.78	0.16
Adult criminal involvement	5.76*	58.18***	2.32	1.92	0.58	0.16

*** p < 0.001. ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05