

SOCIAL BOND, LIFE COURSE, AND TERMINATION
OF CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR: A SOCIAL
PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

by

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SOCIAL BOND, LIFE COURSE, AND TERMINATION
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PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page |
|---|------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Theoretical Background. | 3 |
| Purpose of the Study. | 8 |
| Expected Contribution of the Research . . . | 10 |
| Definition of Terms | 11 |
| II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE | 12 |
| Introduction. | 12 |
| Social Control Theory | 13 |
| Hirschi's Control Theory | 16 |
| Social Psychology and Human Development . . | 20 |
| Life Span Perspective and Adult Development. | 22 |
| Life Course, Age Grading, and Society. | 29 |
| Termination Research. | 34 |
| III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY | 39 |
| Introduction. | 39 |
| Procedures for Data Collection. | 39 |
| Characteristics of the Sample | 41 |
| The Research Instrument | 45 |
| Statistical Analysis. | 47 |
| Validity. | 49 |
| Generalizability. | 57 |
| Reliability | 58 |
| Limitations of the Study. | 60 |
| IV. RESULTS. | 62 |
| V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS. | 88 |
| Introduction. | 88 |
| Summary | 89 |
| Conclusions | 93 |
| Recommendations | 97 |
| VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY | 99 |
| VII. APPENDIX - RESEARCH INSTRUMENT | 110 |

LIST OF TABLES

| Table | Page |
|--|------|
| I. Comparison of Percent Response to Demographic Variables by Repeat and Non-Repeat Offenders. | 43 |
| II. Unrotated First Factor Loading for Subscales of the Control Theory | 52 |
| III. Unrotated First Factor Loading for Subscales of the Life Course Theory | 55 |
| IV. Crombach Alpha Reliability for Control and Life Course Scales. | 59 |
| V. Frequencies, Percentages, and Chi-Squares in Each Sociodemographic Variables on Success and Failure Categories. | 63 |
| VI. Comparison of Age and Years of Education of Offenders Rated as Successes and Failures | 65 |
| VII. Frequencies, Percentages, and Chi-Squares for Criminal Background Variables on Success and Failure Categories. | 66 |
| VIII. Comparison of Means, Standard Deviations, and T Scores of Successes and Failures on Four Social Control Scales | 71 |
| IX. Frequencies, Percentages, and Chi-Squares for Alcohol and Drug Use Variables on Success and Failure Categories. | 72 |
| X. Comparison of Frequency of Alcohol and Drug Use of Offenders Rated as Successes and Failures. | 73 |
| XI. Comparison of Means, Standard Deviation, and T Scores of Successes and Failures on Four Social Control Scales | 74 |
| XII. Coefficient of Correlation Between Age, Life Course and its Six Subscales. | 76 |

| Table | Page |
|--|------|
| XIII. Comparison of Means, Standard Deviation, and T Scores of Successes and Failures on Six Life Course Scales. | 77 |
| XIV. Frequencies, Percentages, and Chi-Squares for Major Problems and the Help Received. | 79 |
| XV. Frequencies, Percentages, and Chi-Squares for Offenders' Efforts After Release From Prison. | 82 |
| XVI. Frequencies, Percentages, and Chi-Squares for Offenders Decisions to Stay Away From Trouble with the Law. | 83 |
| XVII. Frequencies, Percentages, and Chi-Squares for Efforts Associated with the Termination Decision. | 84 |
| XVIII. Frequencies, Percentages, and Chi-Squares for Considerations Associated with the Termination Decision. | 85 |
| XIX. Individuals Blamed for Offenders Involvement in Criminal Activities. | 87 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The inverse relationship between age and crime has long been established in criminology (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983). It is generally agreed that crime tends to rise sharply during the teenage years, peaking in adolescence and then decline with age (Steffensmeier, Allan, Harer, and Streifel, 1989). Even though most young offenders desist from criminality at a relatively early age, one group, "career criminals," continue their lawbreaking activities over a long period of time. Studies of career criminals, however, indicate that continuation of criminal activities does not last long, and in many cases, withdrawal occurs "well before the offenders in question have become infirm or enfeebled" (Jolin and Gibbons, 1987:240).

Much of the research on offending, even those on habitual criminals, focus on initiation into crime and factors contributing to the persistence of involvement in deviant behavior (Shover, 1983). In most cases, if there is any attempt to explain the termination of criminality, it is usually done in terms of "maturation effect" (Glueck and Glueck, 1937), "maturation reform," "burn out" (von Hirsch, 1981), or the simple process of aging. As noted by Hirschi

and Gottfredson (1983), however, because the maturational reform and other similar processes are vaguely identified or remain unexplained, they are unable to explain desistance from crime.

With the advent of rehabilitative ideals in this century, particularly between about 1945 to 1975, many have focused on treatment and rehabilitation of criminals. Based on the general assumption that deviant behavior is a function of undesirable personality traits, individual therapies, group therapies, and a multitude of other programs have been designed in hopes of correcting the public offender. In such cases, recidivism data have been used as a yard stick to measure the effectiveness of treatment and subsequent desistance from criminality. As Transler (1979) points out, however, even though behavior modification techniques have proven effective in educational settings, recidivism information indicates that in the case of the offenders results have been disappointing.

Despite apparent failure of these programs, the fact remains that withdrawal from crime occurs with great regularity. "To die a criminal, one would almost have to die a violent death" (Cusson and Pinonneault, 1986:314). Termination of criminal careers between the ages of 20 and 30, for example, seem to be fairly high, lower between 30 and 42, and quite high again between the ages of 42 and 60 (Blumstein and Cohen, 1982).

As early as 1953, Moberg presented a list of factors,

such as decline in physical strength and decrease in utility of deviant behavior because of improved social status, as reasons for the increasing drop out rate with age. Only in recent years, however, an increasing number of researchers have turned their attention to a more systematic explanation of the age/crime relationship, particularly as it relates to cessation from criminal behavior.

Theoretical Background

According to Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983) the relationship between age and crime is "one of the brute facts of criminology." Whenever the attention shifts to explanations and implications of this relationship, however, particularly concerning the relationship between age and desistance, it turns into "the most difficult facts in the field." One reason may be that the termination of criminal behavior is not predicted by existing sociological theories of deviance, "in fact, it [cessation from crime] tends to be inconsistent with such theories" (Gove, 1985:115). In other words

. . . all of these theoretical perspectives either explicitly or implicitly suggest that deviant behavior is an amplifying process that leads to further and more serious deviance. Thus although these perspectives rarely explicitly discuss the link between age and deviance, they imply that with age people become increasingly locked into a deviant career. (Gove, 1985:118-119).

A review of the literature, however, indicates that the development of a social bond, the main element of Hirschi's control theory (1969), is one of the major contributing

factors in the withdrawal from criminal activities. Hirschi (1969) proposed that those juveniles tightly bonded to society and social groups are less likely to get involved in delinquent behavior. There are four elements of this social bond: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

Attachment, the most important component of the social bond, is sensitivity and affection toward others including parents and peers. People who are attached to significant others, Hirschi wrote, are less likely to jeopardize their social relationships by becoming involved in antisocial behavior. Commitment, the second element of the social bond, refers to investment of time, energy, and effort in the conventional world. According to Hirschi (1969), those who have little investment in society may see little risk in deviation from its accepted norms. The third element, involvement, refers to the degree of participation in conventional activities. Involvement in job, recreation and family, according to this theory, insulates the individual from the lure of deviant behavior. Belief or individual's allegiance to the values and moral codes of society, is the final element of social bond. Belief in such societal values as sharing, sensitivity to the rights of others, and conviction about the legitimacy and morality of conventional values prevent persons from participating in antisocial behavior.

Even though Hirschi (1969) used his control theory to explain juvenile delinquency, there is evidence that it can equally be applied to adult recidivism and the termination

of criminal behavior by career criminals (Meisenhelder, 1977; Mathur, 1987). In his extensive interview with 20 property offenders, Meisenhelder (1977) found that offenders were motivated to abandon criminal behavior not only because of "the threat of punishment" but also "to gain, or regain rewards of social normality" (p. 322). The study pointed to restraining force of meaningful conventional employment, formation of positive interpersonal relationships particularly to the family, and association with noncriminal individuals as the most important factors in successful exiting from criminal activity. Following Meisenhelder (1977) and others, the present study investigated the applicability of social control theory and the development of social bonds to the cessation of criminal behavior by adult offenders.

In addition, interviews with ex-offenders who have apparently been successful in leaving the life of crime suggest that adult development theories may help explain the desistance/age relationship (Jolin and Gibbons, 1987; Shover, 1983, 1985; Gove, 1985). These theories, usually presented under the heading of life span developmental psychology, suggest that human life consists of a number of sequential stages. At each stage, individuals are faced with the necessity of accomplishing certain tasks and have to deal with accompanying psychological changes. The developmental theorists, presented later in more detail, generally agree that as individuals age, (1) they become

more accepting of societal values; (2) they become more concerned about social relations; (3) they become more community sensitive; (4) they develop a new perspective on the self; and, (5) they develop a new awareness of time (Levinson, 1981, 1978; Gould, 1978).

Dannefer (1984) was critical of adult developmental theories, used by the proponents of life span developmental psychology, for their similarities to biologically based models or what he refers to as "ontogenetic fallacy." Those involved in life span studies, according to Dannefer (1984), assume "sequentiality, unidirectionality, irreversibility, qualitative structural transformation, and universality" of changes throughout one's life time. This is because the social environment is conceived as affecting adult development only indirectly through providing a supportive context for psychological changes supposedly innate within all humans.

While not denying the importance of biological and psychological changes, the "life course" researchers emphasize the impact of socially patterned demands of others as one of the most important factors in adult socialization. Scholarly works by anthropologists and social psychologists point to the fact that in every society a timetable exists for the ordering of major life events. At each stage people are granted rights and privileges and are, at the same time, expected to fulfill certain obligations to the society (van Gennep, 1960; Fry and Keith, 1982). In other words, a

general socially structured and regulated age system can be found in all societies even in a complex pluralistic society such as the United States with its multitude of subcultures and subgroups.

Both life span researchers such as Levinson (1981) and the life course theorists including Brim (1976) identify the mid-life stage as one of the most crucial periods of adult life, qualitatively different from other age periods. It is at this stage that a person is faced with the challenge of coming to terms with the contrasts of youthful dreams of success and what is possible. This is the time when undeniable signs of biological aging coupled with social and cultural distance from the youth forces the person to try to establish a niche in society (Levinson, 1981). And, this is the time when a person becomes preoccupied with the purpose and meaning of life and reevaluation of his/her interpersonal relationships.

Using the life course model set forth by Neugarten (1968) and others, the purpose of this study was to investigate whether repeat offenders, like middle age nonoffenders, were subject to socially constructed expectations of age grades and age related timetables. The model, sometimes referred to as "the timing-of-events model" (Clausen, 1986), suggested that the notions of adequacy-inadequacy in being on-or-off schedule in major accomplishments in life is a product of social time. The present research was designed to examine if the expectations

of social time were responsible for habitual offenders' appraisal of their past and present life events and their attempts in trying to adjust themselves to what is expected of a "normal" middle-aged person. It was also felt that this process coupled with increasing chances of being arrested and sentenced to lengthy prison terms due to the past criminal record, declining physical abilities, and the mounting tensions associated with the life of crime forced these individuals to seriously consider and in many cases successfully put an end to their criminal behavior.

Purpose of the Study

Previous studies have found correlations between sociodemographic variables, criminal history variables and recidivism (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983; Farrington, 1983; McCord, 1980). There is also a wealth of studies pointing to strong relationships between substance abuse and crime (Sandhu, 1981; Clayton and Tuchfeld, 1982; McBride and McCoy, 1982). In addition, studies indicate a sharp decline in alcohol and drug use with age (Rowe and Title, 1977; McAuliffe, 1980). In the first part of the present study, relationships among sociodemographic variables, criminal history variables, and substance abuse was examined.

In the second part of the study, social control theory and life course theory were tested. The following possible hypotheses were proposed to test the social control theory and its four components of attachment, commitment,

involvement, and belief.

1. Offenders who feel more attached and have more sense of caring for others (family, peers, etc.) are more likely to terminate their criminal behavior.

2. Offenders who are more committed to the pursuit of conventional line of action (getting education, saving for future, commitment to work) are more likely to leave the life of crime.

3. Offenders more involved in conventional activities (involvement with family, recreational activities) are more likely to stay away from crime.

4. Offenders with stronger belief in morality and legitimacy of social rules and laws are more likely to desist from criminality.

To test the life course theory, the following possible hypotheses were developed:

1. Offenders who feel more "off time" in their life achievement compared to others of similar age are more likely to desist from criminality.

2. Offenders who, because of their age, feel pressured to act more responsible are more likely to end their life of crime.

3. Offenders who are more concerned about the meaning of life are more likely to go straight.

4. Offenders who have developed a perception of greater maturity and better grasp of reality are more likely to desist from crime.

5. Offenders who have developed an "awareness of time as limited" are more likely to terminate their criminal behavior.

6. Offenders with more feelings of responsibility toward themselves and society are more likely to stay away from criminal activity.

Finally, the last part of research dealt with age related changes and experiences specific to aging criminals. Based on available literature, it was proposed that, in addition to age related changes similar to those of nonoffenders, certain aspects of criminality finally take their tolls on criminals and push them toward normality. More specifically, this part of the research was an exploratory attempt to gain some insight into the life of crime, the nature of pressure to abandon criminal behavior, post-prison adjustment, and obstacles to rehabilitation from the inmate's perspective.

Expected Contribution of the Research

The present research is expected to contribute to the field in several ways. First, it is hoped that the results of this study assist those designing rehabilitative programs to understand better the needs and concerns of this group of offenders to the benefit of both the client and the larger society. Second, the present research with its somewhat unique application of life course theory to deviant behavior can be used as a basis for further research endeavors on

desistance and lead to a more adequate interdisciplinary approach in the field. Finally as suggested by Cusson and Pinsonnault (1986:80) "there is not one quantitative research study on the reasons for desistance." It is hoped that the present research will fill some of the gap that exists in this area.

Definition of Terms

Criminal or Offender: Refer to an individual convicted and imprisoned for an unlawful act. The terms criminal and offender are used interchangeably in this study.

Termination of Criminal Behavior: Termination refers to projection of offender's desistance from criminal behavior by his probation and parole officer. Individuals projected to maintain a crime free life are referred to as "successes" and those likely to return to the life of crime are referred to as "failures."

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Criminologists and penologists have long used the recidivism data to try to understand the process of termination of criminal behavior. Instead of focusing on the offenders themselves, however, the focus of these studies have primarily been on the effects of different correctional programs and their possible contributions to behavior modification and subsequent abandonment of criminality. Evidence from literature, however, indicate that thus far very few of the planned programs have been able to conclusively demonstrate their validity or effectiveness. This is in spite of the fact that majority of offenders at one time or another decide to leave their criminal activities behind, settle down, and adhere to the norms and values of the conventional society.

The main assumption of the present study is that offenders, like other members of society, are subject to a variety of social, psychological, and biological forces at different stages of life. More specifically, it is argued that the socially constructed expectations of age related timetables combined with psychological changes and the

natural process of aging eventually take their toll on offenders and pressure them out of crime. It is also argued that the life course perspective coupled with the social control theory can, to a great extent, explain the nature of these forces and contribute to our understanding of the processes involved in the decision to give up crime.

In order to lay an appropriate groundwork for the conceptual theoretical model in this paper, this chapter begins with a presentation of the social control theories and the adult developmental theories and their relevance to the study at hand. The chapter will continue with a review of the "termination" literature to date and discuss their findings. This is deemed necessary because the evaluation of a study should always be based in part on a comparison with what has already been done in other relevant studies.

Social Control Theory

Sociological theories of deviant behavior can be classified into two broad categories--social structure and the process theories. Social structure theories focus on the socio-economic factors to explain the causes of criminal behavior. Cultural transmission theory developed through the work of Shaw and McKay (1969), for example, contend that criminal behavior is a product of cultural learning and transmission of norms, motives, and skills that are different from those of the dominant culture. Structural-strain theory, another example of the social structure

theories, also suggests that deviant behavior is a product of the organization or disorganization of the society. Based on Durkheim's concept of anomie (1951), structural-strain theory proposes that whenever there is a discrepancy between the "culturally defined goals" and the "socially defined means to those goals," strain toward deviant behavior is produced (Merton, 1957).

Social Process theories, on the other hand, maintain that criminality is a function of socialization (or lack of it) and the psycho-social interactions people have with various organizations, social institutions, and the processes of society. In other words, all social process theories focus their attention on socialization process and try to identify the developmental factors such as family relations, peer influences, the development of self-image and self-confidence, etc. that lead to delinquency and adult criminality. According to these theories, every individual has the potential to become delinquent or a criminal. Only those, however, whose bond to society are so weakened that are free from its constraining moral forces are the ones who commit crime.

The forerunner of the control theories of deviance is seen by most criminologists to be Reiss who set the basic groundworks for the later theoretical work in this area. Even though his work is based on psychoanalytic theory, Reiss (1951) identified three social psychological factors that in his mind explained delinquency. The three

components, (1) lack of proper controls internalized during childhood; (2) a breakdown of those controls; and, (3) lack of, or conflict in, social norms provided by significant others, can be found in one form or another in all the control theories developed since then.

The next step in the development of control theory was taken by Walter Reckless and his associate Simon Dinitz (1967). Reckless in his theory, referred to as Containment Theory, explained deviant act in terms of interplay between internal (or inner) and external (or outer) controls. Self-control, according to him, was the main buffer to outside influences. There were also many external "pushes and pulls" toward deviant behavior that were experienced by all individuals. An individual with strong self-control, usually formed during the early childhood years, would be resistant to weak social control and would not involve in deviant behavior. Weak self-concept, however, would make an individual less influenced by the outer controls and therefore more likelihood of unlawful behavior (Reckless, 1970).

Like their predecessors, Sykes and Matza (1957) believed that the process of becoming a deviant is a learning process. They do not, however, agree that youth learn the techniques, values, and attitudes necessary for delinquent behavior. On the contrary, delinquent hold attitudes and values similar to any law-abiding citizen. Sykes and Matza (1957) proposed that by learning the techniques of

neutralization some individuals can temporarily neutralize the dominant societal values and "drift" back and forth between legitimate and illegitimate behavior. They listed five forms of neutralization utilized by individuals to temporarily suspend their commitment to societal values: denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim, condemnation of the condemners, and appeal to higher loyalties.

Some empirical research on neutralization theory found that delinquents and nondelinquents do hold different moral values (Hindelang, 1973). These findings directly contradict the basic principles of neutralization theory. Even those who found some support for the theory (Minor, 1980; Regoli and Poole, 1978), failed to show that neutralization preceded the onset of criminality. Despite these contradictory and inconclusive results, the fact remains, however, that neutralization theory contributed a great deal to our understanding of juvenile delinquency. For one thing, it accounts for the fact that many delinquents do not evolve into adult criminals. Since the delinquents, according to this theory, never in reality rejected the moral values of the society, once the pressures of the adult life exert themselves, many delinquents would drift back into legitimate mode of behavior.

Hirschi's Control Theory

The most recent, and by far the most popular, version

of control theory has been proposed by Hirschi (1969). Elaborating on the work of other social control theorists, he offers a considerable number of testable hypotheses. He argued that we do not need to explain the motivation for delinquency, since "we are all animals and thus all naturally capable of committing criminal acts" (1969:31). Like Durkheim (1951), Hirschi believed that moral standards and rules of behavior, a product of social interaction, hold the society and its members together. It was the power of internalized norms, conscience, and approval by others that, according to Hirschi, motivated the individual toward legitimate and conventional behavior. He was, therefore, in agreement with Durkheim that

The more weakened the groups to which [the individual] belongs, the less he depends on them, the more he consequently depends on himself and recognizes no other rules of conduct than what are founded on his private interest. (Durkheim, 1951:209)

In other words, Hirschi proposed that the reason individual engaged in the criminal act, in contrast to Sykes and Matza (1957), was not the use of neutralization techniques but weakened or broken bond to society and social groups such as family, school, and peers. The social bond had four elements or dimensions. The first, and the most important element is attachment. Internalization of norms and values of society take place through attachment to significant others. Attachment produces affection for and sensitivity to others and therefore, the more attached an individual is to others, the less likely he/she will involve

in deviant behavior. Hirschi views family, peers, and school to be the most important institutions in shaping one's personality. Family, and particularly the parents, are the most important of all. A child must hold strong ties to one or both parents even if the family is shattered by divorce or separation. Respect for others in authority will not likely to develop without attachment to one's family.

Commitment, the second element of social bond, refers to the degree of physical and emotional investment in conventional world. The more effort expended in pursuit of legitimate lines of action such as getting an education, saving money for the future, or occupational aspirations, a person is less likely to engage in any activity that would jeopardize his or her position in the social order. "The person becomes committed to a conventional line of action, and he is therefore committed to conformity" (Hirschi, 1969:21). Involvement or engrossment in conventional activities insulates a person from the lure of deviant behavior. The conventional activities require meeting deadlines, working hours, planning, and the like. Heavy involvement in job, school activities, recreation, or family affairs does not leave any more time or energy to engage in illegitimate act. In Hirschi's mind "the idle mind is the devil's workshop." Those who get involved in deviant acts are plagued with free time and characterized by " . . . a search for kicks, disdain for work, a desire for the big

score, and the acceptance of aggressive toughness as proof of masculinity" (Hirschi, 1969:22-23).

Belief, the fourth component of Hirschi's control theory, refers to the internalization of acceptable norms, values, and moral doctrine of the society. As opposed to the more traditional control theorists, Hirschi believed that, because of the failure or weakness in socialization process, those who violate the rules are different in their belief about what constitutes good and desirable conduct. As it was mentioned earlier, Hirschi disagreed with the notion that criminals use rationalization or "verbalization" (Cressey, 1960) or "techniques of neutralization (Sykes and Matza, 1957) so that they can violate the rules and at the same time, maintain their belief in them. Like Merton (1957), he believed in a common value system for the society. Hirschi (1969), however, disagreed with Merton (1957) that the social structure and its strains on the individual were responsible for antisocial behavior.

In an attempt to test the main hypotheses of his theory, Hirschi (1969) administered a detailed survey to more than 4,000 junior and senior high school youth in California. Through a detailed analysis of data, he found considerable evidence in support of his theory. For the most part, the results have also been supported by another major study by Hindelang (1973). Using sixth through twelfth grade students from rural schools in the state of New York, his findings disagreed with Hirschi's that close attachment to

peers will reduce delinquency. Others (Jensen and Brownfield, 1983; Wiatrowski, Griswold, and Roberts, 1981) have also found that attachment may or may not lead to deviant behavior. Jensen and Brownfield (1983), for example, found that attachment to parents who used drugs would more likely produce drug use among the children.

Finally, research on the theory has also produced a controversy on the relationship between attachment to school and delinquency. Elliot and Voss (1974), for example, argued that even though the school failure contributes to the delinquency, after a person drops out the rate of delinquency decline significantly. This finding is disputed by a recent study by Thornberry, Moore, and Christenson (1985). They believed that there was an "ineluctable conclusion" that "dropping out of school is positively associated with later crime" (1985:3).

Social Psychology and Human Development

Traditionally, infancy, childhood, and adolescence have been the primary focus of those behavioral and social scientists concerned with human development. For several reasons middle as well as old age were of little interest to developmental researchers. First, the average life expectancy at the turn of the century was only forty-nine years compared to 73.7 in 1979 (Atchley, 1985). Second, adulthood was once considered a period of relative stability. Today, Americans are increasingly unlikely to

have the same spouse, job, or home throughout their adult life.

Increase in longevity combined with changing patterns of family and work life have raised questions about constancy and stability in adult life. But as Brim and Kagan (1980) point out, most of research in this area is still age specific. And this, according to them, has produced fragmented pieces of age specific information and assumptions devoid of comprehensive understanding of human transformation over the life span.

Abeles (1987) suggested that the past two decades of study in life span psychology and sociological analysis of aging has led to a new perspective in human development. This emerging perspective with its four underlying premises present us with a new step in understanding constancy and change throughout the life course. Abeles (1987) described these four premises as:

1. Continuity of lifelong process: human development is a continuing process not limited to any specific age.
2. Multidimensionality of development: change is not limited to biological aging. Psychological and social domains of human behavior also change with ongoing human experience.
3. Human development is multidirectional: the pattern of change is not linear for all domains of human behavior and functioning. Rather, it may occur at different rate, duration, or continuity.

4. Development is multidetermined: change or stability are caused by interrelated influence of biological, psychological, and social functioning of humans.

As the multitude of adult developmental theories indicate, however, there is disagreement among the researchers on the nature and sources of change during the adult life. In other words, there is lack of consensus on how and to what extent biology, inner psyche, and/or social factors are responsible for shaping one's life cycle. Hagestad and Neugarten (1985) identify two general perspectives in adult development studies. First, life span perspective advocated mostly by psychologists and psychological social psychology focuses primarily on the interpsychic phenomena. Second, the life course perspective developed by sociologists and sociological social psychology is mainly interested in and emphasizes the turning points when the "social persona" undergoes change. Clausen (1986) refers to these two perspectives as the "normative-crisis model" and "the timing-of-events model," respectively.

Life Span Perspective and Adult Development

The main assumption of life span perspective is that life consists of a sequence of unfolding stages starting at birth and continuing throughout life. Individual is required to accomplish a major task at each stage to avoid threats to future achievements. In other words, in order for a person to lead a "normal" life and continue to grow

psychologically and socially she/he must face and overcome the major life crises in sequential stages through life (Datan and Ginsberg, 1975).

One of the pioneers in the analysis of stages of the entire life span was Erik Erikson who extended Freudian psychological theory beyond childhood. His theory, largely based on the work of Freud, described a series of eight stages through which individuals progress as they develop (Erikson, 1950). He accepted many of Freud's ideas. Like Freud, he believed in id, ego, and superego as the three basic components of personality. He also agreed with Freud on the existence of some inborn basic instincts. Unlike Freud, however, Erikson stressed that individuals are not passively molded by their parents or by the unconscious and at the same time continuous struggle between the id and superego. On the contrary, individuals are actively involved in understanding of the realities of social world and attempting to successfully adapt to their environment (Shaffer, 1989). More importantly, as his "eight ages of man" indicate, this is an ongoing process since three of these stages occur during the adult years (Erikson, 1950).

Erikson believed that at midlife individual has to go through the seventh stage of life -- "generativity versus stagnation. According to him generativity "is primarily the interest in establishing and guiding the next generation or whatever in a given case may become the absorbing object of a parental kind of responsibility" (Erikson, 1950:231). It

is important to point out that this does not require one to be a parent to undertake this task. Strong sense of generativity can be achieved by trying to become a model and provide guidance for younger persons. To not "accept the responsibility which evolution and history have given him" results in "stagnation" or a sense of narcissistic self-indulgence. The need for "mentorship" during the middle age was documented by Vaillant (1977) in his longitudinal study of ninety-five Harvard men over the age of thirty-five. It is interesting to note that Shover (1985) found similar "interest in establishing and guiding the next generation" among the middle aged former criminals.

Peck (1968) criticized Erikson for his vague description of middle age and suggests additional crises faced by man in their middle years. Individuals at this stage of life have to struggle with the four crises of valuing wisdom versus valuing physical power, socializing versus sexuality, emotional flexibility versus emotional impoverishment, and mental flexibility versus mental rigidity. According to him, these crises are the result of physical changes, decline in sexual desires, and the need for adaptation to these as well as other sociobiological events such as divorce, death of friends, and end of careers.

Like Erikson, Levinson (1978) believed that human lifespan divides into progressive and orderly sequence of developmental stages. He suggests five such "eras" or "ages," each lasting roughly twenty to twenty-five years,

although age boundaries overlap somewhat. Four of these ages happen during adult years each requiring a particular structure of personal and interpersonal relations allowing the individual to accomplish the tasks related to that stage. In between these stages, there is a five-year transitional period where previous life structure is modified and work toward initiation into a new structure starts.

Despite the universality of these "ages," because of the "individual life structure" or "the patterning or design of the individual life at a given time" some degree of variability can be found among the individuals (Levinson, 1981). An individual life structure has three components:

(a) The nature of the man's sociocultural world, including class, religion, ethnicity, race, family, political systems, occupational structure, and particular conditions and events, such as economic depression or prosperity, war, and liberal movements of all kinds.

(b) His participation in this world -- his evolving relationships and roles as citizen, worker, boss, lover, friend, husband, father, member of diverse groups and organizations.

(c) The aspects of his self that are expressed and lived out in the various components of his life; and the aspects of the self that must be inhibited or neglected within the life structure . . . (Levinson, 1981: 285)

For Levinson (1978), transition into adulthood starts at the age of seventeen with the task of separation from one's family and beginning to establish an independent, adultlike identity. After entering the adult world and passing through "age thirty transition" lasting from the age 28 to

33, and reaffirmation of commitments made in previous stages, one enters the "settling down" stage. It is in this stage that man has to accomplish the task of establishing a niche in society and become a valued member of valued world through career development and community participation. At about ages forty and forty-five or what he labels as mid-life transition, man must face the signs and limitations of aging.

The mid-life transition brings about a new set of developmental tasks. The new "marker events" such as death of friends and parents, sickness, and children leaving home can contribute tremendously to the change of perspective (Levinson, 1978).

Now the life structure itself comes into question and can not be taken for granted. It becomes important to ask: What have I done with my life? What do I really get from and give to my wife, children, friends, work, community -- and self? . . . What are my greatest talents and how am I using -- or wasting -- them? What have I done with my early dreams and what do I want with them? (Levinson, 1981: 294-295).

Levinson's subjects were limited to forty adults between the ages of thirty five and forty five. Therefore, even though he suggests three other stages beyond midlife transition, the information regarding these stages are sketchy. It is also revealing that a number of other studies have found similar results like the ones developed by Levinson. Vaillant (1977), for example, found a period of commitment to work and success during early adulthood, reappraisal and questioning during the midlife, and concerns

with the "world within" among his ninety-five subjects. Sheehy (1976) in a study of 115 men and women presented stages identical to those of Levinson, even though in his case the labels have changed. Jolin and Gibons (1987) found similar developmental patterns among seventeen middle age offenders.

As a result of his study of 500 outpatients at a psychiatric clinic and later 524 nonpatients, Roger Gould (1978) presented yet another developmental theory. Like Erikson and Levinson, he believes in sequential passage through stages of life, or what he refers to as "transformations." But unlike the other two, Gould (1978) is less concerned with the individual's relations to outer world. Instead, he is more concerned with the inner self or self-consciousness.

For Gould (1978), development entails gradual transformation from child consciousness to adult consciousness. The task of individual at each stage is to overcome the false, "childish" assumptions ingrained within us during the early childhood and replace them with more "adult" and realistic assumptions. The four major false assumptions are

1. We'll always live with our parents and be their child.
2. They'll always be there to help when we can't do something on our own.
3. Their simplified version of our complicated inner

reality is correct, as when they turn the light on in our bedroom to prove there are no ghosts.

4. There is no real death or evil in the world. (Gould, 1978: 39).

Similar to other developmental stage theories, these developmental tasks have to be overcome in sequential stages, the first-listed assumption have to be rejected first, and so on.

Life span perspective and stage theories have recently come under attack for a variety of reasons. For one thing, it is suggested that up to date so many different segmentation of life span have been proposed that the "reality" of these ad hoc formulations should be questioned, "if not on empirical grounds, at least on logical grounds" (Haan, 1981: 146). Clausen (1986) criticizes these theories for presupposing an invariant order of stages. In the case of Levinson, for example, as he suggests, not only there is no support from major longitudinal studies for proposed stages, discrepancies even exist between sequences and timing and the very cases studied by Levinson himself (Clausen, 1986). Dannefer (1984) is also critical of such theories on several grounds. His objection is directed toward statements such as the following made by Levinson (1978: 322).

This sequence of eras and periods exists in all societies, throughout the human species, at the present stage of human evolution. The eras and periods are grounded in the nature of man as a biological, psychological and social organism, and in the nature of society as a complex enterprise

extending over many generations.

Such hypothesizing, according to Dannefer (1984), can only lead to ontogenetic fallacy where biology becomes the primary force in shaping the human life. Within such a framework, social environment and socialization only receive a token acknowledgment as a necessary element in the life of individuals and society as a whole. In addition, since no variation is allowed in the sequencing of stages, the causal factors must be assumed invariant and hence variability of environmental factors logically irrelevant. Furthermore, since sequential passage through stages are assumed to be developmentally normal, any deviation or variation can only be perceived as not normal (Dannefer, 1984).

Life Course, Age norms, and Society

The roots of the life course theory goes back to the earlier works of cultural anthropologists and their comparative cross-cultural studies. Van Gennep (1960), for example, found that "time" in different societies does not always move in a universal linear pattern and is not always measured in terms of minutes, hours, days, or years. Rites of passage demarcate stages of life, sometimes completely different and even in contradiction to Western concept of social time. In other words, as cross-cultural studies indicate, passage of time, life stages, and their boundaries are culturally defined and culturally set.

Life course theorists consider socially constructed

stages of life and social time as main elements of social structure in every culture. They point to the relativity and variability of the notions of age, time, and the concept of life course, not only from one culture to another but also from one segment of society to the other. One thing, according to this theoretical perspective is universal and that is the fact that all societies contain an age system through which personal life course is established and individuals are channeled into different positions and roles (Fry and Keith, 1982).

Neugarten and Hagestad (1976) suggested that in all societies biological time is divided into socially relevant units. Later (Hagstad and Neugarten, 1985) they proposed that as a result of this division, age classes, age grades and age statuses emerge as social constructions. This age system delineates socially recognized and predictable road maps for the participants and provide them with life paths. In other words:

. . . period of life are defined; people are channeled into positions and roles according to age criteria; and privileges, rights, and obligations are based on culturally shared age definitions. Finally, populations are divided into age groups whose interactions are socially structured and regulated. (Hagstad and Neugarten, 1985:5)

Consequently, life course is perceived to be a matter of successive entering and leaving of social roles throughout one's life span (Bush and Simmons, 1981; George, 1980). There is, however, a general agreement among the life course theorists that more than one pattern of timing or ordering

of life events exist in every society (Atchley, 1975; Runyan, 1984). It is further argued that not all the timing of the life changes are structurally determined, but may be self-produced. In other words, individuals do not passively choose or enter every specific life-path put forth by the society at a certain age or age-range in their life. On the contrary, many of the selections are results of a "person's goals, feelings, perceptions, interpretations, aspirations, and evaluations" (Wells and Stryker, 1988). The fact remains, however, that most age norms can be viewed as objectified time markers that determine typical standard of conduct for people at various points along the life course. As stated by Maines (1983:185), "Certain ages or age ranges take on a normative quality because people impute consensual meaning to them and a sufficiently large number of people act in a way which is consistent with those meanings".

Previous studies in the United State point to a broad agreement among Americans regarding the appropriate age for various transition events. These studies point to the ideal age as well as the suitable age-ranges outside of which a person is "off time" (Elder, 1974; Modell, 1979).

Neugarten, Moore, and Lowe (1965), for example, found that over 80% of their respondents felt that the best age for a man to marry was between 20 and 25. The same percentage also felt that age 20 to 22 was the proper age to go to work. Over 70% felt that most men should be settled on a career between the ages of 24 and 26. The study also found

a highly significant increase in the perceived importance of the age norms as age increased.

Other studies have also shown considerable consensus regarding expectations and norms associated with the four major life phases of young adulthood, maturity, middle age, and old age (Cameron, 1969; Drevenstedt, 1976; Fry, 1976). The normative quality and expectations associated with each life stage require members of society to observe the "proper" timing of entering and exiting from social roles associated with each stage of life course.

Where there are well-defined age norms for many events in adult life, the general countour of life transitions is given by the culture (the belief system of the society) rather than by biological processes. Adaptation is most urgently demanded when a person is unable or unwilling to make transitions at an expected time or when a person is confronted with disruption of an expected state (Clausen, 1986:18).

Empirical studies indicate that most individuals within the American society are aware of their positions within social timetables and describe themselves as being "off-time" or "on-time" (Neugarten et al., 1965; Sofer, 1970). As a result, being "on-time" provides support from peers and generalized others (Brim and Ryff, 1980; Seltzer, 1975) while being "off-time" or deviations from the "standard norms of timeliness" can be a source of stress (Wells and Stryker, 1988).

Review of literature indicate that expectations of social time coupled with inevitable physiological changes associated with chronological changes lead to readjustment

of expectations and performance levels throughout adult life (Brim, 1976). Neugarten and Datan (1981) in their extensive study of 100 middle-aged men and women found that with advancing age, individuals face deteriorating health, inefficiencies in body functions, and death of friends of the same age. Consequently, individuals restructure their life in terms of time left to live rather time since birth. As opposed to the younger adults who have a tendency to focus on relationships with friends, neighbors, and colleagues, in the middle years and beyond social ties with kins tend to constitute a larger proportion of their relationships (Fischer, 1982; Farrel and Rosenberg, 1981). Increasing age brings more attention to inner life and less preoccupation with striving. Men become more expressive and nurturant with age. They seem to become less aggressive, more affiliative, and more interested in love than conquest or power (Clausen, 1986; Gutmann, 1969). With age also comes time to reflect on one's accomplishments in life, on failures, and on establishment of new goals in life. In general, many researchers have found a large proportion of middle-aged men to have higher self-esteem and self-confidence, perceive themselves more in control of their destinies (Deutscher, 1968), having a greater sense of maturity and better sense of reality (Neugarten and Datan, 1981).

Desistance and Related Literature

The first attempt to explain desistance from crime can be found in "A Treatise on Man" by Quetelet (1842). He associated propensity to crime with increase in physical powers and passions. As these qualities decreased with age, "reason," also developed and continued to develop with age, acquired sufficient power to govern the combined influence of the other two. Quetelet then concluded that "of all the causes which influence the development of the propensity to crime, or which diminish that propensity, age is unquestionably the most energetic" (1842, 1968:92).

Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck (1974) in four different studies investigated factors leading to the rehabilitation of more than two thousand five hundred delinquents and career criminals. Their four decades of investigation and examining many possible traits and factors involved in recidivism led them to conclude that "the most probable influence was the achievement of a requisite state of maturity" (1974:169). This conclusion was consistent with an earlier finding that "Aging is the only factor which emerges as significant in the reformatory process" (Gluecks 1937:105). They argued that aging or maturation, a complex concept and process, encompassed the development of stage of physical, intellectual and affective capacity and stability. According to them, maturation also required an adequate degree of integration of all aspects of temperament,

personality and intelligence necessary to meet the demands and restrictions of life in organized society.

Despite the fact that the relationship between age-crime is well established and as Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983:552) state "no fact about crime is more widely accepted", few studies have tried to explain the nature of this relationship. Even the conclusion reached by Gluecks (1974) that aging brought maturation and with maturation came the desistance, have come under attack as being "one of the--unhappily not infrequent--occasions on which a label has been mistaken for an explanation" (Wooten, 1959:164).

Shover (1985) classified the studies of adult offenders into three categories. First, the traditional parole prediction research that relied on official records to determine which variables contributed to the "success" and "failure" of the parolees. According to him, these studies were all atheoretical and stimulated by correctional concerns and assumptions. The second group of studies combined official data with some follow-up interviews. Even though some of this studies were guided by theory-generating or theory-testing objective, like the first group, they were highly structured and mostly dictated by correctional concerns. The third group of investigations were primarily guided by theoretical concerns and utilized a relatively unstructured inductive methodology to understand the fates of repeat offenders from their own point of view. Shover (1985) noted that this kind of study would lead to

interpretative understanding of the offender experiences and explanation of modifications of their criminal behavior.

Using this approach, Shover (1985) interviewed 50 ex-offenders previously convicted of ordinary property crimes. Results indicated that the subjects experienced subtle but fundamental changes as they aged. The offenders described these changes as becoming "more settled," "more mature," or more responsible." As a result, they developed a new perspective on self, a growing awareness of time, a change in aspirations and goals, and a growing sense of tiredness. The offenders, according to Shover (1985), developed a growing awareness of time as limited resource and feared that because of previous convictions, the future prison terms could be lengthy. Comparing the results of his findings to those of Neugarten (1968) and Levinson (1978), Shover (1985) found many similarities between offenders and nonoffenders. Like nonoffenders in Neugartern's study, his subjects had changed their time orientation to time-left-to-live rather than time-since-birth. Like Levinson's subjects, the offenders in Shover's study (1985) had become increasingly introspective, more realistic in their expectations, and they had become more future oriented. Furthermore, Shover (1985) found that offenders, like nonoffenders, became more and more interested in harmonious interpersonal relationships, legitimate employment, and in some cases, religion and religious experience.

The results of Shover's study find a great deal of

support in desistance literature. Irwing (1970), for example, interviewed 15 ex-convicts who had remained out of prison for many years. He found fear of further imprisonment, exhaustion from a deprived prison life and desperate criminal life, decreasing financial and sexual expectations, and improved social bond through personal relationships and sports participation as main factors contributing to the abandonment of criminality. Bull (1972) found development of personal and spiritual growth to be the main factors in reduction of criminal activities among the fifteen ex-convicts he interviewed.

Like Irwing (1970), Meisenhelder (1977) also found fear of further imprisonment as one of the reasons the 20 incarcerated, nonprofessional property offenders tried to stay away from criminal life. He also found "subjective wish to lead a more normal life" and "meaningful bond to the conventional social order" (Meisenhelder, 1977:324-25) to lead to a successful exit from crime. More specifically, the offenders in this study indicated that the fear of punishment and restraining forces of family ties, relationships with friends, and potential loss of job all assisted the exiting projects of these men.

Similar conclusions were also reached in a more recent study of 17 ex-offenders in Canada by Cusson and Pinsonneault (1986). According to them the decision to abandon criminal behavior was generally a result of a shock of some sort, a delayed deterrence, or both. The shock

could be a result of some event happening during the commission of offense or even a consequence of a severe prison sentence. Delayed deterrence was a function of increasing fear of punishment. Cusson and Pinsonneault (1986) found the statement by Shover (1983:212) that ". . . the men began to see the entire criminal justice system as an apparatus which clumsily but relentlessly swallows offenders and wears them down" to be also true of their subjects. In sum, Cusson and Pinsonneault (1986) found ex-offenders to eventually find it more difficult to do times behind bars and come to a realization that they were wasting their lives. Consequently, the offenders lose their desire to associate with disreputable, coarse, untrustworthy, and violent people. Not unlike other previously mentioned studies, their subjects also had developed the impression of having become more realistic, more prudent, and more mature. Finally, even though their study did not find family and having a job to have an important role in the decision to stop, the offenders found an interesting job and satisfying family life critical in resisting the temptations of committing new crimes.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study investigated the factors influencing the offender's decisions to terminate their criminal behavior. A review of literature indicated that aging, fear of punishment, and tensions associated with the life of crime eventually take their toll on the offenders and pressure them to desist from criminal activity. Previous research has also suggested that in addition to criminal histories and other demographic factors, life course and social control theories may be able to shed some light on reasons individuals decide to stop their offending.

This chapter presents the procedures for data collection, characteristics of the sample, and a description of the research instrument. It then proceeds to discuss the issues of validity, reliability, and generalizability.

Procedures for Data Collection

A preliminary meeting was held with the officials at the Oklahoma Department of Corrections to discuss the availability of a possible sample for this study. It was decided that since individuals currently on probation and

parole would best fit the purpose of this study, the researchers, with the approval of the Department of Corrections, should contact the local probation and parole office. Individuals under probation and parole, unlike those in the Community Treatment Centers or those in the House Arrest Program, do not have regular meeting times. Because of this factor and because of the distance to the other probation and parole offices, limiting the sample to those reporting to the local office seemed to be the best feasible opportunity to collect data.

As it was indicated by the probation and parole officers, the majority of individuals on probation and parole report to the office during the first week of the month. The data collection efforts, therefore, were concentrated during this period for three consecutive months. The data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire designed for this study. After explaining the purpose of the study and assuring the individuals of the confidentiality of their responses, the probationers and parolees were asked if they would participate in the research. Assistance by three trained researchers were provided for those unable to read or write.

After each questionnaire was completed, the probation and parole officer was asked to rate the offender on the possibility of future success or failure. Evaluation of successes or failures of offenders by their probation and parole officers is not unique to this study. Close

association between the evaluation of probation and parole officers and the eventual success or the failure of the offender is well documented. In his study of 33,967 parolees from New York State correctional institutions, for example, Stanton (1969) found that the evaluations of the parole officer corresponded in general with parole expectancies of the parolees.

Characteristics of the Sample

A total of 98 individuals participated in this study. The majority, or 71.4% of the respondents, were currently under probation, 19.4% were on parole, 1.0% were released under split sentence, and the rest, 8.2% were in the "other" category.

The probation and parole officers rated 45.9% of the respondents as failures and 54.1% of the offenders were rated as successes. At the time the data were collected, 56.1% of respondents had been incarcerated two or more times and 43.9% had been incarcerated one time. The majority of subjects (81.6%) were white and, the rest (18.4%) were African Americans, Native Americans and Hispanics.

About 42.3% of all offenders had a high school diploma, 37.1% had less than 12 years of education, and 20.6% had some college education. Of these, 40.4% had a G.E.D. Based on the question regarding the respondent's best skill or trade, the largest proportion or 41.8% of the sample were found to be semi-skilled workers, 31.6% were unskilled,

11.2% were skilled workers, and 15.3% were professional or full-time students. Unemployment was reported by 24.5% of the sample, part-time employment by 18.4%, and 56.1% reported that they either had a full-time job or were full-time students.

The responses indicated that 36.7% of the sample were single, 39.8% were married one time, 16.3% were married twice, and 7.1% were married three or more times. About 1.0% of respondents were widowed, 22.4% were separated or divorced, 14.3% had common law marriage, and 26.5% were legally married. The number of children was reported to be 1 for 24.5% of the offenders, 2 for 20.4%, 3 for 10.2%, and 4 or more for 6.1% of the sample. Thirty-nine percent of respondents did not have children.

The age of respondents varied from 18 years of age to 74. About 28.6% of were between the ages of 18 to 25, majority or 49.0% were between 26 and 35, 15.3% were between 36 and 44 years of age, and 7.1% were between the ages of 46 and 74. When asked about the place offenders resided most of their life, 26.8% reported they had lived in a large city most of their lives, 54.6% in a small town, and 18.6% indicated they had lived in a rural area.

Chi-square was used to see if there were any significant difference between the repeat offenders and the first time offenders. As Table I indicates, the two group were found to be significantly different on two of the demographic

TABLE I
COMPARISON OF PERCENT RESPONSE TO DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES
BY REPEAT AND NON-REPEAT OFFENDERS

| Variable | Non Repeaters (N=43) | Repeat Offenders (N=55) | Total Sample (N=98) | Chi Value |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Success/Failure | | | | |
| Success | 69.8 | 41.8 | 54.1 | |
| Failure | 30.2 | 58.2 | 45.9 | 7.59* |
| Race | | | | |
| White | 81.4 | 81.8 | 81.6 | |
| African American | 4.7 | 7.3 | 6.1 | |
| Native American | 11.6 | 7.3 | 9.2 | |
| Hispanic | 2.3 | 3.6 | 2.0 | 0.01 |
| Age | | | | |
| 18 - 25 | 27.9 | 29.1 | 28.6 | |
| 26 - 35 | 53.6 | 45.4 | 49.0 | |
| 36 - 45 | 11.6 | 18.2 | 15.3 | |
| 46 and above | 6.9 | 7.3 | 7.1 | 1.01 |
| Residence | | | | |
| Large City | 14.3 | 36.4 | 26.8 | |
| Small Town | 69.0 | 43.6 | 54.6 | |
| Rural Area | 16.7 | 20.0 | 18.6 | 7.29* |
| Education | | | | |
| Less than high school | 25.6 | 46.3 | 37.1 | |
| High School | 53.5 | 33.3 | 42.3 | |
| More than high school | 20.9 | 20.4 | 20.6 | 5.50 |
| G.E.D. | | | | |
| Yes | 57.1 | 39.5 | 59.6 | |
| No | 42.9 | 60.5 | 40.4 | 0.05 |
| Best Skill or Trade | | | | |
| Professional or Student | 14.0 | 16.4 | 15.3 | |
| Skilled | 14.0 | 9.1 | 11.2 | |
| Semi-Skilled | 44.2 | 40.0 | 41.8 | |
| Unskilled | 27.9 | 34.5 | 31.6 | 1.04 |

TABLE I (Continued)

| Variable | Non Repeaters (N=43) | Repeat Offenders (N=55) | Total Sample (N=98) | Chi Value |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| Marital Status | | | | |
| Single | 44.2 | 29.1 | 35.7 | |
| Legally Married | 27.9 | 25.5 | 26.5 | |
| Common Law Marriage | 9.3 | 18.2 | 14.3 | |
| Separated or Divorced | 18.6 | 25.5 | 22.4 | |
| Widowed | 0 | 1.8 | 1.0 | 4.21 |
| Number of Times Married | | | | |
| Once | 37.5 | 62.2 | 57.3 | |
| Twice | 33.3 | 24.3 | 28.0 | |
| More Than Two Times | 29.2 | 13.5 | 14.6 | 0.49 |
| Number of Children | | | | |
| None | 44.2 | 34.5 | 38.8 | |
| One | 20.9 | 27.3 | 24.5 | |
| Two | 18.6 | 21.8 | 20.4 | |
| Three or More | 16.3 | 16.4 | 16.3 | 1.10 |
| Employment | | | | |
| Full-Time | 53.5 | 58.2 | 56.1 | |
| Part-Time | 20.9 | 16.4 | 18.4 | |
| Unemployed | 25.6 | 25.5 | 24.5 | 1.96 |

*Chi-Square significant at .05 level.

variables. The majority of first time offenders were rated as successes by the probation and parole officers while the opposite was true of those rated as failures. Additionally, comparatively smaller proportion of successes had resided in larger cities and rural areas, the proportion was higher for the failures.

The Research Instrument

The data for this study were obtained through the use of a self-administered questionnaire specifically designed for this study (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was divided into seven sections. The first section provided information on the race, age, place mostly lived during the lifetime, years of school completed, and completion of G.E.D. The information also included the best skill or trade, marital status, number of times married, number of children and the status of current employment. The second section collected data on the subjects' legal background. Offenders' encounters with the juvenile and adult criminal justice system were the subjects covered in this section. Section four asked questions regarding drug and alcohol use and whether the offender was under the influence at the time of arrest. The next section was concerned about the last prison sentence and asked questions regarding the length of sentence and visits from the family members. Questions regarding the support from family and friends, the type of help received after release, and the activities involved since release were included in section five.

In order to collect data on control and life course theories, a series of Likert-type questions were used. The items were developed based on the previous work by Hirschi (1969), Shover (1985), and Neugarten (1967, 1968, 1981). After a close review by three researchers, it was decided to include 35 items to measure different components of control

theory. The components included attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief -- all developed earlier by Hirschi (1969). Another 34 items were developed to measure being on/off time in major life events, pressure by others to act more responsibly, life meaning, greater maturity and grasp of reality, awareness of time as limited, and the sense of responsibility toward oneself and others -- all components of the life course theory.

The last part of the questionnaire was developed to obtain information regarding decisions and efforts made by the offenders to stay away from criminal life. This section focused on factors perceived important by the respondents in their decision to terminate their offending. The items included in this section were designed to shed light on such issues as motivation, life events, and considerations affecting the criminal's decision-making processes. The subjects were also asked to reflect on changes they had made in their habits, life styles, and in social relations that they thought were important in their success.

Even though coding the open-ended questions for statistical purposes are, in general, more difficult and time consuming, these type of questions were perceived by the researcher to play a vital role in understanding social phenomena. As stated by Labaw (1980:132):

. . . these types of questions (open-ended) are indispensable to a thorough understanding of complex issues and topics. The main advantage of free-response or open-ended questions is that they are the only way the researcher can give the respondent the opportunity to "have his own say."

Presumably, although this is often forgotten, the main purpose of an interview, the most important goal of the entire survey profession, is to let the respondent have his say, to let him tell the researcher what he means, not vice versa.

For this reason, a number of open-ended questions were included in this section of the questionnaire. This allowed the subjects to freely expand their responses that otherwise were limited by the constraints of the close-ended question format.

Statistical Analysis

The responses to the questionnaires were coded and a data file was constructed for statistical analysis. After the completion of data input, the printout of computer file was checked manually against a number of randomly selected questionnaire responses to assure the accuracy of data input. A special program was also designed to further test and detect errors in computer data file. This program checked the range of keypunched values for each variable against possible values assigned to that variable. Whenever an error was found, the program printed out of range value, variable label, and the case id number. This enabled the researcher to easily find and correct all the errors.

The Chi-square and the t-test statistics were used to examine the differences between sociodemographic variables, criminal history variables, and substance abuse variables among those incarcerated more than two times and those who were imprisoned less. The same procedures were also used to

determine the differences between those rated as successes by the probation and parole officers and those who were rated as failures.

In order to determine if the control theory items scaled together, a factor analysis using principle components with an orthogonal Varimax rotation from the statistical system "SAS User's Guide" (1989) was used. The items selected for this purpose reflected attachment to family and others; commitment to family, community, and work; involvement in social and community organizations and clubs, involvement with friends, and family affairs; and, belief in the legitimacy of laws, fairness of punishment, and being certain about right rules.

The same procedure was also utilized to determine if the items for each component of the life course scaled together. Being off-time compared to others, pressure to act responsible, life meaning, maturity and grasp of reality, awareness of time as limited, and, responsibility toward self and others were the scales constructed for the life course theory.

T-test was used to determine whether there were any significant differences on each subscale of social control between those rated as successes and those as failures. The calculations were also performed for the scales of the life course theory.

As it was stated earlier, one purpose of this study was to see if significant relationships existed between

different demographic, criminal history, and substance abuse variables and the dependent variable of success/failure. Chi-Square values were calculated to accomplish this task.

The last part of this study looked into offenders efforts in reintegration into society and their efforts and accomplishments after release from prison. This section included some open-ended questions as well as close-ended ones. The responses to the open-ended questions were coded and Frequency counts and percentages were calculated for these and other items in this section. Additionally, chi-square tests were used to see if there were any differences between successes and those rated as failures on any of the items.

Validity

According to Cook and Campbell (1979) there are four main types of validity: statistical conclusion, construct, internal, and external validity. External validity, discussed in more details in the following section, refers to the degree of generalizability of the findings of a study to different groups or settings.

The statistical conclusion validity refers to inferences about covariation made on the basis of statistical evidence. The threats to statistical conclusion validity for this study were alleviated by setting the alpha level at .05 and at the same time being aware of Type I and Type II errors. Efforts were also made to choose the most appropriate

parametric and nonparametric statistical techniques and by avoiding the violation of the most important assumptions of the tests used.

As it was explained previously, several steps were also taken to assure the validity of the coded data. These steps included a comparison of computer generated data printout with the data provided on a number of randomly selected questionnaires. Additionally, the accuracy of data input was further tested through a specially designed computer program.

Internal validity refers to the confounding effects of extraneous variables. The data for this study were collected using a self-report questionnaire filled out by the respondents. Previous studies of the self reports have come to different conclusions regarding the weaknesses and strengths of this type of data. Farrington (1973), for example, believed that self-report data on deviant behavior were more accurate and more objective than the data collected through face-to-face interviews. This was likely because of the increased sense of anonymity felt by respondents using self-report questionnaires. The self-reports also seem to be more accurate compared to official statistics. This is because of the failure of official statistics to reveal the actual extent and the types of offenses committed (Erickson and Empey, 1963). Farrington (1973) suggested that the most accurate data on deviant behavior may come from a combination of self-report

questionnaire and official data. In order to assure confidentiality of the responses, however, the respondents were asked not to include their names on the questionnaires. The comparison of responses with the official data, therefore, was not feasible.

Construct validity, according to Babbie (1986:113), "is based on the way a measure relates to other variables within a system of theoretical relationships." In other words, construct validity concerns the degree to which the test measures the construct it was designed to measure. Mason and Bramble (1978) suggest two parts to evaluate the construct validity of a test. First, the theory underlying the construct being measured must be taken into consideration. Second, they propose that the adequacy of the test in measuring the construct must be evaluated. They further propose that factor analysis, by determining the intercorrelation among the items, can be used as one of the primary tools for studying construct validity.

In order to test the construct validity of the control theory scales, a factor analysis using principle components with an orthogonal varimax rotation from the statistical system (SAS User's Guide, 1989) was used. The purpose of factor analysis was to see if the items from attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief scaled together.

Nine items were selected to measure the degree of attachment to family, friends, and others. As indicated in Table II, since all items displayed significant loadings of

TABLE II
UNROTATED FIRST FACTOR LOADING FOR SUBSCALES
OF THE CONTROL THEORY

| Item | Original | Final |
|---|----------|-------|
| <u>Attachment</u> | | |
| Worried about criminal activity hurting family | .44 | .44 |
| Owing family little | .53 | .53 |
| Not having close friends | .63 | .63 |
| Happy without a single friend | .60 | .60 |
| Warm emotional relations with others | .43 | .43 |
| Regret past action hurting someone else | .43 | .43 |
| No one caring about what happens to me | .70 | .70 |
| Seldom worry about others | .52 | .52 |
| Being self-centered | .48 | .48 |
| <u>Commitment</u> | | |
| Working only for money | .34 | - |
| Not satisfied with any job | .77 | .77 |
| Importance of working hard | .61 | .62 |
| Looking to future with hope and enthusiasm | .67 | .67 |
| Liking job too well to give it up | .67 | .68 |
| Changing what want to be all the time | .21 | - |
| Strongly committed to helping family | .53 | .54 |
| Trying hard enough to achieve goals | .60 | .61 |
| <u>Involvement</u> | | |
| Having friends and social life | .76 | .73 |
| Being identifies with at least one group | .77 | .77 |
| Enjoying oneself alone, away from others | .50 | .50 |
| Spending time for the good of community | .03 | - |
| Not fulfilling potential unless deeply involved in at least one group | .73 | .73 |
| Participating in group activities of the community | .65 | .64 |
| <u>Belief</u> | | |
| Criminals stupid to get caught | .19 | - |
| Hard work leading to success | .70 | .72 |
| Children should learn respect for authority | .69 | .72 |
| Laws being necessary for society | .68 | .71 |
| Purpose of law being the well being of the individual | .70 | .72 |

TABLE II (Continued)

| Item | Original | Final |
|---|----------|-------|
| Laws keeping individuals from interfering with the rights of others | .77 | .81 |
| Fair for society to punish offenders | .45 | .45 |
| Should have been punished more for crime | .16 | - |
| Feel ashamed of past activities | .30 | - |
| Do not like life people lead on the outside | .13 | - |
| Alright to get around the law if possible | .30 | - |
| Having trouble deciding what the right rules are | .30 | - |

.43 and above, they were all retained as a measure of attachment. This factor explained 30% of variance of these items. Eight items were selected to measure the level of commitment. Two items, "The main reason I have a job is for money," and "My idea about what I want to be changes all the time" did not display a significant loadings. Because the former indicated a loading of .34 and the latter .11, both items were dropped form analysis. The factor explained .43% of the variance of these six items.

Six items were originally selected to measure the degree of involvement in conventional activities. One item, "Every person should spend some of his/her time for the good of his/her community" had a loading of .03 and, therefore, was not included in the final analysis. The involvement factor accounted for .48% of the remaining five items. Twelve items were originally selected to measure the degree of

belief in conventional values and norms. Six items of "The biggest difference between criminals and other people is that criminals are stupid enough to get caught," "For all the things I have done I should have been punished more than I have," "As I think about my past there are some points about which I feel shame," "I don't like the life that most people lead on the outside," "It is alright to get around the law if you can get away with it," and "I often have trouble deciding which are the right rules to follow" all had loadings of .30 or below. All these six items were excluded from the final analysis. This factor explained .49% of variance of the remaining six items.

Factor analysis was also used to test the construct validity of the life course theory scales. This was done to see if the items of being off time, act more responsible, life meaning, Grasp of reality, time as limited, and the responsibility toward self and society scaled together. In all cases, a factor loading of .40 and below was considered to be weak and therefore, eliminated from the analysis.

One item "Compared to others my age, I feel like I have wasted part of my life being involved in crime" was omitted from feelings of being off subscale because of low factor loading of .19. The factor itself explained .44% variance of the items. Six items were also include to measure "pressure to act more responsible" subscale. All items had a loading of .63 and above and, therefore, all were retained. Concerns about the life meaning included seven

TABLE III
UNROTATED FIRST FACTOR LOADING FOR SUBSCALES
OF THE LIFE COURSE THEORY

| Item | Original | Final |
|---|----------|-------|
| <u>Being off Time</u> | | |
| Being behind in life compared to others of the same age | .66 | .60 |
| Wasted part of life compared to others | .19 | - |
| Time to settle down and have a normal life | .59 | .65 |
| Being proud of most things done in life | .82 | .82 |
| Difficult to communicate with younger people | .49 | .52 |
| <u>Acting more responsible</u> | | |
| Being immature for ones age | .72 | .72 |
| Wondering if ever grow up | .83 | .83 |
| Fear others being disappointed if finding out about past actions | .75 | .75 |
| Having trouble acting responsible | .72 | .72 |
| People wanting more responsibility | .67 | .67 |
| Trying to find what gets him in trouble | .63 | .63 |
| <u>Life Meaning</u> | | |
| Discovering a satisfying life purpose | .61 | .60 |
| Inner life being the most rewarding object of study | .06 | - |
| Life being empty, filled with despair | .84 | .86 |
| Future appearing dark | .83 | .87 |
| Having clear goals and aims in life | .70 | .70 |
| My life is in my hand | .25 | - |
| Generally plan into the future | .26 | - |
| <u>Grasp of Reality</u> | | |
| Trying to escape from reality | .58 | .58 |
| More realistic in what can and cannot do | .74 | .74 |
| Mature enough to do something about future problems | .47 | .47 |
| Sometimes ignore the consequences of action | .73 | .73 |
| <u>Time as limited</u> | | |
| Thinking about disappearing youth | .75 | .73 |
| Worried about not having enough years left to achieve goals | .67 | .68 |
| Wondering if too old to make fresh start | .74 | .75 |

TABLE III (continued)

| Item | Original | Final |
|--|----------|-------|
| Worried about physical problems | .71 | .71 |
| Too old to be involved in crime | .30 | - |
| Feel older than I really am | .46 | .47 |
| Feeling young enough to accomplish important goals | .52 | .55 |
| <u>Responsible toward self and others</u> | | |
| Being responsible for troubles | .70 | .70 |
| Having someone to be responsible to | .52 | .54 |
| Failing if some changes in life are not made | .78 | .77 |
| People will respect me one day | .39 | .40 |
| Being an irresponsible person | .10 | - |

items originally. Three items of "The most rewarding object of study anybody can find is his/her own inner life," "My life is in my hands," and "I generally plan into the future" all had loadings of .30 and below. The three items were, therefore were dropped from the final analysis. About .58% of the variance in the items of these subscale was explained by this factor.

All items in the grasp of reality subscale had a loading of .47 and above. The factor explained .38% of variance of these items. The two other two subscales of time as limited, and feeling responsible toward self and other started with five items each. The item, "I feel I am too old to be involved in the life of crime" from the former, and "I am an irresponsible person" from the later subscales

were dropped because of low loadings. The Variance in the items explained by each factor were .43% and .39% respectively.

Generalizability

One of the concerns of any researcher is the degree to which the results of a study can be generalized to other groups or settings. Theoretically, generalizability can be achieved by randomly selecting a sample from the desired population. In the actual research setting, where the researcher is restricted with the scarcity of time and resources, utilization of a representative sample can be limited. In most cases the convenient available samples are selected.

Since the sample for the present study was selected on the basis of availability of subjects, the researcher is aware of the shortcomings of results when it comes to inference and generalization. Every attempt, however, was made to provide detailed information on the demographic characteristics of the sample under study. This will provide a basis to determine the plausibility of inference to analogous population for the future researchers. For the purpose of this research, no attempt was made to infer conclusions beyond the sample under study and the analysis was limited to comparisons between the findings of this and other previous studies.

Since the questionnaires were administered in the

facility associated with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, the interaction between setting and treatment, a threat to external validity, is a possibility. To alleviate this problem, however, the purpose of the study and the association of the researchers to the local university, were carefully explained to each individual respondent prior to the questionnaire administration.

Reliability

While reviewing the literature regarding reliability of self-reported deviant behavior, Farrington (1973) concluded that scales containing many items and including many types of deviant behaviors were found to be internally consistent to a high degree. He also found that research studies point to the high test-retest reliability of such reports. In their study of the test-retest reliability of self reports of alcohol consumption, Williams, Aiken, and Malin (1985) found such reports to be highly reliable. This was also found to be true by Dentler and Monroe (1961) in their test-retest self-report study of the deviant behavior. Their study indicated that at least 92% of the responses were the same when the test was readministered two weeks later.

According to Cook and Campbell (1979), selection of longer tests which include highly intercorrelated items or measures can help alleviate the problem of unreliability. The internal consistency of an instrument can be estimated by the split-half technique or by one of the Kuder-

TABLE IV
CROMBACH ALPHA RELIABILITY FOR CONTROL
AND LIFE COURSE SCALES

| Scales | Crombach Alpha |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Control Theory</u> | .84 |
| Attachment | .69 |
| Commitment | .72 |
| Involvement | .72 |
| Belief | .76 |
| <u>Life Course Theory</u> | .60 |
| Being off Time | .54 |
| Acting More Responsible | .81 |
| Life Meaning | .75 |
| Grasp of Reality | .43 |
| Time as Limited | .72 |
| Responsible Toward Self and Others | .48 |

Richardson (K-R) formulas or Cronbach's alpha. In all cases the reliability can be estimated from a single administration of the instrument. A high correlation coefficient in the case of Cronbach's alpha suggests that the subjects would score about the same on any given sample of the test items.

For the purpose of the present study, a detailed multi-item questionnaire was designed to gather data from selected inmates. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to test the reliability of the items in each subscale of the control and life course theories. This was done after

elimination of items not displaying significant loadings in the previously mentioned factor analysis. As the Table IV indicates the alpha coefficients for the control theory scales varied from .69 to .84. For the life course theory scales the calculated alpha varied from .43 to .81. Nunnally (1978) accepts a coefficient of .7 and above to show a great reliability. For Carmines and Zeller (1979), however, Cronbach's alpha method is a conservative estimation of reliability and alpha is usually smaller than the true value of reliability of a scale. In any case, the fact remains that three subscales of "Grasp of Reality," "Responsible toward Self and Others," and "Being Off-Time" had low alpha values of .43, .48, and .54, respectively. Consequently, the results from the use of these scales should be treated with caution.

Limitations of the Study

1. In all self-report and attitudinal studies, there is always a risk of inconsistency between reported attitudes and the actual attitudes. Since many of the questions asked of the participants in this study dealt with the matter of attitudes and personal opinions, conclusions can only be drawn with this clearly in mind.

2. The subjects of this study were limited to a relatively small sample of probationers and parolees in a medium size town in the state of Oklahoma. As a result, one cannot safely generalize the results of this study to other

groups of offenders elsewhere.

3. Since no existing instrument was found to be appropriate for collecting the needed data, the researchers constructed their own instrument. Although several methods such as factor analysis and Chronbah alpha were used to resolve different types of validity issues, this area is always of some concern in most research including the present one.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

As it was stated earlier, previous studies have found significant relationships between sociodemographic variables, criminal history, and substance abuse with recidivism. The first part of this chapter consisted of determining the impact of these variables on offenders' successes and failures. Sociodemographic variables included in this study were age, race, education, G.E.D., type of residence, best skill, marital status, number of times married, number of children, employment, and current occupation.

Table V shows frequencies, percentages, and chi-squares for nine of these sociodemographic variable on the dependent variable categories. The successful offenders and those considered as failures differed only on two variables of best skill or trade and their current occupations. A larger proportion of successes (26.4%) reported to have professional jobs or be college students compared to only 2.2% of the failures. The largest proportion of failures (51.1%), on the other hand, were semi-skilled workers. It is interesting to note, however, that 34.0% of the successes were semi-skilled workers and the same percentage were

TABLE V
 FREQUENCIES, PERCENTAGES, AND CHI-SQUARES IN
 EACH SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON
 SUCCESS AND FAILURE CATEGORIES

| Sociodemographic Variables | Success N (%) | Failure N (%) | Chi Value |
|--------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <u>Race</u> | | | |
| White | 46 (86.8) | 34 (75.6) | 2.05 |
| Minorities | 7 (13.2) | 11 (24.4) | |
| <u>G.E.D.</u> | | | |
| Yes | 11 (44.0) | 10 (37.0) | 0.26 |
| No | 14 (56.0) | 17 (63.0) | |
| <u>Type of Resident</u> | | | |
| Large City | 18 (34.0) | 8 (18.2) | 3.43 |
| Small Town | 25 (47.1) | 28 (63.4) | |
| Rural Area | 10 (18.9) | 8 (18.2) | |
| <u>Skill</u> | | | |
| Professional or Student) | 14 (26.4) | 1 (2.2) | 14.40* |
| Skilled | 3 (5.7) | 8 (17.8) | |
| Semi-skilled | 18 (34.0) | 23 (51.1) | |
| Unskilled | 18 (34.0) | 13 (28.9) | |
| <u>Marital Status</u> | | | |
| Single | 24 (45.3) | 11 (24.4) | 5.30 |
| Married | 20 (37.7) | 20 (44.4) | |
| Separated/Divorced | 9 (17.0) | 14 (31.1) | |
| <u>Number of Times Married</u> | | | |
| Never | 22 (41.5) | 14 (31.1) | 2.87 |
| One Time | 17 (32.1) | 22 (48.9) | |
| Two or More | 14 (26.4) | 9 (20.0) | |
| <u>Number of Children</u> | | | |
| None | 24 (45.3) | 14 (31.1) | 2.78 |
| One | 10 (18.9) | 14 (31.1) | |
| Two or More | 19 (35.8) | 17 (37.8) | |

TABLE V (Continued)

| Sociodemographic Variables | Success N (%) | Failure N (%) | Chi Value |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <u>Employment</u> | | | |
| Full Time | 33 (62.3) | 22 (48.9) | |
| Part Time | 10 (18.9) | 8 (17.8) | |
| Unemployed | 10 (18.9) | 15 (33.3) | 4.30 |
| <u>Current Occupation</u> | | | |
| Professional or Student) | 13 (25.0) | 1 (2.3) | |
| Skilled | 3 (5.8) | 1 (2.3) | |
| Semi-skilled | 15 (28.8) | 14 (31.8) | |
| Unskilled | 11 (21.1) | 13 (29.5) | |
| Unemployed | 9 (19.2) | 15 (34.1) | 11.90* |

*Chi-square significant at .05 level.

unskilled.

When asked about the current occupation, the largest proportion of successes (28.8%) indicated that they were holding semi-skilled jobs. The largest proportion of failures (34.1%) were currently unemployed. In addition, while one-fourth of successes were holding professional jobs or were enrolled in college, only 2.3% of the failures were in this category.

T test was calculated to see if the two groups were significantly different in their age and their years of education. As indicated in Table VI, the average age for successful offenders was 32.7, while the average age for the failures was 29.71. The difference between the average age

TABLE VI
COMPARISON OF AGE AND YEARS OF EDUCATION OF OFFENDERS
RATED AS SUCCESSES OR FAILURES

| | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | t Value | P > T |
|------------------|----|-------|--------------|------------|--------|
| <u>Age</u> | | | | | |
| Successes | 53 | 32.77 | 10.65 | | |
| Failures | 45 | 29.71 | 7.48 | | |
| | | | | 1.66 | .099 |
| <u>Education</u> | | | | | |
| Successes | 53 | 12.32 | 2.61 | | |
| Failures | 44 | 11.18 | 1.45 | | |
| | | | | 2.58 | .011 |

of the two groups, however, was not found to be statistically significant. T test calculations, however, revealed a significant difference ($p < .05$) between the educational achievements of the two groups. The success group, on the average, had 12.32 years of education. The corresponding number for the failure group was 11.18.

Chi-square was also used to determine whether the two groups were different in their criminal histories. Seventeen variables were analyzed for this purpose. These included the offenders age at first arrest, age at first conviction, number of juvenile court convictions, number of times under juvenile probation, length of time under juvenile probation, commitment to juvenile institutions, length of time committed to juvenile institutions, number of times convicted as an adult, times under adult probation,

TABLE VII
 FREQUENCIES, PERCENTAGES, AND CHI-SQUARES FOR
 CRIMINAL BACKGROUND VARIABLES ON
 SUCCESS AND FAILURE CATEGORIES

| Criminal History Variables | Success N (%) | Failure N (%) | Chi Value |
|--|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <u>Age at First Arrest</u> | | | |
| 20 years & below | 28 (52.8) | 35 (77.8) | |
| 20 - 40 Years | 23 (43.4) | 9 (20.0) | |
| More than 40 years | 2 (3.8) | 1 (2.2) | 5.65* |
| <u>Age at First Conviction</u> | | | |
| 20 years & below | 26 (49.1) | 30 (66.7) | |
| 20 - 40 years | 25 (47.2) | 14 (31.1) | |
| More than 40 years | 2 (3.8) | 1 (2.2) | 3.09 |
| <u>Juvenile Court Conviction</u> | | | |
| None | 44 (83.2) | 26 (57.8) | |
| One Time | 7 (13.2) | 9 (20.0) | |
| Two or More | 2 (3.8) | 10 (22.2) | 9.62* |
| <u>Juvenile Probation</u> | | | |
| None | 44 (83.2) | 28 (62.2) | |
| One Time | 8 (15.1) | 8 (17.8) | |
| Two or More | 1 (1.9) | 9 (20.0) | 9.36* |
| <u>Years Under Juvenile Probation</u> | | | |
| None | 44 (83.0) | 30 (66.7) | |
| Less Than One Year | 7 (13.2) | 6 (13.3) | |
| More Than One Year | 2 (3.8) | 9 (20.0) | 6.57* |
| <u>Commitment to Juvenile Institution</u> | | | |
| None | 49 (92.5) | 35 (77.8) | |
| One Time | 4 (7.5) | 5 (11.1) | |
| Two or More | 0 (0.0) | 5 (11.1) | 6.84* |
| <u>Years Committed to Juvenile Institution</u> | | | |
| None | 51 (96.2) | 35 (77.8) | |
| Less Than One Year | 1 (1.9) | 5 (11.1) | |
| More Than one Year | 1 (1.9) | 5 (11.1) | 7.71* |

TABLE VII (Continued)

| Criminal History Variables | Success N (%) | Failure N (%) | Chi Value |
|---|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <u>Adult Court Conviction</u> | | | |
| None | 6 (11.3) | 1 (2.2) | |
| One Time | 23 (43.4) | 10 (22.2) | |
| Two or More | 24 (45.28) | 34 (75.6) | 9.83* |
| <u>Adult Probation</u> | | | |
| None | 5 (9.4) | 0 (0.0) | |
| One Time | 33 (62.3) | 20 (44.4) | |
| Two or More | 15 (28.3) | 25 (55.6) | 10.10* |
| <u>Years Under Adult Probation</u> | | | |
| None | 11 (20.8) | 3 (6.7) | |
| Less Than One Year | 7 (13.2) | 3 (6.7) | |
| More Than One Year | 35 (66.0) | 39 (86.7) | 5.77* |
| <u>Adult Incarceration</u> | | | |
| None | 14 (27.5) | 6 (13.3) | |
| One Time | 19 (37.2) | 12 (26.7) | |
| Two or More | 18 (35.3) | 27 (60.0) | 6.23* |
| <u>Years Committed to Adult Institution</u> | | | |
| None | 27 (50.9) | 12 (26.7) | |
| Less Than One Year | 17 (32.1) | 16 (35.6) | |
| More Than One Year | 9 (17.0) | 17 (37.8) | 7.66* |
| <u>Previous Offenses</u> | | | |
| Property | 18 (34.0) | 23 (51.1) | 2.94 |
| Violent | 11 (20.8) | 12 (26.7) | 0.47 |
| Alcohol Related | 25 (47.2) | 27 (60.0) | 1.61 |
| Drug Related | 17 (32.1) | 13 (28.9) | 0.12 |
| Fraud | 2 (3.8) | 4 (8.9) | 1.11 |

*Chi-square significant at .05 level.

length of time under adult probation, times incarcerated as an adult length of time incarcerated as an adult, and the length of time in adult institutions. The two groups were also compared on the number of times they were previously convicted for property, violent, fraud, DUI, and drug related offenses. Table VII shows the frequency and percentages in each criminal history variables on the dependent variable of success/failure. The two groups were found to be significantly different on eleven of these seventeen variables.

A larger proportion of failures (77.8%) were arrested while they were twenty years of age or younger. In comparison, only 52.8% of the successes fell in that category. About 43% of the successes were first arrested while the percentage for the failures was 22.2%. The number of convictions by the juvenile court was also significantly different for the two groups. A larger proportion of successes, 82.2% compared to 62.2% for the failures, were never convicted by the juvenile court. The proportion of offenders who were convicted by the juvenile court one time and two or more times were larger for the failures. Twenty percent of failures were convicted at least one time and 22.2% were convicted by the juvenile court two or more times. The corresponding percentages for the successes were 13.2% and 3.8%, respectively.

A larger proportion of the failures were also found to have been under juvenile probation. Approximately 83% of

the successes were never under juvenile probation, 15.1% were under juvenile probation one time, and 1.9% two times or more. About 58% of the failures, on the other hand, were never under juvenile probation, 20% one time, and 22.2% two or more times.

As Table VII indicates, the number of years spent under juvenile probation was also significantly different for the two groups. While the proportion of offenders who spent less than one year under juvenile probation was similar for the both groups (13.2% of successes and 13.3% of the failures), a larger proportion of failures (20.0%) were found to have been under juvenile probation for more than one year compared to the successes (3.8%).

Significant variation were also found in the variables of commitment to juvenile institution and years committed to juvenile institution. As Table VII shows, a larger proportion of successes (92.5%) were never committed to a juvenile institution. The percentage for the failures was found to be 77.8%. The number of times committed to the juvenile institutions and years committed to these institutions was higher for failures. While 7.5% of the successes were committed to juvenile institutions only one time, 11.1% of the failures were committed one time and another 11.1% were committed two or more times.

Chi-square calculations indicated that the proportion of successful offenders were significantly different from the failures on all variables related to adult offending.

Significantly more failures (75.6%) had two or more adult convictions compared to the successes (45.28%). A larger proportion of successes (43.4%) were convicted only one time in comparison to the failures (22.2%).

While majority (55.6%) of the failures had been under adult probation two or more times, majority of successes (62.3%) had been under adult probation only one time.

A significant variation was also found in the years under adult probation. About 87% of the failures had been under adult probation more than one year. Sixty-six percent of successes fell in that category. In addition, while 20.8% of the successes had never been under probation, only 6.7% of the failures were in that same category.

The number of adult incarcerations was also significantly different for the two groups. About 27.5% of the successes were never incarcerated as an adult, 37.2% were incarcerated one time, and 35.5% were incarcerated two or more time. On the other hand, the corresponding percentage for the failures were 6%, 12%, and 60%.

A larger proportion of failures (37.8%) were also found to have been committed to adult institutions more than one year compared to 17% of the successes. About 36% of failures were also committed to adult incarceration for less than one year. The percentage for the successes was 32.1%.

The two groups were also compared on the type of previous offenses. The offenders were compared on property, violent, alcohol related, and drug related offenses as well

as embezzlement and fraud. As Table VII indicates, with the exception of drug related offenses, a larger percentage of failures fell in each category of offense. None of the categories, however, revealed a statistically significant difference between the successes and failures. T test calculations, however, revealed a significant difference ($p > .05$) between the successes and failures on the average number of times they had committed property offenses as well

TABLE VIII
COMPARISON OF MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND T SCORES
OF SUCCESSES AND FAILURES ON FOUR DIFFERENT
TYPES OF OFFENSES

| | <u>Successes</u> | | <u>Failures</u> | | T | p> T |
|------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|------|------|
| | Mean | Std. Dev. | Mean | Std. Dev. | | |
| Property Offense | .43 | .77 | .93 | 1.29 | 2.28 | .02 |
| Violent Offense | .30 | .72 | .45 | 1.04 | .82 | .41 |
| Drug Related | .51 | .89 | .43 | .76 | .46 | .64 |
| Alcohol Related | 1.07 | 1.49 | 1.93 | 2.34 | 2.12 | .03 |

as alcohol related offenses. As Table VIII shows, on the average, failures reported they had committed significantly more property and alcohol related offenses than their counterparts in the success category.

The two groups were also compared on whether the last

TABLE IX
 FREQUENCIES, PERCENTAGES, AND CHI-SQUARES FOR
 ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE VARIABLES ON
 SUCCESS AND FAILURE CATEGORIES

| | Success N (%) | Failure N (%) | Chi Value |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <u>Last Crime Committed</u> | | | |
| <u>Under Influence of</u> | | | |
| <u>Alcohol</u> | | | |
| Yes | 29 (54.7) | 28 (62.2) | 0.56 |
| No | 24 (45.3) | 17 (37.8) | |
| <u>Last Crime Committed</u> | | | |
| <u>Under Influence of</u> | | | |
| <u>Drug</u> | | | |
| Yes | 9 (17.6) | 11 (24.4) | 1.54 |
| No | 42 (82.4) | 34 (75.6) | |

crime was committed under the influence of alcohol and drugs. As Table IX indicates, a larger proportion of failures indicated that they were under the influence of alcohol while committing their last crime. A larger proportion of failures also indicated that they were under the influence of drugs at the time they committed their last crime. The differences, however, were not found to be statistically significant for either one of these variables.

There was also a slight difference on the frequency of alcohol and drug use among the two groups prior to their last arrest. Again, as shown in Table X, the differences were not statistically significant.

TABLE X
 COMPARISON OF FREQUENCY OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG
 USE OF OFFENDERS RATED AS
 SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

| | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | t Value | P > T |
|---------------------------------|----|------|--------------|------------|--------|
| <u>Frequency of Alcohol Use</u> | | | | | |
| Successes | 53 | 2.9 | 1.73 | | |
| Failures | 45 | 3.0 | 1.64 | 0.27 | 0.79 |
| <u>Frequency of Drug Use</u> | | | | | |
| Successes | 53 | 1.4 | 1.78 | | |
| Failures | 45 | 1.7 | 2.00 | 0.61 | 0.55 |

A major goal of this study was to test the two theoretical perspectives: Hirschi's (1969) Control Theory and the Life Course Theory proposed by Neugarten (1967) and others.

Hirschi (1969) proposed that individuals who had developed strong bonds to social groups such as family and peers are less likely to commit crime. One major component of his theory was attachment or affection for and sensitivity to others. As Table XI shows this was also supported by the findings of the present study. The degree of attachment of those individuals rated as successes by the probation and parole officers were significantly higher than those rated as failures.

Hirschi (1969) also believed that individuals with stronger commitment or rational investment in conventional society and those who were more involved in conventional activities had a greater stake in conformity and therefore did were not likely to get involved in criminal behavior. The present study indicated that those who were rated as successes had a higher mean on both of these dimensions than those rated as failures (Table XI). The differences, however, were not statistically significant.

Additionally, Hirschi believed in a common societal value system. He proposed belief or "the acceptance of the moral validity of the central social-value system" (Hirschi, 1969, p. 26) as the fourth major component of his theory.

TABLE XI
COMPARISON OF MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND T SCORES
OF SUCCESSES AND FAILURES ON FOUR SOCIAL
CONTROL SCALES

| | <u>Successes</u> (N=53) | | <u>Failures</u> (N=45) | | T | p> T |
|----------------|----------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|------|------|
| | Mean | Std. Dev. | Mean | Std. Dev. | | |
| Attachment | 4.2 | .63 | 3.9 | .55 | 2.30 | .02 |
| Commitment | 3.9 | .58 | 3.7 | .55 | 1.19 | .24 |
| Involvement | 3.3 | .58 | 3.2 | .66 | .63 | .53 |
| Belief | 3.6 | .35 | 3.6 | .52 | .16 | .88 |
| Social Control | 3.0 | .34 | 2.9 | .29 | 1.50 | .14 |

The mean scores were the same for both the successes and failures participating in the present study.

Based on the life course theory by Neugarten and others it was proposed that as criminals age they undergo some physical and psychological changes that eventually lead to their desistance from their deviant behaviors. Previous studies by Neugarten (1967), Atchley (1975), Neugarten and Datan (1981), and Hagestad and Neugarten (1985), indicate that individuals adjust and re-adjust to age related changes imposed by the society throughout their life. These studies suggest that individuals begin to compare themselves to others of approximately the same age regarding their accomplishments in life. As the individuals age, they also feel under pressure to act more responsible toward self and the society. In addition, the studies suggest that aging individuals feel more mature, they deal with life as a limited resource, and become more concerned with life meaning. In recent years, some criminologists (Jolin and Gibbons, 1987; Shover, 1983, 1985; Gove, 1985) have proposed similarities in developmental patterns between criminals and nonoffenders. They further suggest that the life course changes eventually force criminals to rethink about their life and the consequences of their behavior and desist from criminality.

As Table XII indicates, calculation of correlation coefficients between life course and its subscales with respondent's age did not produce any significant results.

TABLE XII
 COEFFICIENT OF CORRELATION BETWEEN AGE, LIFE COURSE
 AND ITS SIX SUBSCALES

| | Age | P |
|--|-----|-----|
| Life Course | .17 | .09 |
| Off/On time | .03 | .70 |
| Pressure to act More Responsible | .18 | .08 |
| Life Meaning | .02 | .88 |
| Maturity | .12 | .22 |
| Time as Limited | .04 | .71 |
| Responsible Toward Self and Society | .12 | .25 |

Additionally, comparison of the mean scores of the criminals rated as successes and the ones rated as failures on six major subcomponents of the life course did not produce any conclusive evidence to support these suggestions. As Table XIII indicates, those rated as failures felt more off time in their life accomplishments and felt more under pressure to act more responsible. Those rated as successes were more concerned with the life meaning, felt slightly more mature than those rated as failures, and were less concerned about time as limited. Both groups were identical in their feelings of pressure to act more responsible toward self and the society. The calculated t values, however, did not

TABLE XIII
 COMPARISON OF MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND T SCORES
 OF SUCCESSES AND FAILURES ON SIX
 LIFE COURSE SCALES

| | <u>Successes</u> (N=53) | | <u>Failures</u> (N=45) | | T | p> T |
|--|----------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|------|------|
| | Mean | Std. Dev. | Mean | Std. Dev. | | |
| Off/On time | 2.9 | .62 | 3.1 | .56 | .97 | .33 |
| Pressure to act More Responsible | 2.2 | .96 | 2.5 | .72 | 1.33 | .19 |
| Life Meaning | 4.0 | .51 | 3.9 | .57 | 1.30 | .20 |
| Maturity | 3.9 | .61 | 3.7 | .58 | 1.87 | .06 |
| Time as Limited | 2.6 | .74 | 2.8 | .68 | 1.46 | .15 |
| Responsible Toward Self and Society | 3.8 | .54 | 3.8 | .51 | .17 | .88 |
| Life Course | 3.2 | .28 | 3.3 | .31 | .56 | .58 |

reveal any significant differences between the mean scores of the two groups on any of the six subcomponents.

The third and the final part of this study was exploratory in nature. This section was designed to collect information on participants' perceptions of different aspects of the life of crime, their efforts in reintegrating into the society, and the help they received from different individuals upon their release. As it was indicated earlier, a series of open-ended questions were also included

in this section to allow for a better input from the offenders. Based on the similarity of responses, the answers to these questions were coded for data analysis. Because of the low response rate, however, all the statistical inferences are questionable and should be treated with caution.

First, the subjects were asked to indicate the type of problems they faced upon their release from prison. The responses fell into four categories of 1) alcohol, drug, and depression related problems; 2) family related problems, 3) financial and job related problems; and 4) no problem. As Table XIV indicates, 16.7% of offenders rated as successes fell into the first category, 6.7% reported having family related problems, 43.3% had financial/job related problems, and 33.3% had no problems upon release. For those rated as failures, the percentages were 21.6%, 5.4%, 45.9%, and 27.0%, respectively. No significant differences were found among the two groups.

Next, the participants were asked to indicate the degree of help they received from their parents, siblings, spouses, and friends. An overwhelming majority of both successes (75.0%) and failures (65.6%) indicated that their parents helped them fully upon release. Majority of offenders in both groups also received full help from siblings (59.4% of successes and 63.0% of failures). Help from spouse was received fully by 60.0% of those rated as failures, while only 29.6% of the successes indicated

TABLE XIV
 FREQUENCIES, PERCENTAGES, AND CHI-SQUARES FOR MAJOR
 PROBLEMS AND THE HELP RECEIVED

| Problem and help | Success N (%) | Failure N (%) | Chi Value |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <u>Major Problem Upon Release</u> | | | |
| Alc/drug/depression | 5 (16.7) | 8 (21.6) | |
| Family problem | 2 (6.7) | 2 (5.4) | |
| Money/job problem | 13 (43.3) | 17 (45.9) | |
| No problem | 10 (33.3) | 10 (27.0) | 0.50 |
| <u>Help from Parent</u> | | | |
| Yes fully | 27 (75.0) | 21 (65.6) | |
| Only partial | 3 (8.3) | 7 (21.9) | |
| None | 3 (8.3) | 2 (6.3) | |
| Does not apply | 3 (8.3) | 2 (6.3) | 2.52 |
| <u>Help from brothers or sisters</u> | | | |
| Yes fully | 19 (59.4) | 17 (63.0) | |
| Only partial | 6 (18.8) | 4 (14.8) | |
| None | 3 (9.4) | 4 (14.8) | |
| Does not apply | 4 (12.5) | 2 (7.4) | 3.05 |
| <u>Help from spouse</u> | | | |
| Yes fully | 8 (29.6) | 15 (60.0) | |
| Only partial | 1 (3.7) | 2 (8.0) | |
| None | 2 (7.4) | 2 (8.0) | |
| Does not apply | 16 (59.3) | 6 (24.0) | 6.94 |
| <u>Help from friends</u> | | | |
| Yes fully | 21 (67.7) | 14 (48.3) | |
| Only partial | 3 (9.7) | 8 (27.6) | |
| None | 2 (6.5) | 3 (10.3) | |
| Does not apply | 5 (16.1) | 4 (13.8) | 3.92 |
| <u>Who helped the most</u> | | | |
| Parents, siblings | 22 (59.5) | 21 (60.0) | |
| Spouse | 6 (16.2) | 8 (22.9) | |
| Friends/girlfriend | 7 (18.9) | 3 (8.6) | |
| Others | 2 (5.4) | 2 (5.7) | |
| No one | 0 (0.0) | 1 (2.9) | 2.86 |

TABLE XIV (Continued)

| Problem and help | Success N (%) | Failure N (%) | Chi Value |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <u>Kind of help given</u> | | | |
| Monetary | 7 (20.6) | 10 (34.5) | |
| Place to stay | 6 (17.6) | 7 (24.1) | |
| Emotional | 14 (41.2) | 8 (27.6) | |
| Combination | 7 (20.6) | 4 (13.8) | 2.68 |

receiving such help. A closer look at the results, however, reveal that about half of all those rated as successes were single and 59.3% had marked "Does not apply" in response to this question.

When asked about the individual(s) who helped the offenders the most at the time of release, about the same percentage of successes (59.5%) and failures (60.0%) listed their parents or siblings as the main source of support. More successes (41.2%), however, indicated emotional support as the primary type of help received while most failures (34.5%) indicated that they had received monetary help. Another 20.6% of the successes received a combination of monetary and emotional help. The corresponding number for the failures was 13.8%.

Pritchard (1979) in his study of recidivism literature found age at first arrest, living arrangements, income, and history of drug and alcohol abuse to be the most stable predictors of recidivism. The offenders in this study were

asked if they had stopped or reduced alcohol and drug use since release. About the same percentage of individuals in both groups indicated they had stopped or reduced alcohol/drug abuse. A slightly higher percentage of offenders rated as failures by the probation and parole officers claimed they had stopped or reduced alcohol/drug use (42.2% and 22.2%) compared to the successes (41.5% and 20.7%). At the same time, 42.2% of failures claimed they had attended AA or NA since their release. The proportion of successes in this category was lower at 28.3%. In all cases, the differences between the two groups were not statistically significant.

About 32.0% of successes and 51.1% of failures indicated that they had stayed away from criminal friends since release. Avoiding or staying away from criminal friends and former crime associated was brought up again when participants were asked if they had "stopped doing something else which was causing trouble with the law." About 24.5% of successes and 28.9% of failures responded positively to this question. When asked for explanation, frequent response was "staying home more," particularly on weekends, and therefore avoiding bad companion. More than half of the offenders in each category also chose "straightened out my life" as one of the ways to improve their life chances. Here again more respondents indicated that in order to do so they had stayed away from alcohol, drugs, and bad companion by "staying home more," "off drug," or "no alcohol."

TABLE XV
 FREQUENCIES, PERCENTAGES, AND CHI-SQUARES
 FOR OFFENDERS' EFFORTS AFTER RELEASE
 FROM PRISON

| Efforts | Success N (%) | Failure N (%) | Chi Value |
|---|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <u>Stopped alcohol/drug use</u> | | | |
| Yes | 22 (41.5) | 19 (42.2) | 0.00 |
| <u>Reduced alcohol/drug use</u> | | | |
| Yes fully | 11 (20.7) | 10 (22.2) | 0.03 |
| <u>Stayed away from criminal friends</u> | | | |
| | 17 (32.0) | 23 (51.1) | 3.65 |
| <u>Stopped other activities causing trouble</u> | | | |
| | 13 (24.5) | 13 (28.9) | 0.24 |
| <u>Went back to school</u> | | | |
| | 10 (18.9) | 3 (6.7) | 3.15 |
| <u>Learned a new trade</u> | | | |
| | 6 (11.3) | 11 (24.4) | 2.92 |
| <u>Attended AA or NA</u> | | | |
| | 15 (28.3) | 19 (42.2) | 2.08 |
| <u>Joined some club, association, etc.</u> | | | |
| | 5 (9.4) | 2 (4.4) | 0.91 |
| <u>Straightened life</u> | | | |
| | 29 (54.7) | 25 (55.6) | 0.00 |

The participants in the study were asked if they had tried to improve their life chances by going back to school or learning a new trade. More offenders rated as successes indicated that they had gone back to school (18.9%) compared to failures (6.7%). On the other hand, 24.4% of failures had tried to learn a new trade compared to 11.3% of successes. Again, the difference between the two groups were not found to be statistically significant.

When asked if they had made a deliberate, firm decision to stay away from trouble with the law, an overwhelming 90.6% of successes and 88.9% of failures indicated they had done so (Table XVI). In order to do so, 39.6% of success and 46.7% of failures had given up alcohol/drug abuse; 37.7% of successes and 44.4% of failures had developed strong self control; 34.0% of successes and 46.7% of failures had improved family relations; 39.6% of successes and 55.6% of

TABLE XVI
FREQUENCIES, PERCENTAGES, AND CHI-SQUARE FOR
OFFENDERS' DECISIONS TO STAY AWAY
FROM TROUBLE WITH THE LAW

| Variables | Success N (%) | Failure N (%) | Chi Value |
|--|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <u>Decision to stay away from trouble with the law</u> | | | |
| Yes | 48 (90.6) | 40 (88.9) | 0.07 |
| No | 5 (9.4) | 5 (11.1) | |

failures had stayed away from criminal friends; and, 20.7% of successes and 22.2% of failures had started a better job (Table XVII).

As Table XVIII indicates, the majority of individuals in both groups claimed being "tired of getting into trouble" (66.0% and 68.9% of successes and failures respectively) as one of their major considerations entering into the decision to stay away from trouble with law. "Wasting life" was another consideration for 62.3% of successes and 64.4% of

TABLE XVII
FREQUENCIES, PERCENTAGES, AND CHI-SQUARE FOR
EFFORTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE
TERMINATION DECISION

| Variables | Success N (%) | Failure N (%) | Chi Value |
|--|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <u>Gave up alcohol/drugs</u> | | | |
| Yes | 21 (39.6) | 21 (46.7) | 0.54 |
| <u>Developed strong self control</u> | | | |
| Yes | 20 (37.7) | 20 (44.4) | 1.78 |
| <u>Improved family relations</u> | | | |
| Yes | 18 (34.0) | 21 (46.7) | 1.64 |
| <u>Stayed away from criminal friends</u> | | | |
| Yes | 21 (39.6) | 25 (55.6) | 2.48 |
| <u>Got a better job</u> | | | |
| Yes | 11 (20.7) | 10 (22.2) | 0.03 |

TABLE XVIII
 FREQUENCIES, PERCENTAGES, AND CHI-SQUARES FOR
 CONSIDERATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE
 TERMINATION DECISION

| Consideration | Success N (%) | Failure N (%) | Chi Value |
|--|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <u>Tired of getting into trouble</u> | | | |
| Yes | 35 (66.0) | 31 (68.9) | 0.09 |
| <u>Wasting life</u> | | | |
| Yes | 33 (62.3) | 29 (64.4) | 0.05 |
| <u>Stop shame and humiliation to self and family</u> | | | |
| Yes | 32 (60.4) | 23 (51.1) | 0.85 |
| <u>Fear and pain of imprisonment</u> | | | |
| Yes | 27 (50.9) | 25 (55.6) | 0.21 |
| <u>Religious Experience</u> | | | |
| Yes | 16 (30.2) | 10 (22.2) | 0.79 |
| <u>Out of respect for someone</u> | | | |
| Yes | 22 (41.5) | 23 (51.1) | 0.90 |
| Friend | 7 (30.4) | 5 (21.7) | |
| Relative | 16 (69.6) | 18 (78.3) | 0.45 |

those rated as failures. About 60.4% of successes and 51.1% of failures also made their decision to stay away from trouble with the law because they wanted to stop shame and humiliation to themselves and family. About 50.9% of successes and 55.6% of failures made the decision out of the

fear of imprisonment. Religious experience had contributed to the decision by 30.2% of successes and 22.2% of those rated as failures. Respect for someone was one of the considerations in decision making for 41.5% of successes and 51.1% of failures. Majority or 69.6% of successes and 78.3% of those rated as failures indicated that "someone" was a relative and the rest, 30.4% of successes and 21.7% of failures marked "a friend" as that someone special. When asked which one of the considerations was the major factor, "respect for someone" was selected the most by both the successes (24.4%) and failures (33.3%). The second largest proportion of successes (20.0%) chose "fear and pain of punishment" as the second major factor. "Religious experience" was selected the least by only 2.2% of the successes. For the failures, the second largest proportion chose "tired of getting into trouble" as the major consideration in decision to stay away from trouble with law. Only 2.8% of failures chose "stop shame and humiliation to self and family" as the major consideration.

Finally, the subjects were asked to indicate whom they blamed for the period they were involved in criminal life. About 88.9% of all respondents blamed themselves, 4.2% blamed others, and 5.6% blamed a combination of self and others. Similar pattern also appears when responses of those rated as successes and the failures are considered separately. As table XIX reveals, 87.2% of successes and 90.9% of failures blamed themselves for their

TABLE XIX
INDIVIDUALS BLAMED FOR OFFENDERS INVOLVEMENT
IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

| Blame | Success N (%) | Failure N (%) | Chi Value |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <u>Who do you blame?</u> | | | |
| Self | 34 (87.2) | 30 (90.9) | |
| Other | 2 (5.1) | 1 (3.0) | |
| Combination | 3 (0.0) | 2 (6.0) | 2.10 |

criminality, 5.1% of successes and 3.0% of failures blamed others. Another 7.7% of successes and 6.0% of failures blamed a combination of self and others for their criminal life.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study investigated the factors influencing the offenders' decisions to terminate their criminal behavior. A total of 98 male probationer and parolees in a medium size city in the state of Oklahoma were selected to participate in the study. The questionnaire, specifically designed for this study, was administered by the researcher in a separate room within the confounds of the Probation and Parole Office. A positive or negative mark was then placed on the questionnaire based on the probation and parole officer's evaluation of the respondent as a success or a failure. The evaluation part was done in the absence of the participant himself.

The first part of this study compared the offenders rated as successes and those rated as failures on sociodemographic variables, criminal background variables, and substance abuse variables. Second part of this study was designed to test the social control theory proposed by Hirschi (1969) and the life course theory proposed by Neugarten (1968). The study was also designed to investigate the participants' problems, their thoughts, and their

efforts in reintegration into the community since release from prison.

This chapter first presents a summary of findings of the study. Looking at the previous research, it then attempts to draw conclusions and reconcile the consistencies and the inconsistencies of the findings of this study with other relevant ones. Finally, based on the findings of the present study, some suggestions for future research will be presented.

Summary

About 54.1% or 53 of the subjects were rated as successes by the probation and parole officers, and the rest, 45.9% or 45 individuals were rated as failures. Chi-Square and t-test were used to compare the two groups on sociodemographic, criminal background, and substance abuse variables.

Calculated chi-square value indicated that the probation and parole officers had rated a significantly larger proportion of repeat offenders as failures. About 70% of those rated as successes were the first time offenders compared to 30% of failures. A significantly larger proportion of successes were found to be skilled as professionals or were currently enrolled as students. The majority of the failures, on the other hand, were found to be either semi-skilled or unskilled. A larger proportion of successes were also found to have professional jobs while

majority of jobs held by the failures were the jobs requiring very little occupational skills or no skill at all. About one-third of all failures were currently unemployed compared to about 19.0% of the successes. The job related information corresponded to the highest educational degrees held by the successes and failures. The failures, on the average, had 11.18 years of education compared to 12.32 years for the successes. The difference between the highest degree earned by the two groups was found to be statistically significant.

Fourteen different variables were included in the analysis of criminal history of the two groups. The successes were found to be significantly different from the failures on eleven of these variables. More than three-fourth of failures indicated that they had been first arrested at the age of 20 or younger. About half of the successes felt in that category. More offenders rated as failures had one or more juvenile convictions, had been under juvenile probation, and spend more time under juvenile probation compared to successes. Significantly more offenders rated as failures had also been committed to juvenile institutions and spend more time in those institutions.

The same results were found when looking at the adult life of the two groups. A significantly larger number of failures were convicted by the adult courts, were put under adult probation one or more times, and had spend more time

under probation. The number of times the failures had been incarcerated as an adult as well as the length of time in adult institutions were higher compared to the successes.

The proportion of successes and failures were not found to be significantly different when compared on the types of crimes they had committed. It is interesting to point out, however, that with the exception of drug related offenses, the proportion of failures was larger in every category of crime compared to successes. Additionally, the failures had committed significantly more property offenses and alcohol related offenses than those rated as successes.

When asked whether they had committed the last crime under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the majority of individuals in both groups indicated that they were under the influence of alcohol at the time of crime. In comparison, the proportion of those under the influence of drugs was lower for both the successes and failures. The differences in both cases, however, were not statistically significant. The frequency of alcohol and drug use was also similar for the two groups. Both groups, however, indicated that they had used alcohol more frequently than illegal drugs and the proportion of failures who had used drugs was slightly higher for the failures.

The offenders rated as successes and those rated as failures were not found to be significantly different on three subscales of social control--commitment, involvement, and belief. The successes were only found to have

significantly higher levels of attachment to family and friends. When comparing the two groups on different subscales of the life course, no significant differences were found. Both groups were similar on their feelings of being on/off time, pressure to act more responsible, perception of life meaning, degrees of maturity, perceptions of time as limited, and feelings of responsibility toward self and society.

When asked about the major problems upon release, a large proportion of individuals in both groups listed monetary and unemployment problems as the two main problems. Both groups also indicated that major help was received from their parents, siblings, and their friends. Both groups presented parents as the main source of assistance upon release. The only difference was that the help received from parents was monetary help for the failures while for the successes, the help was primarily emotional support.

A slightly more than 40% of offenders in each group claimed to have stopped alcohol/drug abuse. Another 20% claimed they had reduced the substance abuse. A majority of failures indicated they had stayed away from criminal friends, and about 24% of them had learned a new trade. About 32% of successes claimed to have stayed away from criminal friends and 18.9% indicated they had gone to school since release from prison.

An interesting finding of this study was that about 90% of both successes and failures claimed they had made a firm

decision to stay away from trouble. In order to do so, a majority of the failures had stayed away from criminal friends, 44% had developed strong self control, 47% had given up substance abuse, and the same percentage had improved family relations. Even though the differences were not statistically significant, the percentage of successes in each of those categories were lower at a 34 to 40 percentage level.

Another interesting finding was the degree of similarity between the two groups on the reasons given for the decision to stay away from trouble with the law. A majority of individuals in both groups claimed they had made that decision because they were getting tired of getting into trouble, they felt they were wasting their life, and they wanted to stop shame and humiliation to themselves and their family. Fear and pain of imprisonment was also mentioned by more than half of the individuals in both groups. The decision to stay away from trouble with the law was also instigated out of respect for a significant other for 41.5% of successes and 51.5% of failures. An overwhelming majority of individuals in both groups were similar in blaming themselves for their involvement in criminal activities.

Conclusions

The findings of the first part of this study, in general, supported the findings of the previous research

studies. Significantly more offenders rated as failures by their probation and parole officers were repeat offenders, had less education, less job skills, and were employed in jobs requiring less or no skills compared to the successes. As a group, the failures were younger at the time of their first arrest; more inclined to have had juvenile court convictions; proportionately more had been under juvenile probation; more committed to juvenile institutions and for a longer period of time. Additionally, more failures were convicted by adult courts two or more times, were imprisoned more than two times, and for longer periods of time. The failures also reported that they had been under adult probation two or more times and for a longer period of time compared to the successes.

The fact that the social control and the life course theories were not, for the most part, supported in this study may be due to several factors. First, previous studies by Glaser and O'Leary (1972), Glueck and Glueck (1937, 1974), Greenberg (1979), Farrington, 1979), Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983), and numerous other individuals point to the aging as one of the most important factors in termination of criminal behavior. The present study did not find any significant relationship between the offenders' ages and either the social control or the life course scales. This may be due to the fact that a majority or 78% of all subjects were 35 years of age or younger. Additionally, similarity of the age distribution of those

rated as successes and the failures in the present study may be a contributing factor to the lack of any significant differences between the two groups on different subscales of the social control and the life course. In other words, it is possible that the lack of support for social control and life course theories is due to the distribution of age among the two groups of offenders under study rather than the nature of the theories themselves.

Second, previous studies point to the differences in the duration of criminal careers among different categories or criminals (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983). Those committing homicide and rape, for example, seem to have the lowest recidivism rates (Glaser and O'Leary, 1972; Shover, 1985). More property crimes with lower risks, public-order offenses, and alcohol abuse, on the other hand, have flatter age curves and a slower termination point (Steffensmeier et al., 1989). Because of the smallness of the size of sample, it was not statistically possible to compare and control the effects of variations in the types of offenses. This, in turn, might have obscured the existing differences between the successes and the failures in terms of social control and the life course scales.

Third, as it was stated earlier, a factor analysis of questionnaire items for both the social control and the life course scales produced significant loadings for most of the items chosen. Low alpha coefficients for the three subscales of being on/off time, maturity, and feeling more

responsible toward self and others, however, bring into question the reliability of these subscales and, therefore, the validity of statistical inferences.

Lack of significant differences between the successes and failures on the items related to the offenders' decisions, efforts, and motivation to desist from offending poses several unresolved questions. It is possible, on the one hand, that both the successes and the failure were striving genuinely to abandon criminal behavior at the time of study. On the other hand, this does not mean that the future success rates will be the same for both groups. More failures suffered from lack of job skills and significantly lower educational levels and, therefore, less job opportunities. The failures also had a longer exposure to the life of crime and longer imprisonments, both as a juvenile and later as an adult. Consequently, one may expect a larger proportion of the failures to eventually relinquish commitment to "normalcy" and return (or be forced to return) to the life of crime.

There is also a possibility that, at least for some of the offenders, what is presented as "a deliberate, firm decision" and the related efforts and motivations to avoid "getting in trouble with the law" is nothing more than a "desired" stance hoped to be achieved rather than what has already been attained.

Finally, a larger proportion of those rated as failures indicated that, as part of their efforts to stay away from

criminal behavior, they had decided to stay away from criminal friends. More failures also reported attending AA or NA compared to the successes. At first glance, this might look surprising because the opposite is expected to be true in both cases. In the first case, there is a possibility that more offenders rated as failures had a larger number of criminal friends prior to their last conviction or last release and, therefore, a larger proportion indicating an attempt to stay away from them. In the second case, AA and NA attendance, it is not clear whether this was a voluntary move on the part of the offenders or a mandate imposed as one of the conditions of probation or parole. In both cases, the items on the research questionnaire did allow these issues to be further investigated.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Based on the findings of this study and the problems encountered during the analysis of data, this researcher would like to propose the following recommendations.

1. There is an apparent variation in the length and duration of criminal career for different groups of offenders. Any future desistance study should include sufficient number of individuals from each group to be able to better compare and contrast these groups with each other.
2. Even though the present study did not find any support for the relevancy of life course developmental

process and the termination of criminal behavior, this may be more due to the nature of the sample, the research instrument, or the research design. In addition to the recommendations on the research design that follows, any future study should pay a particular attention to the questionnaire design the construction of a more appropriate and reliable instrument in order to be able to test the theories presented here more accurately.

3. Longitudinal studies are generally thought of as the preferred method of determining change. This method of inquiry seems to be particularly appropriate for the studies of desistance over time. Based on the findings of this study, for example, about 90.0% of all offenders claimed to have made a firm decision to stay away from criminal activities. What happens to these individuals over time and whether they are able to stay "clean" is an open question that can only be answered utilizing a longitudinal design.

4. And finally, knowing why an individual recidivates is as important as knowing why he/she succeeds in staying away from criminal behavior. In addition to studies such as the one in hand, it seems essential to conduct in-depth interviews with both successes and failures to shed some light on the intricacies of human feelings, thoughts, behavior, and the process of decision making, particularly as they relate to criminal behavior and criminality.

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APPENDIX

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire is designed by the OSU Sociology Department. The information you give will be used for RESEARCH ONLY. You are requested to be truthful in your responses, as the information you volunteer will not be seen by anyone except the researchers and can not be used against you under any circumstances. We hope we will be able to use the information you give us to help you, as well as contribute to general research knowledge.

I. Social Background

The majority of these questions can be answered by placing a mark in front of the response that applies to you. There are some questions that require specific dates which may be answered with information to the best of your knowledge. Questions which require longer responses may be answered on the back of the questionnaire if more space is needed. (Do indicate which question is being answered.)

1. Race:
1. White [] 2. Mexican American []
3. Black [] 4. Native American []
5. Other [] _____

2. Present age: _____ Years

3. You have lived most of your life in:
1. a large city []
2. a small town []
3. rural area []

4. Years of school completed: _____ years

5. Have you completed a GED? Yes [] No []

6. What is your best skill or trade _____

7. Marital status: [] Single
[] Legally Married
[] Common Law Marriage
[] Separated or divorced
[] Widowed

8. Number of times married: _____

9. Number of children: _____

10. You are now employed [] full time
[] part time
[] unemployed

B. Legal Background

1. What was your age at first arrest _____
2. What was your age at first conviction _____
3. How many times were you convicted by a juvenile court? 0 1 2 3 4+
4. How many times you have been convicted by an adult court? 0 1 2 3 4+
5. How many times were you placed on probation, as a juvenile? 0 1 2 3 4+
6. How many times have you been placed on probation, as an adult? 0 1 2 3 4+
7. How many times you were committed to juvenile institutions? 0 1 2 3 4+
8. How many times have you been incarcerated as an adult? 0 1 2 3 4+
9. For how long did you remain under juvenile probation?
 _____ years _____ months
10. For how long did you remain under adult probation?
 _____ years _____ months
11. How much time did you do in juvenile correctional institution in total?
 _____ years _____ months
12. How much time have you done in adult correctional institution in total?
 _____ years _____ months
13. If you were incarcerated more than once, how much time did you stay out on the street between the last two incarcerations?
 _____ years _____ months
14. What was the offense for which you were last convicted?

15. How many times have you been sentenced:
- for property related offenses? _____
- for violent offenses? _____
- that were drug related? _____
- that were alcohol related? _____
- con games, embezzlement? _____
- any other? _____ explain _____

C. ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

1. Before your last conviction, did you drink alcohol?
- Everyday _____ Occasionally _____
- Twice a week _____ Rarely _____
- Once a week _____ Never drank _____
2. Were you under the influence of alcohol at the time you committed your last offense? yes _____ no _____
3. Before your last conviction, did you use illegal drugs?
- Everyday _____ Occasionally _____
- Twice a week _____ Rarely _____
- Once a week _____ Never _____
4. Were you under the influence of drugs at the time you committed your last offense? yes _____ no _____

D. LAST PRISON SENTENCE

1. What was the length of your last sentence?
- _____ years _____ months
2. When did your sentence start? _____ month _____ year
3. When did you come out on the street?
- _____ month _____ year
4. Are you currently on: [] probation
[] parole
[] split sentence
[] any other _____
5. While you were in prison during your last imprisonment, how often were you visited by your family members?
- _____ weekly _____ once a year
- _____ monthly _____ never
- _____ quarterly

E. ON REENTRY TO THE COMMUNITY

1. What were the major problems and what kind of help did you need most when you came out of incarceration?

2. Upon release from incarceration, we all expect some measure of support from family, friends, and other sources. Did you get the expected support

| | Does not apply | None | Only partial | Yes, fully |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------|-----------------|---------------|
| from parents | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| brothers or sisters | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| husband/wife | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| friends | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| others (specify) | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

3. Who helped you the most and how? _____

4. Did you have any trouble with the law once released?

___ No ___ Yes.

If yes, what was the nature of trouble?

5. Indicate if you have done any of the following since release from your last incarceration? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

- _____ Stopped alcohol/drug use
- _____ Reduced alcohol/drug use
- _____ Stayed away from friends who influence me to criminal life
- _____ Stopped doing something else which was causing trouble with the law. Explain _____

6. Check if you have made any efforts given below to improve your life chances (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Went back to school
 Learned a new trade
 Attended AA or NA
 Joined some club, association, trade union
 Straightened out my life. How? _____
 Any other, Explain _____

7. What is your occupation now? _____

The following are some statements with which you may agree or disagree. There are no right or wrong answers. Circle the symbol which best represents your position on each statement as follows:

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| SA = Strongly Agree | A = Agree | U = Undecided |
| SD = Strongly Disagree | D = Disagree | |

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1. When I get into trouble with the law, it really bothers me to think that this would hurt my family. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 2. I owe my family very little. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 3. I do not have any close friends. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 4. I can be perfectly happy without a single friend. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 5. I have a warm emotional relationship with others. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 6. I regret my own past action I have taken when I find that my behavior has hurt someone else. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 7. I feel no one really cares much about what happens to me. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 8. I seldom worry about other people. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 9. I'm really pretty self-centered. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 10. The main reason I have a job is for money. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 11. Something inside me just won't let me be satisfied with any job I've done. | SA | A | U | D | SD |

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|------------------------|--------------|---------------|
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| DS = Strongly Disagree | D = Disagree | |

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|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 12. If I worked hard at my job, I would reap the full benefit of our society. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 13. I look forward to the future with hope and enthusiasm. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 14. I like my work too well to give it up. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 15. My ideas about what I want to be change all the time. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 16. I am strongly committed to helping my family. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 17. If a person tries hard enough, he/she will usually reach his/her goals in life. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 18. It is very important to me to have enough friends and social life. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 19. It is important for me to be closely identified with at least one group. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 20. I enjoy myself most when I'm alone, away from other people. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 21. Every person should spend some of his/her time for the good of his/her community. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 22. I do not really fulfill my human potential unless I involve myself deeply in some group. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 23. It is wrong to refuse to participate in at least some of the group activities of the community in which I live. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 24. The biggest difference between criminals and other people is that criminals are stupid enough to get caught. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 25. People who work hard will succeed in society. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 26. Respect for authority is the most important virtue children should learn. | SA | A | U | D | SD |

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|------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| SA = Strongly Agree | A = Agree | U = Undecided |
| DS = Strongly Disagree | D = Disagree | |

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|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 27. Laws are necessary in a society. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 28. The purpose of law is to guarantee the well-being of the individual. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 29. Laws keep the action of individuals from interfering with the rights of others. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 30. It is fair for society to punish those who offend against it. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 31. For all the things I have done I should have been punished more than I have. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 32. As I think about my past there are some points about which I feel shame. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 33. I don't like the life that most people lead on the outside. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 34. It is alright to get around the law if you can get away with it. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 35. I often have trouble deciding which are the right rules to follow. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 36. I feel like I am behind in life compared to other people of my age. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 37. Compared to others my age, I feel like I have wasted part of my life being involved in crime. | | | | | |
| 38. I think it is about time I settle down and have a normal life. | | | | | |
| 39. Compared to other people my age, I am proud of most things I have done. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 40. It is difficult for me to communicate with younger people anymore. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 41. Other people say I am immature for my age. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 42. Sometimes I wonder if I'll ever grow up. | SA | A | U | D | SD |

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|------------------------|--------------|---------------|
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|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 43. I am afraid for people that I like to find out what I'm really like, for fear they'd be disappointed in me. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 44. I have trouble acting responsibly. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 45. People that I like want me to act more responsible. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 46. For a long time now, I have been trying to figure out what makes me get into trouble. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 47. I have discovered a satisfying life purpose. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 48. The most rewarding object of study anybody can find is his/her own inner life. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 49. My life is empty, filled only with despair. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 50. My future seems dark to me. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 51. I have clear goals and aims in life. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 52. My life is in my hand. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 53. I generally plan into the future. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 54. I try to escape from reality. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 55. I think I am much more realistic in what I can and cannot do in my life. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 56. I feel mature enough to know that I can do something about my future problems. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 57. I sometimes ignore the consequences of my actions. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 58. I often think about my disappearing youth. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 59. I worry about not having enough years left in my life to do what I want to do. | SA | A | U | D | SD |

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|------------------------|--------------|---------------|
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|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 60. I often wonder whether I am too old to make a fresh start. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 61. I am worried about physical problems such as aches and pains, or upset stomach. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 62. I feel I am too old to be involved in the life of crime. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 63. I feel older than I really am. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 64. I feel I am young enough to accomplish the things I most want to. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 65. I have been responsible for a lot of troubles I have been in. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 66. Everyone should have someone in his/her life who he/she is responsible to. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 67. I feel that I might be a failure if I don't make certain changes in my life. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 68. People I know will look up to me one day and respect me. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 69. I am an irresponsible person. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 70. Once you have been in trouble, you haven't got a chance. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 71. My past imprisonment has made me fearful of future arrests. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 72. A man with a record still gets a fair trial. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 73. The police hound you if you have a criminal record. | SA | A | U | D | SD |

Your Decision and Your Efforts

1. Did you ever make a deliberate, firm decision in your life to stay away from "trouble with the law"?
 - _____ (1) No, I never made that decision.
[If No, Stop Here, Thank You For Your Help]
 - _____ (2) Yes, and once I made it, I stuck to it.

2. Under what circumstances did you make the decision to stay away from trouble with the law? _____

3. What motivated you to make the choice you made? _____

4. At about what age did you successfully decide to stay away from criminal life? _____

5. At the same age, did some other changes take place in your life?
 - _____ No, no other changes came into my life.
 - _____ Yes, many other changes.
 - _____ Yes, some other changes.

6. If yes, what were those other changes in your life which accompanied your successful decision to stay away from criminal activities? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)
 - _____ Gave up alcohol/drugs
 - _____ Developed strong self control
 - _____ Improved my family relationships
 - _____ Stayed away from those friends who were involved in trouble with law
 - _____ Got a better job
 - _____ Other, explain: _____

7. Think hard and check if any of the following considerations entered into your decision making. (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)
 - _____ (1) I got tired of getting into trouble
 - _____ (2) I felt I was wasting my life
 - _____ (3) I wanted to stop the shame and humiliation to myself and my family
 - _____ (4) Fear and pain of imprisonment deterred me
 - _____ (5) I had a religious experience
 - _____ (6) Out of respect for someone whom I have great regards. This person was a: _____ Friend
_____ A relative
 - _____ (7) Any other consideration which was important to you: _____

8. Go over the considerations in the previous question and tell us which was the major factor in your decision (Please circle)
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. What were the major efforts you made to keep yourself free from trouble with the law?
1. _____
2. _____
10. The decision to get out of criminal life-style was a
 _____ snap decision
 _____ gradual decision which took a long time in the making
11. What made you want to change? _____
- _____
12. What habits did you have to change? _____
- _____
13. How did you change those habits? _____
- _____
14. Did you ever feel that you: (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)
- _____ were not getting anywhere in life?
 _____ were wasting your life?
 _____ were burdened with wrong decisions of life?
 _____ had done enough damage to self and others and felt guilty?
 _____ all of the above?
 _____ none of the above?
15. For the period that you continued in criminal life, whom do you blame and how much?
- _____
- _____
16. Anything else you want to say about quitting criminal life?
- _____
- _____

2
VITA

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