

**SURVEY OF THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN FOUR VARIABLES IN  
JUVENILE DELINQUENCY**



**SUSAN G. BARNETTE**

SURVEY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
FOUR VARIABLES IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

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Master of Arts  
in Psychology

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by  
Susan G. Barnette  
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Research Paper written by Susan G. Barnette entitled "Survey of the Relationship Between Four Variables in Juvenile Delinquency." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology, with a major in Guidance and Counseling.

  
Major Professor

Accepted for the Graduate  
Council:

  
Dean of the Graduate School

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency, according to Neumeyer (1955), includes

offenses committed by juveniles (whose ages conform to the age group specified by law as juveniles) that are in violation of federal, state and local laws, which breaches of the law by adults would be punishable by fines or imprisonment; certain forms of behavior peculiar to youth, such as habitually running away from home . . . incorrigibility, and other forms of deviant behavior, and being in places or living in surroundings that are regarded as harmful to youth and that lawfully may be interpreted as requiring official sanction. (p. 25)

Glueck and Glueck (1950) see juvenile delinquency as being

repeated acts of a kind which, when committed by persons beyond the statutory juvenile court age of sixteen, are punishable as crimes (either felonies or misdemeanors), except for a few instances of persistent stubbornness, truancy, running away, associating with immoral persons, and the like. (p. 13)

Additionally, the Gluecks state that "any child who commits even a single minor act in violation of the law is technically a delinquent" (cited in Neumeyer, 1955 , p. 25).

West (1973) investigated the development of juvenile delinquency in a normal population of boys from a working-class neighborhood in London. He identified delinquency as "any proven offence sufficiently serious to belong to the categories routinely reported by the police . . . and any offence (e.g., insult, threat or assault) involving an element of personal aggression" (p. 3).

According to Hirschi (1969), delinquency is "defined by acts, the detection of which is thought to result in punishment of the person committing them by the larger society" (p. 47). He sees delinquency as being not a sole incident but a combination of acts, a syndrome or pattern of development into a defined role.

Neumeyer (1955) also views delinquency in terms of the broader scope of behavior, in that such behavior conflicts with the demands of the society in which the child resides. It is perceived anti-social behavior which has a deleterious effect on others in the child's realm; that is, "the individual may be seriously affected by his own action, but behavior is usually regarded as anti-social when the group is affected adversely" (p. 27). Once a child is labeled delinquent, either by his social milieu or by the authorities, "his attitudes and behavior are affected by the realization that he is regarded as a law-violator or as being an anti-social person" (p. 28). The child's self-concept of his own delinquency makes him or her delinquent.

Aultman (1979) proposes an approach to defining delinquency which involves constructing a typology of criminal behavior. She refers to three models: the National Strategy for Youth Development Model, the Model of Interpersonal Control, and Hirschi's Social Control Model. The first model states that "limited access to desirable social roles (e.g., anomie) and negative labeling processes result in delinquent behavior directly and indirectly through the intervening variable of alienation" (p. 153). The two concepts of alienation and anomie are distinctly separate. An individual will tend toward delinquency after normative constraints are removed and a lack of legitimate opportunities results. The individual's attribution of failure to the system rather than personal shortcomings results in the process of social alienation (Aultman, 1979). The Model of Interpersonal Control places emphasis on the controls others have on a person regarding his propensity toward delinquency. This theory assumes that delinquency could result from a lack of control from others, or that this lack of control could lead toward the reduction of one's self-esteem, which could result in delinquent behavior. Finally, the labeling as delinquent by others on an informal basis could result in the reduction of one's opportunities for goal achievement (Aultman, 1979). Hirschi's Social Control Model has been discussed earlier. Aultman concluded, after comparing the theories

in terms of explaining specific types of deviant behavior, that these three theories result in the most relevant explanation of status and petty offenders. Of the theories discussed, the two (Hirschi's model and the Interpersonal Control Model) which conceptualize control as an important variable appear to define delinquency in treatment and predictive terms (Aultman, 1979, p. 163).

Miller (1970) cites a variety of sources in reviewing theories of delinquency as they relate to upper- and middle-class delinquents. He states that although there is not as much deviant behavior among middle-class boys as opposed to lower-class boys, there is probably more of it than had been thought to exist. He cites Bloch (1958), who formulated an analysis of delinquency that decries the influence of class structure as a major factor in deviant behavior. Rather, there are a myriad of variables other than the reaction of working class youth to their backgrounds which many studies ignore (Miller, 1970).

Miller refers to five different theories and the way they relate to middle-class delinquency. Differential association, as proposed by Sutherland (cited in Miller, 1970), hypothesizes that "criminal behavior is learned in association with those who define such behavior, favorably and in isolation from those who define it unfavorably, and that a person in an appropriate situation engages in such criminal behavior if, and only if, the weight of the favorable definitions exceeds the weight of the unfavorable

definitions" (Miller, 1970, p. 35). Thus, the middle-class adolescent has had an opportunity to associate with others who engage in delinquent behavior, has had access to a delinquent learning environment, and performs such behavior. Glaser (cited in Miller, 1970) adds to the theory of differential association an interest in the reference groups which play a part in the self-concept of the middle-class adolescent. Although the adolescent may not actually associate with a gang, he may feel enough of an affinity with their code to promote a type of latent allegiance.

Social Disorganization Theory, although tested almost exclusively in lower-class areas, could be tied into a neighborhood which is economically stable but socially disorganized (Miller, 1970). However, this theory may be inadequate for explaining delinquency in long-established, middle-class neighborhoods or families. A recent phenomenon--federally mandated busing to achieve the proper ethnocentric mix in public schools--is possibly encouraging social disorganization in regard to the transmission of conventional values (Miller, 1970).

Miller also refers to Psychiatric Theory, of which the primary orientation is the individual personality system. The social milieu could be viewed as the basis of the delinquent personality, but not necessarily the delinquent act. The focus in Psychiatric Theory has been toward the characterological individual or the psychotic or neurotic individual. The characterologically disturbed person is

seen as having superego-development shortcomings, while the psychotic or neurotic person evidences a rigid superego structure. The characterologically disturbed delinquent is viewed as having anti-social personality, which implies a certain class structure. Miller states that "the tendency to be diagnosed as "neurotic" rather than "characterological" as one moves from the lower to the middle to the upper classes has been long known in clinical practice. One would surmise that the same pattern holds true with reference to individuals who engage in delinquent behavior" (Miller, 1970, p. 38). Miller cites the work of Szurek and Johnson (1942) and later Vogel and Bell (1960) in regard to a child's deviant behavior where the "behavior is seen as meeting the unconscious needs of one or both parents as a means of keeping the conflict between the parents at a latent level, thereby allowing the individual parent or the family social system to maintain equilibrium" (cited in Miller, 1970, p. 38).

Subcultural theories have been explored by Cohen (1955), who speculates that middle-class delinquency differs in the type of offense and frequency of the act from lower class, and that lower-class boys act out in a more aggressive manner to prove their masculinity in a female-dominated culture. Cohen, as well as Bloch and Neiderhoffer (1958), refers to the struggle of the adolescent, whether middle or lower class, to overcome barriers to becoming an adult.

Cloward and Ohlin (1960) refer to a delinquent subcultural system which is organized for more petty matters; for example, alcohol and marijuana, and the relative lack of peer support the middle-class adolescent receives for his delinquent acts.

A theory of social control espoused by Matza (1964) and referred to by Miller describes the adolescent as being in a state of "drift," which stands between freedom and control. The adolescent has experienced a loosening of control and almost simultaneous frustration at not being able to control his or her own autonomous subculture, which leads to the fluctuation between conventional and unconventional behavior (Miller, 1970).

Williams and Gold (1972) make a distinction between delinquent behavior and official delinquency. Delinquent behavior involves "norm violating behavior of a juvenile which, if detected by appropriate authority, would expose the actor to legally prescribed sanctions " (p. 210). Official delinquency is described as the response of the police and the court system to delinquent behavior and their identification of such behavior. They further suggest that whether or not such behavior is ignored or reacted to depends on such factors as age, race and socio-economic status as they are perceived by the authorities, what they term a "filtering process."

Hirschi (1969) stipulates three different perspectives that currently categorize delinquent behavior. The Strain

Theory designates the child's motivation as a large factor; the child experiences desires that cannot be satisfied through conformity, and thus he or she is forced into deviant behavior. In Control Theory, the bond that ties the person to convention is severed, and the person is thus free to commit delinquent acts. Lastly, Cultural Deviance Theory--conformity to a set of standards which is not the norm in society at large--sets the person apart. Hirschi goes on to criticize certain aspects of these theories, including the fact that delinquency is not a class-related behavioral trait, and that on occasion, situations arise that accommodate deviant behavior (for example, the plight of the Donner party) (Hirschi, 1969).

Of the independent variables which, according to the literature, affect the propensity toward delinquent behavior on the part of an adolescent, four will be discussed: mother's employment, birth order, family size, and parental relationship (the "broken home" syndrome).

In their study, "Family Environment and Delinquency," the Gluecks (1962) have found that a mother's being a sporadic worker had the greatest bearing on deviant behavior in the child. The women discussed were employed as factory workers, domestic workers, waitresses and the like; basically, what is termed blue-collar employment. The Gluecks found that the number of mothers of delinquent and non-delinquent children who were employed outside the home was almost even.

The occasional employment of the mothers of delinquents seemed to be correlated with delinquency because of the mother's seeming lack of concern for the well-being of her children, as evidenced by her sporadic involvement in the world outside the home. The Gluecks deemed this type of behavior as contributing to the destructive, sadistic, and hostile behavior of the children, as well as to their feelings of isolation and resentment (Glueck, 1962). According to this study, "It may be that the sporadically employed mother is more motivated by the enticement of getting away from the household drudgery and parental responsibility than the mother who works regularly" (Glueck, 1962, p. 55). The indication that sporadic employment of the mother is a factor characteristic of delinquent families is also corroborated in "Unravelling Juvenile Delinquency" (Glueck, 1950).

Hirschi (1969) found that the relationship between delinquency and mothers' employment was not particularly strong. He suggests that it is the aspect of control that a full-time mother exerts on a child--that is, the kind of direct supervision--which accounts for the positive relationship between mother and child. He suggests that geographical proximity is an important element in control. Hirschi ties this into the Glueck's theory regarding sporadic employment of the mother outside the home as a negative influence on the child. Mothers who are employed

full time or part time outside the home, and who are employed in a predictable, regular fashion, exert the most positive influence in regard to this particular variable.

There are several theories regarding the influence of birth order on delinquency. Forer (1969) states that the first-born child is subject to such a degree of parental control that eventually rebelliousness develops from his or her stubbornness in regard to this control. He refers to other studies which indicate that first borns, rather than later borns, are more likely to become involved in running away, dropping out of school, and refusing to obey parents. This may be the result of an earlier struggle with an ambivalent parent. He goes on to stipulate that middle children are less likely to exhibit deviant behavior than only, oldest or youngest children.

Neumeyer (1955) cites a study by Sletto--"Sibling Position and Juvenile Delinquency"--indicating that older brothers are more likely to be delinquent than younger brothers, and older sisters than younger sisters. This is in comparison to children with the same age, sex, and sibling positions. He states that girls who have only brothers have a higher delinquency rate than girls who have only sisters, and attributes this to the girl's adopting the delinquency standards of the boys in the family. However, a boy with no sisters does not adopt the same behavioral pattern. Older brothers and sisters influence

opposite sex siblings rather than the one sex influencing the same sex sibling. He offers the explanation that the roles children play in the family structure strongly influence the delinquency rate.

Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck touch on birth order, both in "Unravelling Juvenile Delinquency" (1950) and "Family Environment and Delinquency" (1962). They discovered a lower incidence of delinquency among only children and youngest children. There was no greater proportion among first borns, although these children are more likely to exhibit emotional instability, a characteristic of delinquent behavior. Their findings indicate that a child who is neither the oldest, youngest, or an only child is more likely to exhibit delinquent behavior. An only child who senses a lack of interest on the part of others, especially his or her parents, is more likely to become delinquent than a middle child who receives some emotional support from his siblings.

Hirschi (1969) states that there are several reasons why only, oldest and youngest children are less likely to commit delinquent acts than middle children; among them are the fact that they all have an exclusive relationship with their parents. The oldest child also has a certain amount of responsibility that other siblings often do not have.

Families which include middle children are generally larger than those which include only, oldest or youngest children. Shukla, an Indian sociologist who conducted a study in India in 1970, found, among other things, that "typologically, a larger number of the pilferers were intermediate children. . . . The intermediate children, therefore, were found relatively more susceptible to demoralisation" (Shukla, 1977, p. 398). West (1973) also found the ordinal position of the boy in the delinquent family to be that of the middle child. Another study compiled in Great Britain by Koller (1971), indicated that there was a lower incidence of delinquency in the first-born position, higher among the second, third and fourth positions, and a lower incidence among later-born children. Koller cited a study which indicated that first-born children appear to be more docile and exemplary, although nervous and less optimistic, while later-born children are treated in a more relaxed fashion. Middle children may not know what to expect.

In regard to family size, West (1973) states that large family size is one of the five background traits of particular significance to juvenile delinquency. Children from large families, rather than children from small families, are more likely to have committed delinquent acts (Hirschi, 1969). Shukla (1977) found that the families of the subjects in his study were exceptionally large, although "the deteriorating influence of the largeness of the family,

however, was minimised in the case of families which could overcome this shortcoming by their sound economic condition" (p. 397). Shukla's study indicated the average number of siblings to be 5.2. In the Koller study, the average family size of the delinquent girls was 4.8, while the average size of family in the population was 2.48. The Gluecks (1969) found that the delinquent boys they studied came from somewhat larger families (6.8 children vs. 5.9 in the delinquent families). They surmised that the size variation was caused by the higher proportion of multiple marriages in the parents of delinquents: 31% of the delinquent boys had half- or step-siblings, as opposed to 16% of the non-delinquents. Andrew (1978), in her study, cites several researchers who suggest that the public still has a tendency to look down on small families and prize large families; however, large families produce more delinquents than small families. She goes on to cite studies which have indicated that children from large families have lower IQs than children from small families; that children from larger families are more often nutritionally deficient, a form of subtle neglect; and that the stress factors involved in the dense living situation that so often accompanies a large family may encourage acting out behavior. Shukla (1977) corroborates this in his study of slum children in India.

There has been no dearth of theorizing on, and investigation of, the influence of the parents' relationship with

each other on the delinquent child. Most of it centers on the effect of living in a broken-home situation. Glueck (1950) found in one of his studies that 50% of the parents of the delinquent boys he included were living together, as opposed to 75% of the parents of the non-delinquent control group. Furthermore, 20% of the delinquents' parents had separated or divorced, compared to 10% of the non-delinquents' parents; and 6.3% of the delinquents' parents were not married, compared to 2.2% of the control group. Thus, a higher proportion of delinquents lived with one parent, one parent and a step-parent, two step-parents, foster parents, other relatives, or brothers and sisters. The Gluecks defined broken home as "one from which one or both parents were absent by reason of death, desertion, separation or divorce, or were away from the home for at least a year because of imprisonment, illness or distant employment" (p. 16).

Hirschi (1969) states that the number of institutionalized boys who come from broken homes is greater than the proportion of boys in the general population. He further indicates that the overriding image of a delinquent child is that of one already without a family. "Since most delinquent acts are committed outside the home, few delinquents are committed at parental urging, and most detected acts cause parents embarrassment and/or inconvenience. It is not surprising that an image of the delinquent as not only

physically but emotionally free of [his] parents has developed. However, he also states that "the one-parent family is virtually as efficient a delinquency-controlling institution as the two-parent family, contrary to expectations deriving from the 'direct control' hypothesis" (Hirschi, 1969, p. 103).

Willie, in a study compiled in Washington D. C. between 1959 and 1962, surveyed over 6,000 youths referred to the D. C. juvenile court for other than traffic violations. The study was broken down by census tracts, with 41 predominantly white and 51 predominantly non-white. Willie hypothesized that economic status and family status made both independent and joint contributions to deviant behavior (Willie, 1967, p. 326). He found that the largest number of referrals were from poor areas with many broken homes; the correlation coefficient between juvenile delinquency and family instability in the study was .64 (Willie, 1967, p. 328). He suggests that some delinquency is associated with unstable family life because of poor family circumstances while some devious behavior stems from an impoverished family life, and the impoverishment is the result of an unstable family situation (Willie, 1967, p. 311).

West corroborates the tie between economic status and broken homes in the British study, and stipulates that more often the homes were broken for reasons other than death (West, 1973, p. 209). This study was, in fact, a predictive

view of delinquency, based on a group of boys who had already had some contact with the juvenile authorities at ages 8-10. West found a high rate of illegitimacy, which he felt to be a reflection of poor personal standards. He further stated that the only significant association between broken homes and delinquency was when it was due to parental desertion or divorce, rather than death. His findings suggest that "it is the atmosphere of disruption and conflict that promotes delinquency rather than the physical break. Normal families survive bereavements without the children becoming delinquent, but desertions, because they imply an unsatisfactory family situation of long standing, are more likely to lead to delinquency" (West, 1973, p. 197). Neumeyer also states that delinquency is more likely to occur in homes broken by desertion, divorce, annulment or separation than by death (Neumeyer, 1955, p. 162).

Chilton and Markle, in "Family Disruption, Delinquent Conduct and the Effect of Subclassification," surveyed the juvenile and county courts in Florida, and their analysis of the data suggests that substantially more children charged with delinquency lived in disrupted families than did children in the general population. Furthermore, children referred for more serious charges are more likely to come from incomplete families than children charged with minor offenses (Chilton and Markle, 1972, p. 93).

Statement of Purpose

The studies reviewed indicated that research has found a correlation between several characteristics and juvenile delinquency. The present study was undertaken to further investigate the relationship between the following variables and delinquency: (1) being a middle child (middle defined as not the oldest, youngest, or only child); (2) being from a large family (i.e., more than four children, to include half- and step-siblings); (3) having a mother (or step-mother) who is employed sporadically outside the home; and (4) residing with persons other than the subjects' biological parents in an intact home environment.

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

The study consisted of two groups. A sample group (labeled as status offenders by the State of Tennessee) was comprised of 25 males, former residents of Five Rivers Campus (Action for Youth, Inc.), and 25 females, former residents of the Montgomery County Home for Juvenile Girls. The control group consisted of 74 students from the general school population of the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System.

The data for the sample group were obtained by randomly selecting files of prior residents of the two juvenile homes. These files were located in the offices of the respective homes. Written permission was obtained from the directors of the homes to investigate the files. At the girls' home, every third file was examined from an alphabetical filing system. At Five River Campus, every complete fourth file was drawn from a filing system arranged according to commitment dates. The data obtained from these files included the following: sex, race, date of birth, age and date of adjudication to Department of Corrections or Department of Human Services, family size, birth order of subject, sibling relationships (including half- and step-siblings), caretakers' occupations, occupations of other adults in the household, type of offense, name of persons with whom the subject resided and relationship, and the reason for parental severance, if indicated.

To obtain the data for the control group, a questionnaire was devised and presented to the Director of Pupil Personnel for the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System (see Appendix), with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey. The study was approved by the Director of Pupil Personnel and the Director of the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System.

Subjects were randomly selected from each of the four high schools in Montgomery County. Twenty questionnaires were administered to students at each of the following schools: Clarksville High School, Montgomery Central High School, Northeast High School, and Northwest High School. At each of the schools, students were randomly selected from the schedule cards located in the guidance offices. At Clarksville High School, all the students' schedules were amassed in one file with no discrimination as to grade, while at the other three schools there were separate files for each grade level. Five students from each of the four grades (9-12) were selected, providing for an equal number of male and female subjects.

The method of administering the questionnaires was left to the discretion of each of the guidance counselors who cooperated in the survey. At Clarksville High School, each of the students was called individually to the guidance counselor's office and told the purpose of the survey. The survey was completed in the office. At

Montgomery Central High School, the subjects were called together in a group. The counselor explained the purpose of the survey to the group, and students completed the form at that time in the group setting. At both Northeast and Northwest High Schools, the students were called into the office in groups of five. The purpose of the survey was explained to them, and they completed the survey at this time. Anonymity of the response was stressed to the respondents, and none of the students identified themselves by name on the questionnaire, as per the instructions.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

The results of the study appear to corroborate some, but not all, of the four-part query previously stated. In regard to birth order, 40% of the sample group were middle children, as defined in the hypothesis, while 28% of the control group consisted of middle children. Chi Square analysis indicated that these percentages were not significantly different from zero for both the sample group and the control group. What appeared to be interesting was the number of first borns in the sample group, as opposed to the control group. Of the female sample group, 51% were first borns, while only 18.9% of the control group were first borns. Of the male sample group, 40% were first borns, while 16% of the control group were first borns.

Table 1  
Birth Order

	Middle Child	First-born	Chi Square Value
Status Offender	20 (40%)	23 (46%)	.18
General School Population	21 (28%)	26 (35%)	.012

Large family size, as defined in the hypothesis, was more prevalent in the sample group. Of the sample group, 52% fell within this definition, while only 29.7% of the

control group could be defined in these terms. The highest percentage of large family groups appeared at the rural high school: 36% of the large family groups resided in this area. The median family size of the control group was 3.64 children, while the median family size of the sample group was 4.1 children. The family sizes ranged from 1 to 10 children in the sample group and 1 to 14 children in the control group. Chi Square analysis of this variable indicated that these percentages were not significantly different from zero for both the sample group and the control group.

Table 2  
Large Family Size

Status Offenders	26 (52.0%)	$\chi^2$ Value .14
General School Population	22 (29.7%)	$\chi^2$ Value .002

A higher percentage of mothers in the sample group were unemployed (46% as opposed to 20% in the control group), while more mothers in the control group were employed sporadically (24%) than in the sample group (6%). More mothers in the control group were employed both full time and part time than in the sample group. The occupations of 10% of the mothers in the sample group were unknown because the child resided away from the mother.

Table 3  
Mothers' Employment

	Full-time	Part-time	Occasional	Unemployed
Status Offenders	18 (36.0%)	1 ( 2.0%)	3 ( 6%)	23 (46%)
General School Population	33 (44.5%)	8 (10.8%)	18 (24%)	15 (20%)

Of the control group, 77% resided with both parents, while only 32% of the sample group resided with both parents. Step-parents were included in 5% of the control-group families, while 20% of the sample group included step-parents. Of the control group subjects, 14.8% resided in single-parent homes (10.8% mother only and 4% father only), while 36% of the sample group resided in single-parent homes (32% mother only and 4% father only). Residence with other relatives or friends accounted for 2.7% of the control-group subjects and 10% of the sample-group subjects. Of the severed parental relationships, all severance in the control group was due to divorce or separation; in the sample group, 53% of the relationships were ended due to divorce or separation, while 17.8% were the result of the death of the mother or father, and 21% the result of parental desertion.

Table 4  
Residence

	Status Offenders	General School Population
Both Parents	16 (32%)	57 (77.0%)
Parent and Step-parent	10 (20%)	4 ( 5.0%)
Mother Only	16 (32%)	8 (10.8%)
Father Only	2 ( 4%)	3 ( 4.0%)
Other Relatives and Friends	5 (10%)	2 ( 2.7%)

Table 5  
Reason for Severance

	Status Offenders	General School Population
Divorce or Separation	15 (53.0%)	17 (100%)
Death	5 (17.8%)	
Desertion	6 (21.0%)	

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

Although there was some difference in the number of middle children between the sample group and the control group, the fact that there were more first borns than middle children was of interest in the sample group. The hypothesis that being a middle child was a variable in delinquency was not borne out in this study. Forer (1969) stated that first borns are more likely to exhibit rebelliousness, and indicates that this group is more likely to become involved in delinquent activities. However, Hirschi (1969) disagrees with this; he stated that only, oldest, and youngest children are less likely to commit delinquent acts because of their exclusive relationship with parents. Therefore, there is disagreement among the researchers who were reviewed as to the importance of birth order as a factor in juvenile delinquency, as evidenced by these attitudes.

In regard to family size, there was some difference in both the median number of children and in the number of large families in the two groups, the sample group having a larger proportion of multi-sibling families. The hypothesis stated that large family structures were an integral part of the tendency toward delinquent behavior, and the figures indicate that this may, indeed, be the case. Research has indicated that, according to West (1973), large family size

is one of five important traits of particular significance in delinquent behavior. Also, Glueck and Glueck (1950) found that the subjects in their studies came from larger families, many of which were serial in nature, thus tying together the fact of large families and severed parental relationships as variables in delinquent behavior.

Occasional employment of the mother (or step-mother) outside the home as a factor in delinquent behavior was not borne out by the results of the study, either in the sample group or in the comparison between groups. The greatest number of respondents in the sample group were unemployed; occasional employment was, in fact, most pronounced in the control group. This was not in agreement with the research undertaken by Glueck and Glueck (1950), who stated that sporadic employment was a characteristic of mothers of delinquent children.

The figures regarding residence in an intact home environment with both parents present indicated a decided difference between the sample and control groups. There were far fewer step-parents and single-parent homes among the control-group subjects. Also, severed parental relationships for the control group were all the result of divorce or separation, while the sample group had a number of severed relationships due to other factors such as death and desertion (38.8%), most frequently of the father. There were also a fewer number of subjects residing with

other relatives or friends in the control group (2.7% as opposed to 10% of the sample group). Thus, residing with persons other than the subjects' biological parents in an intact environment appeared to be an important factor in delinquent behavior. Research indicates that this is indeed the case; Glueck and Glueck (1950) found, in their study, that 75% of the subjects deemed delinquent resided in broken homes, while only 50% of the comparison group resided in similar circumstances. Overall, a higher proportion of delinquents resided with one parent, a step-parent, or persons other than the subjects' biological parents. Hirschi (1969) also indicates that more boys who are institutionalized come from broken homes than intact homes, and this figure is greater than the proportion of boys in the same circumstances in the general population. Thus, the present study agrees with the literature on this particular section of the hypothesis.

## Conclusion

This study, although undertaken with a small sample population and a somewhat larger but proportionate control-group population, agrees with two of the four factors in the hypothesis, while contradicting the other two stated questions. There appears to be a link between large family size and delinquent behavior, and the persons with whom the adolescent resides and his/her propensity toward this type of behavior. Birth order, although an important factor contributing to delinquency as seen in the literature, did not seem to be an important correlative in this study. The same results were found with regard to the literature's findings about the employment situation of the mother or the step-mother.

Much of the literature reviewed for the present study consisted of research undertaken outside of the United States or prior to 1970. The following recommendations are made in regard to the study of delinquent behavior:

1. A broader study could be undertaken, comparing rural and urban delinquency patterns in the South;
2. a longitudinal study similar to the West (1969) study in Great Britain be undertaken in a particular demographic area of the United States; and
3. a study of delinquency among specific ethnic groups in the United States, with a comparison of social mores, be undertaken.

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## APPENDIX

This information is needed for a project being undertaken by a graduate student in the Psychology Department at Austin Peay State University. Please do not identify yourself by name. The information is to be strictly anonymous. Your cooperation is much appreciated.

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

How many children are in your family? \_\_\_\_\_

What place are you in your family (for example, oldest, youngest, second, third, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

Are your parents (check one): Married \_\_\_\_\_  
divorced \_\_\_\_\_  
separated \_\_\_\_\_  
single parent \_\_\_\_\_  
mother widowed \_\_\_\_\_  
father widowed \_\_\_\_\_

I live with (check one): both parents \_\_\_\_\_  
mother only \_\_\_\_\_  
father only \_\_\_\_\_  
mother and stepfather \_\_\_\_\_  
father and stepmother \_\_\_\_\_  
other relative(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
guardian or foster parent \_\_\_\_\_

Does your mother (or stepmother) work outside the home (check one):

full-time \_\_\_\_\_  
part-time \_\_\_\_\_  
occasionally \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_