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PERCEIVED PARENTAL ATTITUDES AND PREDELINQUENCY

JACOB CHWAST

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Today, it is almost generally accepted that the most effective approach to the delinquency problem is that of prevention. If the child can be reached before he has become fixed in a delinquent way of life, the chances of keeping him within the bounds of socialized living are much better. Many agencies have expended considerable time, money and effort along these lines. For them, the advantages of methods aiding in the early detection of potential delinquents need hardly be mentioned.

This paper describes an investigation using psychological testing techniques which has tried to explore the nature of predelinquency in terms of the parent-child relationship.¹ It deals with a group of boys who have given definite evidence that they are becoming delinquent. They were selected for study because they had already become known to the police authorities for unlawful activity. Their offenses, however, were not so serious as to necessitate being taken into court.

Since parent-child relationships can be looked at in many ways, this investigation has primarily focused on one phase, namely: the relationship between boys' perception of parental attitudes and the boys' predelinquency.² This over-all objective has been more specifically accomplished by determining whether statistically significant differences, if any, existed between a group of predelinquent boys and a control group of non-predelinquents with respect to: (1) their expressed attitudes

regarding mothers, fathers and parents in general; (2) their underlying attitudes regarding mothers and fathers; and (3) the discrepancy between their expressed and underlying attitudes regarding mothers and fathers.

The three types of attitude particularly singled out for investigation are those of a dominating, possessive and ignoring character. These attitudes have been defined, after Shoben, in the following manner:³ "Dominating" is a tendency on the part of the parent to put the child in a subordinate role, to take him into account quite fully, but always as one who should conform to parental wishes under penalty of severe punishment. "Possessive" is the tendency on the part of the parent to "baby" the child, to emphasize unduly the affectional bond between parent and child, to value highly the child's dependence on the parent, and to restrict the child's activities to those which can be carried on in the family group. "Ignoring" is the tendency on the part of the parent to disregard the child as an individual member of the family, to regard the "good" child as the one who demands the least parental time, and to disclaim responsibility for the child's behavior.

RELATED LITERATURE

The value of approaching the problem of delinquency via the route of parent-child relationships has been pointed up by many authorities, with increasing interest of late.

³ In his study, "The Assessment of Parental Attitudes in Relation to Child Adjustment", *GENETIC PSYCHOLOGY MONOGRAPHS*, 1949, 39: pp. 101-148, PROF. E. J. SHOBNEN JR. describes how he constructed a scale to objectively determine parental attitudes toward children after combing the literature for items differentiating problem children from non-problem children.

¹ This article is based upon the author's doctoral dissertation, *A Study of the Relationship between Boys' Perception of Parental Attitudes and their Predelinquency*, School of Education, New York University, 1956.

² Predelinquent has been here defined as a child between 7 and 16 years of age who has committed two or more trivial offenses such as disorderly behavior, beating subway fares, etc. or one or more offenses of a more serious nature as assault, larceny, malicious mischief, etc. which have brought him to police attention but did not require arrest.

THEORETICAL

Although he tended to minimize parental attitudes in stressing that the individual failed in life because he could not adapt his instinctual drives to society's demands, Freud was quite cognizant of them. He spoke of the neuropathic parents who "often awaken in the child a disposition for neurotic disease."⁴ Flügel observed that parents who are restricting or too lax in exercising control over their children frequently find them growing up in revolt against themselves and all adult authority.⁵ Selling emphasized the relationship between delinquency and hatred of an abusive father.⁶

As do Murphy, and Murphy and Newcomb,⁷ Frank perceives parents acting in the capacity of culture transmitters. Specifically, he views the delinquent as a person who has never been socialized or "has been so warped and twisted and filled with anxiety or guilt or hostility that he is unable to conform to the requirements of peaceful, orderly, social living."⁸

To Horney, the child reacts very specifically to influences from his environment.⁹ He may move toward, against or away from people as a result of parental treatment. A child will tend to react with hatred toward others if he does not receive love or respect in his early years. In moving against people, the individual copes with his earlier feelings of helplessness by accepting the hostility of others. Power becomes his driving force and sympathy is a sign of weakness. His shell of toughness and hardness is patterned after what has seemed to be typical of the adults in his life. Fromm and Sullivan have similarly spelled out specific characterological consequences of family handling.

Fromm stressed that the child felt powerless and hostile because of parental hostility.¹⁰ A child

⁴ SIGMUND FREUD, *THREE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE THEORY OF SEX, NERVOUS AND MENTAL DISEASE MONOGRAPH SERIES #7*, New York and Washington, 1918, pp. 30-31.

⁵ J. C. FLÜGEL, *THE PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF THE FAMILY*, L. and V. Woolf, 1929, pp. 221-241.

⁶ L. S. SELLING, *A Psychiatrist Looks at Industrial Triancy*, *INDUSTRIAL MEDICINE*, Vol. 12, April 1943, pp. 189-201.

⁷ G. MURPHY, L. B. MURPHY AND T. M. NEWCOMB, *EXPERIMENTAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1937, pp. 208-209.

⁸ LAWRENCE FRANK, *PERSONALITY AND CULTURE*, Hinds, Hayden and Eldridge, New York, 1948, p. 14.

⁹ KAREN HORNEY, *THE NEUROTIC PERSONALITY OF OUR TIME*, 1937, and *OUR INNER CONFLICTS*, 1945, both published by W. W. Norton, New York.

¹⁰ ERICH FROMM, *ESCAPE FROM FREEDOM*, Farrar and Rhinehart, New York, 1941.

would not be damaged if frustrated during the early stages if the mother had a basically loving attitude toward him. If the child has not experienced too much hostility and hence retains his self-respect and self-confidence, he will not have to resort to an escape from "aloneness and powerlessness".

For Sullivan, the process of acculturation or socialization is synonymous with becoming a human being.¹¹ The child learns from the very beginning through empathy with the attitudes of significant persons: the mother and her surrogate especially. A chronically hostile mother induces in her child an intense and more or less chronic anxiety. In addition, he will not receive tenderness: "a deprivation which will have fateful consequences for his future well-being and happiness."¹² The child acquires a respecting, loving attitude toward himself, if the significant people in his life express a loving, respectful attitude toward him.

If they are derogatory and hateful, then he will acquire a derogatory and hateful attitude toward himself. Throughout life, save perhaps for the intervention of extraordinary circumstances and allowing for some modification through later experiences, he will carry the attitudes toward himself he learned early in life around with him just as surely as he will carry his own skin.¹³

If he is chronically rebuffed by his parents in his quest for tenderness, a child may undergo, what Sullivan terms, "a malevolent transformation" of personality.¹⁴ This will call out felt anxiety any time his need for tenderness is experienced. Further, the child may momentarily subdue his anxiety by becoming angry. In this way, he is poised to strike back against the hostile, anxiety provocations of his parents with his own hostility.

EMPIRICAL

Most studies of parent-child relationships have been empirical in nature, based upon case history material. Among the early researches carried out at the Smith College of Social Work were those of Figge and Zimmerman. The former found that children who were aggressive and rebellious have

¹¹ PATRICK MULLAHY, *OEDIPUS MYTH AND COMPLEX*, Hermitage, New York, 1948, p. 281.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 293.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 298.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 304.

been rejected by their mothers.¹⁵ The latter reported aggressive children to have over-protective or rejecting mothers.¹⁶ In neither study were definitions clearly stated, nor were fathers investigated.

About thirteen years later, also at Smith College, Stein, who examined case records qualitatively, discerned two types of parental rejection: overt and subtle.¹⁷ Whereas the over-inhibited child had been subtly rejected, the unsocialized-aggressive child had been completely and openly rejected. She offered no statistical data to back her conclusions; in fact, none having been previously found for the same population by Horwitz.¹⁸

Newell reported two studies (1934 and 1936) of maternal rejection based upon the analysis of case histories and psychiatric examinations.^{19, 20} He found that rejected children showed aggressive behavior. In only his second study was a control group used, and this as well as his statistical criterion for significance in differences seems to have been less than adequate.

Symonds found more delinquent trends occurring among rejected children than accepted children.²¹ His definition of rejection was not sufficiently sharp to distinguish between the neglectful and punitive, or the overt and covert forms. In a second study, Symonds found that dominating parents had submissive, dependent, shy children; submissive parents had aggressive offspring.²² Fitz-Simons, by rating case histories, concluded that the greatest number of behavior problems

occurred among children judged to be rejected by both parents.²³ Clothier believed the effect of parental rejection is aggressiveness on the part of children.²⁴ In this, she was supported by Kanner who associated the extremely anti-social behavior of psychopathic personalities with either open or concealed parental hatred.²⁵

After evaluating ratings of clinical cases, Wolberg described two types of rejection: hostile and neglectful.²⁶ Parental neglect produced aggression against the school or the police. Domineering, hostile parents had children whose aggressiveness was used to evade parental control and who were also occasionally submissive.

Aichorn regarded dissocial behavior as the result of an unsatisfied need for tenderness and love in childhood. An open reaction of hatred, manifested as insubordination, was induced by too little love and by repudiation of the child by parents.²⁷ Healy and Bronner found a sizable number of delinquents suffered from feelings of rejection.²⁸ More recently, the Gluecks, in a large scale study, reported delinquents' mothers and fathers indifferent, openly hostile and rejecting, with the father more hostile than the mother. Non-delinquents' mothers and fathers were more affectionate toward their sons.²⁹

Both conscious and unconscious rejection by parents of seriously delinquent boys were observed by Redl and Wineman.³⁰ These boys had been treated with open brutality, cruelty and neglect. Also, in a study of delinquents, Bowlby found affectionless children to be more anti-social than others.³¹

¹⁵ M. FIGGE, *Studies in Maternal Overprotection and Rejection: V, Some Factors in the Etiology of Maternal Rejection*, SMITH COLLEGE STUDIES IN SOCIAL WORK, 1, June 1931, p. 407.

¹⁶ A. C. ZIMMERMAN, *Parental Adjustments and Attitudes in Relation to the Problems of Five and Six-Year-Old Children*, SMITH COLLEGE STUDIES IN SOCIAL WORK, 1, June 1931, pp. 406-407.

¹⁷ L. H. STEIN, *A Study of Overinhibited and Unsocialized Aggressive Children, Part II: A Qualitative Analysis of Background Factors*, SMITH COLLEGE STUDIES IN SOCIAL WORK, 15: 124-125, 1944.

¹⁸ E. HORWITZ, *A Study of Overinhibited and Unsocialized Aggressive Children, Part I: A Quantitative Analysis of Background Factors*, SMITH COLLEGE STUDIES IN SOCIAL WORK, 15: 121-122, 1944.

¹⁹ H. W. NEWELL, *Psychodynamics of Maternal Rejection*, AMER. JOUR. OF ORTHOPSYCH., 4, 1934, pp. 387-401.

²⁰ H. W. NEWELL, *A Further Study of Maternal Rejection*, AMER. JOUR. OF ORTHOPSYCH., 6, 1936, pp. 576-607.

²¹ P. M. SYMONDS, *A Study of Parental Acceptance and Rejection*, AMER. JOUR. OF ORTHOPSYCH., 8, 1938, pp. 697-688.

²² P. M. SYMONDS, *THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS*, New York, D. Appleton-Century Company, 1939, pp. 104-140.

²³ M. J. FITZ-SIMONS, *SOME PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS AS SHOWN IN CLINICAL CASE STUDIES*, Contrib. to Ed. #643, Teachers Coll., Columbia Univ., 1935.

²⁴ FLORENCE CLOTHIER, *The Treatment of the Rejected Child*, NERVOUS CHILD, 3, pp. 89-110.

²⁵ LEO KANNER, *The Role of the School in the Treatment of Rejected Children*, NERVOUS CHILD, 3, 1944, pp. 228-248.

²⁶ L. R. WOLBERG, *The Character Structure of the Rejected Child*, NERVOUS CHILD, 1944, Vol. 3, pp. 74-88.

²⁷ AUGUST AICHORN, *WAYWARD YOUTH*, The Viking Press, New York, 1935.

²⁸ W. HEALY AND A. E. BRONNER, *NEW LIGHT ON DELINQUENCY AND ITS TREATMENT*, Institute of Human Relations, Yale University Press, 1936.

²⁹ SHELDON AND ELEANOR GLUECK, *UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY*, The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1950.

³⁰ FRITZ REDL AND DAVID WINEMAN, *CHILDREN WHO HATE*, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1951.

³¹ JOHN BOWLBY, *Forty-four Juvenile Thieves: Their Character and Home Life*, INTER. JOUR. OF PSYCHOANALYSIS, Vol. XXV, 1944, pp. 19-53, 107-127.

OBJECTIVE TESTING

In recent years, objective testing methods have become increasingly utilized. In a study of junior high school students, Anderson, by psychological tests, discovered that parents who were high in dominance and low in affection had aggressive and rebellious children.³² Wittman and Huffman reported that delinquents, on a rating scale, judged their parents to be rejecting.³³

Using Shoben's eighty-five item inventory, the University of Southern California Attitude Survey, Claiborne compared the expressed attitudes of the mothers of fifty delinquent boys with those of the mothers of fifty non-delinquent boys.³⁴ He found that the former group of mothers were more dominating and ignoring than the latter. No difference was seen with regard to possessive attitudes toward children.

Rush studied a group of male, Negro, junior high school pupils who came from broken homes.³⁵ He tried to find the relationship between mothers' expressed attitudes toward sons (with the Shoben scale), and that of sons toward mothers (with a fifty item Child-Parent Relationship Scale essentially similar to the one used in the present investigation); the relationship between sons' attitudes toward mothers (in addition to the dominating, possessive and ignoring variables on the C-P.R.S., he rated the boys' submissive, withdrawn and aggressive reactions toward the mother on the Thematic Apperception Test) and their behavior in the school situation measured by the Haggerty-Olson-Wickman Behavior Rating Scale; and last, the relationship between the kinds of maternal attitudes and the sons' behavior in the school situation. Rush concluded that:

1. Sons who are greater behavior problems in school

- have mothers who express more rejecting (ignoring) attitudes toward them. The sons will see that their mothers are more rejecting. These sons will also display more aggressiveness on a deeper level.
2. Sons who are sporadic behavior problems in school have mothers who express more ambivalent attitudes toward them. The sons will see their mothers as more ambivalent.
3. Sons who are more compliant in school have mothers who express more dominating attitudes toward them. These sons will see their mothers as more dominant. In addition, they will have more submissive attitudes on a deeper level.³⁶

It can be seen from the various studies which have been discussed above that they have differed in many ways in the approach to an understanding of the nature of parent-child relationships. They have differed with respect to objectives, definitions, delimitations, populations and methods. Understandably, their results have differed somewhat. In no case has the primary concern been with a predelinquent group of and by itself. Furthermore, none of the studies cited has attempted to assess objectively the relationship between upper and lower level perceptions of parental attitudes on the part of predelinquent boys for the same variables.

Needleman made an attempt of this kind with schizophrenic males but reported little success in evaluating quantitatively the deeper level material elicited by the Thematic Apperception Test.³⁷ Claiborne used the Shoben scale with mothers of delinquents but did not apply a deeper level technique, nor did he test children. Rush used similar techniques to those employed in this study but did not deal with predelinquents as such. He also did not probe upper-lower-level discrepancies in the same variable, nor did he compare his findings with an independent control sample.

RATIONALE OF METHODS EMPLOYED

Since attitude questionnaires directly inquiring into personal data about the individual have been found most easily susceptible to distortion, a less forthright instrument designated by Campbell as the "disguised structured" type has been used for upper level or expressed attitudes.³⁸ Under the cover of some anonymity, the subject is enabled to express attitudes without feeling that he is incrim-

³² J. P. ANDERSON, A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CERTAIN ASPECTS OF PARENTAL BEHAVIOR AND THE ATTITUDES AND THE BEHAVIOR OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, Contrib. to Ed. #809 Teachers Coll. Columbia Univ., 1940.

³³ M. P. WITTMAN AND A. V. HUFFMAN, *A Comparative Study of the Developmental Adjustment and Personality Characteristics of Psychotic, Psychoneurotic, Delinquent and Normally Adjusted Teen-Age Youths*, ELGIN PAPERS, Elgin State Hospital, Elgin Ill., Vol. V, 1944, pp. 228-237.

³⁴ ROBERT B. CLAIBORNE, *A Study of Mother Attitudes in Juvenile Delinquency*, Ph.D. Thesis, School of Educ., New York University, 1954.

³⁵ BERNARD H. RUSH, *An Investigation of Parent-Child Relationships in Broken Homes and their Relationship to School Behavior*, Ph.D. Thesis, School of educ., New York University, 1955.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 122.

³⁷ S. D. NEEDLEMAN, *Ideational Concepts of Parental Figures in Paranoid Schizophrenia*, Ph.D. Thesis, School of Educ., New York Univ., 1951.

³⁸ D. T. CAMPBELL, *The Indirect Assessment of Social Attitudes*, PSYCHOL. BULL., 47, Jan. 1950, pp. 15-38.

inating himself or strongly needing to demonstrate as much conformity as he otherwise might. Nevertheless, he is still under some pressure to show himself in the best possible light, and will substantially present an idealized concept of his attitudes. In other words, this type of instrument tends to elicit stereotyped attitudes rather than those which may typically characterize an individual in his life performances. For the purpose of this investigation, it was therefore assumed that the Child-Parent Relationship Scale (see Appendix I) which was used yielded a rather superficial estimate of the subject's basic attitudes regarding his parents. It gave primarily his expressed or more overt attitudes.

The underlying or more firmly imbedded perceptions of the individual are believed to be more directly related to the innersprings of his behavior. Since projective material offers practically no clue, beyond the instructions, as to what is expected from the subject, distortion and camouflage of fundamental attitudes and orientations is kept to a minimum. The subject portrays these as they more truly are. It was therefore assumed that the combination of thematic pictures selected (see Appendix II for description) have revealed his deeper level attitudes. Also, since four of the pictures contain a mother figure, and four contain a father figure, the child has given evidence of his attitudes to each of his parents.

This has meant, in essence, that the data yielded by use of both techniques could provide a differential backdrop against which to examine the subject's reactions and attitudes. An insight in depth could be possible by comparing his responses in terms of their being expressed or more concealable, and underlying or less concealable.

The concept of human development presupposes that the individual strikes a balance between these two fundamental aspects of his behavior, i.e., between the conscious and the unconscious. The nature of this balance should be especially interesting if comparisons are made among the different groups.

Neurotic difficulties, for instance, have often been ascribed to incongruities in behavior arising from conflicting conscious and unconscious strivings. The need for love and approval can be so great in such individuals that rigidly repressive techniques may be used to prevent the emergence of any socially deviant impulses. Phobias, compulsions and conversion symptoms are among the various means by which the unconscious may make

its imperious demands known. Similarly with the psychotic, one finds that the enormous gulf between conscious wishes and unconscious impulses can lead to various forms of pathology.

Obviously, some objective data on the types of balance maintained among the different deviant groups should be of value in understanding them. This study has attempted to find how this balance in one such group, namely, predelinquent boys compares to that of a group of non-predelinquent boys.

BASIC HYPOTHESES

Upon a review of previous study and research in this field, it was hypothesized that predelinquents would expressly state that their mothers, fathers and parents in general were more dominating, more ignoring and less possessive than non-predelinquents. Second, predelinquents would perceive mothers and fathers as more dominating, more ignoring and less possessive than non-predelinquents on a deeper level. Third, predelinquents would significantly differ from non-predelinquents in the discrepancies between expressed and deeper attitudes as follows: (a) predelinquents stating mothers and fathers were possessive would not see them as such on a deeper level, unlike non-predelinquents who would; (b) predelinquents stating mothers and fathers were ignoring would see them as such on a deeper level, while non-predelinquents would not. Fourth, no differences would occur for mothers' and fathers' dominating.

PROCEDURE IN COLLECTING THE DATA

POPULATION

The research population consisted of an experimental group of thirty predelinquent boys and a control group of thirty non-predelinquent boys. Except for four of the predelinquents, who came from similar low socio-economic neighborhoods, all subjects lived in the same under-privileged area in Brooklyn. Once it was established that the delimitations were met, each subject was immediately tested on a serial basis.

The experimental subjects committed a total of 45 offenses which conformed to the criteria stated previously (see Appendix III). Table I groups these offenses according to frequency.

The control children, of course, had never been reported to the police nor otherwise regarded as troublesome. No subject had ever been arrested, detained or institutionalized. In consequence of

this delimitation, no predelinquent could be assumed to have been traumatized by arrest, court appearance or detention. His attitudes, the parental attitudes and his perception of parental attitudes could not therefore have been in any way affected by such handling or stigmatization which might have resulted therefrom. It should be further noted that the predelinquent was obviously not merely potentially delinquent in an inferred or general sense. He had already given concrete evidence of delinquent tendencies by acting openly against the standards of the community.

In every case, both natural parents were alive and residing at home. This was required to assure that the attitudes tapped by the techniques used could be deemed as really operative in their lives and related to actual personages with whom the subjects were interacting. All families were also required to have lived in this country for at least eight years so as to hold cultural factors relatively comparable. As seen from Table II, the vast majority of families well exceeded this minimum.

The groups were also kept roughly comparable for fathers' occupations, which were chiefly in the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled categories. Ethnic origin was another variable which proved to be almost equivalent, as can be seen from Table III.

All subjects were between twelve and sixteen years of age. The mean age of the experimental subjects was 13.03 years; the mean age for controls was 12.98 years. The difference in ages was not significant. In school grades, the mean for the experimentals was 7.5 years, and that for controls was 7.2 years. A minimum I.Q. of 80 was required. The mean I.Q. was 88.6 for experimentals and 90.0 for the controls. The difference was not significant.

Finally, no subject selected had suffered from any serious physical handicap or organic brain condition.

MATERIALS EMPLOYED

Two tests: the Child-Parent Relationship Scale (Appendix I) and projective thematic pictures (Appendix II contains description) were used to determine the attitudes of the subjects. A split-half reliability coefficient of .80 plus or minus .05 was found for the former. An average reliability coefficient of .74 for the ratings of intensity by two judges was obtained for the latter.

The Child-Parent Relationship Scale measured the more consciously held attitudes regarding

TABLE I
FREQUENCY OF OFFENSES COMMITTED BY
PREDELINQUENT SUBJECTS

Number of Offenses	Number of Experimental Subjects
1	16
2	13
3	1

TABLE II
LENGTH OF TIME FAMILIES IN COUNTRY OF
EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL SUBJECTS

Length of Time (years)	Families of Experimental Subjects	Families of Control Subjects
Native-born	27	20
Above 16	1	7
8 to 15	2	3
Total	30	30

TABLE III
ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF EXPERIMENTAL AND
CONTROL SUBJECTS

	Experimentals	Controls
White	8	10
Negro	19	17
Other	3	3
Total	30	30

Note: Other consists of five Puerto-Rican and one experimental subject of Philippine descent.

dominating, possessive or ignoring tendencies of the mother, father and parents in general. A total score was derived which was taken to represent a composite of undesirable attitudes of parents toward their sons, as suggested by Rush.³⁹

The projective thematic pictures test was scored for the same variables as the C-P.R.S., except that the category of parents in general was excluded. Significant differences between the research groups for attitudes were determined statistically. The *t* test for the difference between means, as developed in small sample theory, was applied when the expressed attitudes, separately considered, or the underlying attitudes, separately considered, were compared between the research groups. When the discrepancies between the expressed and the

³⁹ RUSH, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

deeper level attitudes were compared, however, the "median test", a nonparametric method, was employed.

FINDINGS

EXPRESSED ATTITUDES

The Child-Parent Relationship Scale provided data on dominating, possessive and ignoring attitudes of mothers, fathers and parents in general as overtly perceived by sons.

After checking the variances of the distributions—by means of the *F* test—in each category for homogeneity, the *t* test for the differences between means was applied. Differences were deemed significant at the five percent level of confidence. The results of the *t* test are given in Table IV.

Except on the three categories of Dominating Parents, Dominating Mother and Possessive Parents, means were found to be significantly different at the five percent level or better.

The first hypothesis is thus sustained to the extent that predelinquent boys expressly state that fathers are more dominating, parents in general are more ignoring, mothers are more ignoring and fathers are more ignoring than non-predelinquent boys. Contrary to the hypothesis, the findings for possessiveness by mothers and fathers do not merely fail to support the hypothesis but are in the reverse direction for predelinquent boys, since they expressly state that mothers and fathers are more possessive. As for predelinquents expressly stating that mothers are more dominating than non-predelinquents, no support is forthcoming from the data.

TABLE IV

t VALUES AND LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE ON C-P.R.S.

Category	<i>t</i> value	Level of Confidence
Dominating Parents.....	1.23	—
Dominating Mother.....	.43	—
Dominating Father.....	2.90	1%
Possessive Parents.....	.92	—
Possessive Mother.....	2.38	5%*
Possessive Father.....	2.53	2%*
Ignoring Parents.....	3.84	1%
Ignoring Mother.....	4.28	1%
Ignoring Father.....	3.51	1%
Total Score.....	3.46	1%

* Indicates that the mean is greater for predelinquents.

TABLE V
t VALUES AND LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE ON
PROJECTIVE THEMATIC PICTURES

Category	<i>t</i> value	Level of Confidence
Dominating Mother.....	1.55	—
Dominating Father.....	1.54	—
Possessive Mother.....	3.72	1%
Possessive Father.....	3.31	1%
Ignoring Mother.....	5.71	1%
Ignoring Father.....	4.36	1%
Total Score.....	3.14	1%

UNDERLYING ATTITUDES

The eight projective pictures used provided data about deeper level perceptions by sons of mothers' and fathers' attitudes of a dominating, possessive and ignoring nature.

Again variances were checked and the *t* test applied. Table V presents the results.

No significant differences emerged in only the categories of Dominating Mother and Dominating Father.

As hypothesized, predelinquent boys feel on a deeper level that their mothers and fathers are more ignoring and less possessive than non-predelinquent boys do, on the basis of these results. There is no statistical foundation for contending that predelinquent boys perceive their mothers and fathers as more dominating on a deeper level.

DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN EXPRESSED AND UNDERLYING ATTITUDES

By the "median test", it was possible to ascertain whether there were significant differences between the research groups in the discrepancies between what they would expressly state (C-P.R.S.) and what they would more deeply feel (projective pictures). Differences, here also, were considered as significant at the five percent level of confidence. Table VI gives the results.

In three categories, Possessive Mother, Possessive Father and Ignoring Father, statistically significant differences occurred.

These findings generally sustain the third and fourth hypotheses.

The third hypothesis is upheld inasmuch as predelinquent boys do significantly differ from non-predelinquent boys in the discrepancies between their expressed attitudes and deeper-level percep-

TABLE VI

SIGNIFICANCE OF DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN C-P.R.S. AND PROJECTIVE THEMATIC PICTURE SCORES

Category	Value of Chi-Square	Level of Confidence	Group with Larger Discrepancy
Dominating Mother....	.04	—	—
Dominating Father....	3.47	10%	Control
Possessive Mother.....	6.94	1%*	Experimental
Possessive Father.....	7.97	1%*	Experimental
Ignoring Mother.....	2.00	20%	Control
Ignoring Father.....	5.55	2%*	Control
Total Score.....	.07	—	—

* Statistically significant.

tions of mothers' and fathers' attitudes. More specifically, possessiveness by fathers and mothers is significantly more divergent between overt and underlying levels for predelinquents than for non-predelinquents. On the other hand, the discrepancy is significantly in the reverse direction for ignoring fathers, with a very faint suggestion that this may be so for mothers. Ignoring fathers are perceived with greater consistency as such on both levels by the predelinquents, as compared to non-predelinquents.

The fourth hypothesis is statistically supported although there is a suggestion that it may not be entirely true. Dominating by mothers on the expressed and underlying levels was perceived with the same degree of consistency by both research groups. It is in the perception of fathers that the suggestion (as per a ten percent level of confidence) occurs that predelinquents more consistently find them to be dominating than non-predelinquents.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study appear to support strongly the idea that parent-child relationships exert a powerful influence upon the formation of the child's personality and his behavior. Although the basic hypotheses were not upheld entirely, the divergencies are explicable in terms of psychological, psychodynamic and delinquency theory.

The following conclusions seem explicitly warranted in terms of the research samples used in this investigation, the methods employed and their limitations:

1. Attitudes toward parents in general, a concept

merging both the mother and father, are less differentiating than the attitudes of children toward the mother and father as individual figures.

2. Predelinquent boys will expressly state, on the Child-Parent Relationship Scale, that they have more dominating fathers, more possessive mothers and fathers, more ignoring mothers, fathers and parents in general; and that their parents embody more undesirable attitudes toward them than will non-predelinquents.

3. At a deeper level, as measured by projective thematic pictures, predelinquents will perceive their mothers and fathers as less possessive, more ignoring and exhibiting more undesirable attitudes than will non-predelinquent boys.

4. Predelinquents will be less consistent than non-predelinquents in their expressed statement about possessive attitudes of mothers and fathers toward them and their deeper feelings about these attitudes.

5. Predelinquents will show greater consistency than non-predelinquents concerning what they expressly state the ignoring attitudes of mothers and fathers are and what they more deeply perceive them to be.

6. Predelinquents do not appear to differ from non-predelinquents in the consistency of their expressed statements and deeper feelings about the dominating attitudes of mothers and fathers.

It also became evident that the concept of pre-delinquency, operationally defined as it is in this study, applies to a population of children differentiable in attitudes about parents from a population of more conforming children. Furthermore, the evidence appears to point toward the utility of the attitudinal dimension in differentiating, in a similar manner, particular groups of children—girls as well as boys—from other groups along the gradient of anti-social activity. For instance, it seemed quite evident from the data that non-predelinquent children will more consistently entertain the conviction that their mothers and fathers are interested in and affectionate toward them (as measured by the possessive variable) than do predelinquent children, at different levels of conscious and unconscious expression. Going beyond this by comparing these findings with the reports of other observers (Redl and Wineman⁴⁰, Bowlby⁴¹,

⁴⁰ CHILDREN WHO HATE, The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1951.

⁴¹ *Forty-four Juvenile Thieves: Their Character and Home Life*, INTER. JOUR. OF PSYCHOANAL., Vol. XXV, 1944, pp. 19-53, 107-127.

Glueck⁴²), it would appear that confirmed delinquents have practically no perception of possessiveness, at any level of awareness, as it might be manifested by their parents.

The study seems to substantiate the value of understanding deviant groups by comparisons of multi-level measurements of the same attitudinal variables. This technique holds considerable promise in more objectively assessing such theoretical constructs as self-concept, social role perception, stereotyping, repression, dissociation and the "malevolent transformation", to mention but a few. Although deeper-level techniques appear superior to more direct methods in evaluating basic feelings and attitudes, a determination of the direction and degree of distortion in upper-level perceptions can vastly enrich diagnostic and therapeutic research and practice.

For future investigation, despite the limitations of the present study in population samples and methodology, similar research designs could profitably explore, systematically and comprehensively, all types of parent-child relationships. Not only should data pertaining to this crucial relationship be obtained from the child, but from the mother and father as well. If other siblings could also be

included, whole families could be evaluated with regard to patterns of attitudes, as they are projected by the parents and perceived by the children. The correlation of such data with other social and personal variables should prove quite meaningful to psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, sociologists, anthropologists and educators. If in addition to the particular attitudes of dominance, possessiveness and ignoring examined in this study, the categories of submissiveness, aggressiveness and withdrawal were included, a more fully rounded picture of parent-child relationships would be provided, with data on behavioral and attitudinal reactions to the attitudes manifested by parents and children toward one another.

Finally, the nature of criminogenesis, as must be obvious from what has already been said, could be further investigated by testing several samples along the delinquency-crime continuum. A next logical group for study could consist of children who had been arrested, brought into court and adjudicated as delinquent. At the other extreme, hardened criminals could be selected for study. The testing methods could also be applied to various categories of offenders such as drug-addicts, sex-offenders, fire-setters, burglars and murderers. In this manner, it might be possible to develop incisive, predictive indices for potential delinquents and criminals.

⁴² UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1950.

APPENDIX I

CHILD-PARENT RELATIONSHIP SCALE

Below is a list of statements on how boys feel about their parents. Decide whether you *strongly agree*, *mildly agree*, *mildly disagree* or *strongly disagree* and then circle the letter which best expresses your feelings.

(In the papers as printed and distributed the letters A, B, C, and D were set to the left of each of the 64 statements which follow. To economize on space the letters are omitted below, except that they are set above statement number one.—EDITOR)

Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A	B	C	D

1. Boys must tell their parents how they spend their money.
2. Parents can give valuable advice to their sons on the choice of friends.
3. Fathers often spank their sons without reason.
4. Parents feel that a good whipping is good for the boys now and then.
5. Mothers know what is best for their sons.
6. Parents insist on their sons remaining indoors after supper.
7. Sometimes a boy wishes that he had a different father.

8. Parents' advice to children is for the son's own good.
9. Fathers are often irritable with their sons.
10. Mothers insist on a boy's hanging up his clothes before he goes to bed.
11. Sometimes a boy wishes that he had a different mother.
12. Parents frequently leave their sons to visit a friend.
13. Boy's feelings are often hurt by their mothers.
14. Boy's feelings are often hurt by their fathers.
15. Boys are often praised by their parents.
16. A boy often feels that he has been spanked with reason by his father.
17. Fathers know what is best for their sons.
18. Boys often want to run away.
19. A boy becomes very angry with his mother.

20. A boy becomes very angry with his father.
21. A boy often feels that he has been spanked with reason by his mother.
22. When a boy acts bad, his parents often tell him he will be sent away from home.
23. Mothers attempt to choose their son's friends for him.
24. Parents never forget a son's birthday.
25. Boys frequently get into trouble at home.
26. Boys frequently hug and kiss their mothers.
27. Parents often point out another boy as an example for their own sons to follow.
28. Boys frequently hug and kiss their fathers.
29. When a son misbehaves, his parents tell him that they don't love him anymore.
30. No son will set his will against his parents.
31. Sons fear their fathers to some degree.
32. Parents try to give the impression that they are never wrong.
33. Some fathers do not love their sons.
34. Parents should enter a son's room without permission.
35. When a son asks a question, his mother is usually too busy to answer him.
36. Some mothers do not love their sons.
37. A boy feels that it is wicked to set his will against his parents.
38. Boys do not mind always obeying their parents.
39. Parents seldom allow a son to have his own way.
40. A boy will be punished for contradicting his parents.
41. Boys are often punished without reason.
42. Boys will often be punished for things they have seen their parents do.
43. A boy will never question a command of his parents.
44. Boys do not like to tell their parents secrets.
45. Sons feel that anything their mothers tell them is for their own good.
46. A boy usually loves someone more than his parents.
47. Some mothers want to hurt their sons.
48. Boys feel that anything their fathers tell them is for their own good.
49. Boys wait to get their parents consent before doing anything.
50. Mothers insist on their sons getting high marks in school.
51. Some fathers want to hurt their sons.
52. A boy will often try to get around his mother.
53. A boy will often try to get around his father.
54. Fathers attempt to choose their sons' friends for them.
55. Mothers praise their boys at every chance they get.
56. Mothers feel that boys should be seen and not heard.
57. Boys wish they had more freedom to do what they please.
58. A mother will often point out a brother or sister to her son as an example to follow.
59. Fathers praise their boys at every chance they get.
60. Fathers feel that boys should be seen and not heard.
61. Parents try every way to understand their sons.
62. Parents feel boys often annoy them with unimportant problems.
63. Parents don't care what their sons think of them.
64. When a parent is talking a son is afraid to interrupt.

THANK YOU

APPENDIX II

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECTIVE THEMATIC PICTURE PLATES EMPLOYED

(The underlying attitudes were ascertained by rating the stories given by the subjects to the projective thematic pictures described below)

THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TEST⁴³

5. A middle-aged woman is standing on the threshold of a half-opened door looking into the room.
- 6BM. A short elderly woman stands with her back turned to a tall young man. The latter is looking downward with a perplexed expression.
- 12M. A young man is lying on a couch with his eyes closed. Leaning over him is the gaunt form of an elderly man, his hand stretched out above the face of the reclining figure.
- 18GF. A woman has her hands squeezed around the throat of another woman whom she appears to be pulling backwards across the banister of a stairway.

- 7GF. An older woman is sitting on a sofa close beside a girl, speaking or reading to her. The girl who holds a doll in her lap, is looking away.
- 7BM. A gray-haired man is looking at a younger man who is sullenly staring into space.

SYMOND'S PICTURE STORY TEST⁴⁴

20. Older man paying out money in bills to young man.

STERN'S ADAPTATION OF THE THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TEST⁴⁵

11. Teacher-student situation. (A teacher is bending over the desk of a boy seated in a classroom.)

⁴³ H. A. MURRAY, THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TEST, Harvard University Press, 1943.

⁴⁴ P. M. SYMONDS, ADOLESCENT FANTASY, Columbia University Press, New York, 1949.

⁴⁵ M. J. STERN, A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP

APPENDIX III

OFFENSES COMMITTED BY PREDELINQUENTS

(Each predelinquent selected had committed at least two trivial offenses or one more serious offense for which an arrest was not made. The following is a listing of the the specific offenses committed by each experimental subject)

SUBJECT	OFFENSES	SUBJECT	OFFENSES
1	Truant Runaway from home	15	Fare beat Trespassing
2	Took postage stamp book—70¢ in stamps Truant	16	Threw stones at window Rowdy and noisy in a supermarket
3	Obstructed passageway to store—abusive	17	Struck shop keeper
4	Throwing bricks from adjacent building breaking skylight	18	Broke 15 windows in concert with others
5	Shooting paper clips on subway Stealing money from parking meters	19	Attempted assault on girl friend
6	Climbed "EL" structure—removed bulbs from lights and threw magazines to street	20	Malicious mischief—throwing stones Trespassing
7	Extortion from 12 year old	21	Loitering—soliciting shoe shines Annoying shop keeper
8	Ripped and scratched complainant's car	22	Petit larceny—soap powder Sneaked into movies
9	Incorrigible—fought parents with garrison belt	23	With three others took postage stamp book— 70¢ in stamps
10	Broke into truck—attempted to drive truck in garage		Took wallet and car keys from truck
11	Broke windows with sling shot Looking in complainant's window	24	Fare beat Disorderly in hallway
12	Trespassing and stealing soda bottles from school	25	Assault—tied boy to fence
13	Trespassing on roof Used abusive language	26	Assault with bottle
14	Forced subway door open stopping train Possession of imitation gun Loitering on roof	27	Threatened complainant with knife With three others struck boy
		28	Throwing bricks from adjacent building breaking skylight
		29	Assault and attempted robbery with three others
		30	Molested young girl—used vile language Total number of offenses = 45

BETWEEN ATTITUDES TOWARD CERTAIN AUTHORITY
FIGURES AND JOB STABILITY, School of Educ., New
York University, 1951.