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THREE DELINQUENT TYPES: A MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS*

JACOB I. HURWITZ**

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Several investigators have called our attention in recent years to the need for classifying delinquents or delinquencies into varying types to facilitate both the explanation and the control of this form of deviant behavior. Chein, for example, points out that epidemiological studies of delinquency—e.g. studies of the ecological correlates of delinquency—characteristically disregard typological distinctions.¹ As a consequence, we know very little about the *kinds* of delinquency produced under these varying social conditions, and are therefore compelled to speculate about the social dynamics underlying delinquent behavior.

Grant, in turn, argues for the need to adapt kinds of treatment to types of delinquent.² After reviewing the treatment classifications advanced to date, the latter writer concludes that no satisfactory typology—i.e. one which links empirically relevant

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The author was affiliated with the Harvard School of Public Health and with Boston University during the design and data-gathering phases of the study.

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¹ Chein, *Juvenile Delinquency: Social-Cultural Dynamics and Social Action Approaches*, paper presented in a symposium at the 1957 Annual Convention, American Psychological Association.

² Grant, *Interactions Between Kinds of Treatments and Kinds of Delinquents*, in GRANT & GRANT, *INQUIRIES CONCERNING KINDS OF TREATMENT FOR KINDS OF DELINQUENTS*, Monograph No. 2, Board of Corrections, State of California 5 (1961).

sociological, psychological and situational variables—exists today.

This paper presents the initial results of a study whose aim was to contribute towards both the understanding and control of small city delinquency. It describes a typology integrating several conceptual levels (socio-environmental, intra-familial, interpersonal and intrapsychic) by means of multivariate analytic techniques.

PROCEDURES

The study sample consisted of one hundred ninety-six male, white alleged delinquents appearing on official complaint in a New England juvenile court over a two year period. The sample was selected at random from a universe of all such court cases who lived in two adjacent, semi-suburban communities with populations of fifty to one hundred thousand each. These cases were described and assessed, as part of the pre-sentence investigation process, psychiatrically, psychologically (via Rorschach), interpersonally in diagnostic groups, socially and in terms of how their parents coped with the court crisis situation. The ratings were made by a series of clinical teams on integrated set of quantitative ordinal scales devised for the purpose.³

To derive an empirical classification from a large series of interrelated variables and to adequately define the classes, it was necessary to isolate differentiated types of delinquents and to extract their multivariate profiles. An analysis of variance model using Fisher's intraclass *R* as the basic statistical device was selected for the purpose.⁴ The model called for the following major steps:

1. *Formation of provisional sub-groups.* Results of preliminary analyses of 100 cases based on the individual scales indicated that two major inde-

³ For a detailed discussion of the tool-building-phase of the study, see Hurwitz, Hutcheson & Cooper, *Problems in Refining the Psychiatric Assessment of Juvenile Delinquents*, 2 J. HEALTH HUMAN BEHAVIOR 276 (1961) and Hurwitz, Kaplan & Kaiser, *Designing an Instrument to Assess Parental Coping Mechanisms*, 1962 SOCIAL CASEWORK 527.

⁴ For statistical details of the model, see Haggard, *INTRAClass CORRELATION AND THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE* (1958).

pendent variables—residence in high vs. low delinquency area, and adaptive vs. maladaptive patterns of parental coping with the court crisis situation—ordered most of the data in the study in a meaningful and consistent fashion.⁵ In order to introduce a treatment (i.e. control) component into the analytic model, these two variables were combined with a dichotomized psychiatric rating of much vs. little or no rehabilitative clinical intervention required. Ordering of the sample in terms of the interrelationships among these three variables generated $2 \times 2 \times 2$ or eight provisional subgroups.

2. *Selection of treatment-relevant variables.* Seven project clinicians (two psychiatrists, two psychologists and three psychiatric social workers) were asked to select the rating scales they deemed most relevant for purposes of prescribing the kind of intervention needed by the offenders or their families. All items selected by even a single judge were included in the analysis unless they showed no variance. All but a few items, however, were chosen by two or more judges. Eighty-five treatment-relevant scales were gathered in this fashion from four rating schedules: psychiatric, psychological, parental coping and social. These 85 items were sifted for those showing promise of discriminating among the preliminary subgroups by applying the intraclass R .⁶

The 41 items that best discriminated the provisional groups were then rescaled to standard scores with an arbitrary mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10. Means of the 41 items for each of the eight groups were calculated. The sets of means obtained by each of the groups constituted the group profiles. The resemblance of each individual case profile to all group profiles was determined by calculating the intraclass correlation between each case and each of the profiles. Those cases who appeared to belong better in another group were shifted to it. Group profiles and intraclass R 's were calculated for the reconstituted groups and the same evaluation for shift made. After three such rounds of shifting, final group profiles were calculated. These group profiles were charted and compared both statistically and clinically for essential

similarities to yield the smallest number of clearly and significantly differentiated sub-types. Three basic delinquent types were derived and their multivariate profiles extracted.

Since nearly a third of the cases could not be seen in the small group diagnostic sessions due to scheduling problems, interpersonal interaction data could not be included in the analysis just described. In order to extend the profile analysis into this area as well, the types were compared with respect to selected interpersonal interaction variables on the basis of the cases for whom these data were available.

RESULTS

Figure I presents a comparison of the three type profiles in chart form. Each profile consists of 41 item means. The direction of the items was standardized in the chart to facilitate comprehension. Thus, all mean values *below* 50 represent positive or "healthy" values and those *above* 50, negative or "pathological" values.

Since the three profiles in *Figure I* show varying patterns with respect to items having treatment (as well as etiological) relevance, those individuals in the sample who resemble one profile may be presumed to call for different treatment procedures than those who resemble another profile. In this sense, the three profiles constitute three treatment types. For convenience, we shall use the term "type" in the remainder of the paper. Thus, Type I cases are those whose individual profiles most resemble the profile indicated by the broken line in *Figure I*, Type II cases are those who most resemble the continuous line and Type III cases—the dotted line.

Figure I reveals that all but two Type I mean values lie on the lower or "healthy" half of the chart, while Type II and III means are predominantly on the "pathological" half. While Type II and III profiles are thus predominantly deviant in nature, they reflect different forms of deviancy presumably generated by varying etiological factors.

The results of the comparisons of the three types with respect to the interpersonal interaction items tend, in general, to confirm the findings in *Figure I* above. Type I cases (45% of the sample) are clearly the most socially adaptive and emotionally healthy in the sample, Type II (34%) the most socially deviant and Type III (21%) the most emotionally disturbed.

⁵ It should be noted that the high delinquency tracts were located generally in the lower socio-economic level areas of the two study communities and the low delinquency tracts in the higher socio-economic level areas. In addition, evidence suggested that parental coping patterns in this crisis situation reflected long-standing socialization practices.

⁶ Haggard, *supra* note 4, p. 11, formula 2.

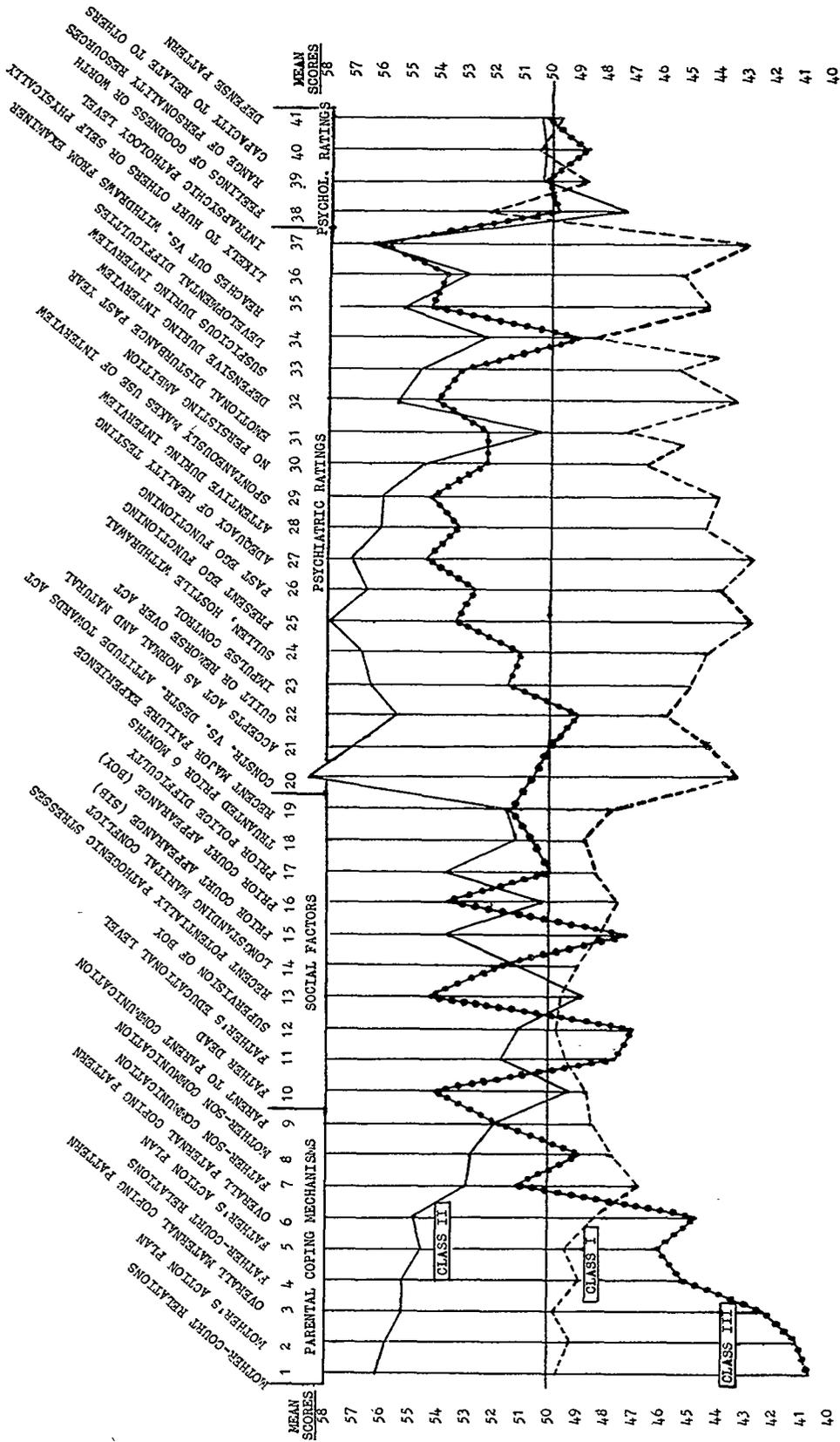


FIGURE 1. COMPARATIVE CLASS PROFILES

Summary of the Three Profiles

Type I cases constitute, on the average, the psychosocially healthiest cluster in the sample in virtually all respects: family relationship patterns, developmental history, psychologically, attitudinally towards both the psychiatrist and the delinquent act, behaviorally in both psychiatric and group settings, and socially. With regard to the latter, for example, they are least often isolated types of boys,⁷ they show the best prior offense and school performance record, and their offenses are most often against property rather than against persons. Proportionately they live most often (58%) in the higher delinquency, lower socio-economic level areas of the community; their delinquent behavior is therefore less contranormative than for adolescents living in lower delinquency areas. Their mothers most often exercise strict or adaptive controls and assume responsibility for their sons' offenses. Furthermore, their families tend to supervise their sons adequately.

Type II cases present, in general, a markedly contrasting profile. Like Type I's, they tend to come from socially intact families without marked longstanding marital conflict or recent major life stresses. However, a predominance of disturbed fathers; of lax mothers who are suspicious of authority figures and who assume no responsibility for the offense; plus overwhelmingly and bilaterally destructive parental coping patterns appear to have contributed towards generating in this subgroup a defective and social psychopathic type of personality structure. This is manifested attitudinally by the highly deviant reactions of these boys towards their offense (see scales 20-22 in Figure I) and by their suspiciousness, sullen hostility towards authority figures, and lack of persisting ambition. Psychiatrically, it is reflected in their extremely poor impulse control and the gross inadequacy of their capacity for reality testing as well as of their overall ego functioning, both past and present. Their behavior in both the psychiatric and group settings was markedly maladaptive: sullenly hostile, suspicious, defensive and withdrawn. And finally, they showed a poor school performance as well as truancy record, a relatively high prior as well as subsequent offense rate, their first court appearance was at an early age and they concen-

trated on thieving. It should be noted that while only 49% of Type II's (as compared, for example, to 58% of Type I's) lived in high delinquency areas, they were subjected to far more destructive parental handling and social deprivation than were the other two types, showed a greater history of developmental difficulties and revealed markedly more anomic attitudes and behavior.

Type III's resemble Type II's psychiatrically more than Type I's. They differ from Type II's, however, in several crucial respects. This type, despite a predominance of constructive parental coping patterns around the court crisis situation, shows a high proportion of physically or emotionally disrupted families manifested by death of a father or, where the fathers are living, by extremely poor father-son and parent-parent communication around the court crisis. (Since the mean educational level of the fathers is the highest in the sample, this latter tendency would appear to be psychological rather than cultural in origin). Both fathers and mothers in these families exercise predominantly lax controls over their delinquent sons but make adequate provision for their supervision during free hours.

Type III offenders show the highest recidivism rate in the sample, i.e. proportionately more of them had either a prior or a subsequent court appearance. Moreover, nearly as many of them, proportionately, experienced prior difficulty with the police or in school, initial court appearance at an early age, and poor school performance as well as truancy records as did Type II's. They did not, however, get into subsequent difficulty with the law or in school as *quickly* as did the Type II offenders.

In ego and particularly superego structure, however, these cases resemble Type I's far more than they do Type II's. They do not show markedly poor impulse controls and their attitudes towards the offense as well as towards authority figures is more conforming than deviant. Their conforming superegos are further evidenced by the low proportion of cases among them who manifest disruptive group behavior and offenses against property. The fact that these cases are, on the average, the most socially isolated and withdrawn in the sample; that they live most often (57%) in the low delinquency, higher socio-economic level areas; that their fathers are, for the most part, either dead or verbally inaccessible to them; and that they focus on assaultive and particularly passive-aggressive types

⁷This is an index based on the presence of *any three* of the following six measures: parental assessment recorded in the social history; no participation in school activities; withdrawal from psychiatrist (two items), and from group leader and group peers.

of offenses suggests that this type is made up, more than the other two, of emotionally disturbed, conflicted adolescents deprived of satisfactory relations with a father. One might reasonably speculate that these offenders enjoy a somewhat seductive relationship with mothers eager to compensate their sons for this lack of a father figure and/or to find substitute gratifications for their own emotional deprivations due to the death or verbal inaccessibility of their husbands. The significant finding that these boys showed the highest mean disturbance score during the past year *but not during their developmental period* suggests that relatively recent events (e.g. death of a father) rather than earlier traumata may have been the chief pathogenic factors in this group.

Type I cases thus seem to be psychologically normal adolescents responding, like some of their fathers, to the deviant norms prevailing in the high delinquency areas where nearly three-fifths of them live.

Type II's, on the other hand, coming equally from high and low delinquency areas, are mainly defective and social psychopathic deviants with poor impulse and superego controls who have been exposed to marked bilaterally destructive or ineffectual parental coping patterns and to disturbed fathers as well as lax and unconcerned mothers; and whose maladjustments appear, as a consequence, to have originated frequently in early childhood.

Type III consists more of emotionally disturbed, conflicted cases whose difficulties appear to have developed *after* their early developmental period. They manifest good superego controls and fairly adequate impulse controls. Their fathers are, for the most part, either dead or verbally inaccessible to them. Parental control is bilaterally lax but supervision and current parental coping patterns are the best in the sample. The fathers are relatively well-educated and the families live mainly in low delinquency, higher socio-economic level areas. The mothers may, perhaps, have a seductive relationship with their sons to compensate both their sons and themselves for the absence, physically or psychologically, of an adult male figure in the family.

The variables which most sharply differentiate the three types are parental coping patterns (except for communication patterns); emotional disturbance in the fathers; attitudes towards the offense; sullen, hostile withdrawal from the psychiatrist; lack of persisting ambition; adequacy of reality

testing; impulse control; level of intrapsychic pathology and adequacy of present as well as past ego functioning.

DISCUSSION

The typology described above appears to be an empirically valid one as measured by its high degree of internal consistency.⁸ It is, moreover, a theoretically relevant typology since the profiles are highly differentiated by such crucial dimensions of delinquency as family structure and coping patterns; impulse and superego controls; attitudes towards authority, towards the offense and towards the future; and behavior in the psychiatric and group settings. And since the profiles consist of determining influences as well as characteristics of delinquents, the typology has explanatory as well as descriptive value.

Some criminologists⁹ and most clinically oriented investigators focus on family structure patterns, particularly early socialization techniques, as the prime etiological agent in delinquent behavior. Sociologically oriented criminologists, on the other hand, look to external socio-cultural factors to account for this, as for other, forms of deviancy. Some of these criminologists¹⁰ even suggest that family experiences may be irrelevant to the causal analysis of delinquency.

The three multivariate profiles described above

⁸ The most striking exception to the otherwise consistent profiles is the series of four Rorschach measures. Three of these (range of personality resources, capacity to relate to others and particularly internalization or externalization as primary defense pattern) failed to differentiate the three generally sharply distinguished classes. The fourth (feelings of goodness or worth) was negatively correlated with virtually all other clinical items in the profiles. Furthermore, eleven of the fifteen Rorschach scales initially included in the study failed to survive the first statistical test for ability to discriminate among the provisional groups. Had the four surviving scales also been excluded from the analysis, the resulting typology would have been even more sharply differentiated. This apparent invalidity of the Rorschach scales for the purpose of classifying delinquents, which showed up in prior analyses as well, may be due, in part, to the restrictions imposed by the study design on the Rorschach diagnostic procedure: quantitative rating of specific traits, blind interpretation of Rorschach scores and a focus on ego functions rather than on personality dynamics.

⁹ Notable among these are the Gluecks with their longstanding emphasis on the importance of "under-the-roof" culture. See, for example, UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY (1950), PREDICTING DELINQUENCY AND CRIME (1959) and FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND DELINQUENCY (1962).

¹⁰ See, for example, CLOWARD & OHLIN, DELINQUENCY AND OPPORTUNITY: A THEORY OF DELINQUENT GANGS (1960).

throw some light on this theoretical issue. Clearly the delinquent behavior of Type I cases, who constitute nearly half the study sample, cannot be attributed to faulty or pathogenic socialization patterns nor, for the most part, to criminogenic family influences. These cases resemble the adaptive, conforming or socialized type of delinquent whose law-violative behavior appears to be mainly a non-persisting response to some kind(s) of environmental deviation pressures. Conformity to peer group pressures to engage in adolescent pranks appears to be a reasonable explanation for the violative behaviors of most Type I delinquents.

Type II cases, coming from the socio-economically most deprived families in the sample (although equally from high and low delinquency areas) and exposed to ego- and superego-damaging socialization practices, reflect the pathogenic influences of both family and broader social environments. With these cases, social and emotional deprivation appear to have combined with deviant family norms (as reflected in anomic maternal attitudes towards the law) and poor family controls to produce a type of offender showing markedly poor impulse controls and deviant and/or defective superegos. These cases, as one might expect, had the highest rate of prior difficulties with the police among the three types. They thus resemble the unsocialized, damaged, defective delinquent described in the literature.

Type III delinquents show the effects of pathogenic *family* influences most prominently. They come most often (57%) from the low delinquency tracts and from the highest socio-economic level families in the sample. While parental coping patterns in the court crisis situation were highly constructive (hence socially normative) among their families, these offenders came mainly from physically broken or psychologically disrupted homes.

As a result, they were the most emotionally disturbed sub-group in the sample who engaged, therefore, mainly in passive-aggressive and assaultive offenses. These cases resemble the emotionally deprived, conflicted, acting-out neurotic category of delinquent.

Since their offenses were of a more serious nature, and since the police (in these communities at any rate) tend to refer offenders from broken homes to the court more often than those from socially intact families, these cases, despite their normative attitudes towards their offenses, showed the highest prior as well as subsequent court appearance rate in the sample.

Of particular interest is the finding that Type I cases, living somewhat more often (58%) in the higher delinquency areas of the two communities but coming from benign family milieus, had persisting ambitions for the future consistent with their potentialities. Types II and III, however, who shared in common an exposure to pathogenic family influences *but not to socio-environmental deprivation*, had no persisting ambitions for the future. Thus, a sense of futility about the future correlated, in this sample, with family structure patterns but not with wider social structures. Those theories which point to socio-economic deprivation as the major causal factor in delinquency¹¹ do not appear to account, by themselves, for the deviant behavior of the current sample, not even among Type II cases.¹²

It would thus appear that to adequately explain delinquent behavior (or more precisely court appearance), in smaller communities at any rate, it is necessary to take into account both the personal environment of adolescent offenders and the socio-cultural milieu in which their families are imbedded, as well as the personality structures and value orientations among these offenders resulting from the interactive impact of the two.

The role of maternal deprivation in the etiology of delinquency has been underscored by several investigators.¹³ Several recent studies, however, suggest that the father may play as crucial a role—perhaps even a more crucial role—in the etiology of delinquency than does the mother.¹⁴ Results of

¹¹ Illustrative of these are Cohen's status discontent theory elaborated in his *DELINQUENT BOYS: THE CULTURE OF THE GANG* (1955) and Cloward and Ohlin's opportunity structure theory described in *supra* note 10.

¹² One wonders, parenthetically, how adequately such theories account for delinquent behavior even in the deprived sections of the large metropolitan urban areas. After all, few children subjected to gross parental abuse or neglect emerge intact, while a majority of the youngsters who grow up in the most socio-economically deprived areas do not become persistent delinquents.

¹³ For examples of this orientation, see Bowlby, *Forty-four Juvenile Thieves, Their Characters and Home Life*, 25 *INTER. J. PSYCHOANAL.* 19, 107 (1944) and FRIEDLANDER, *THE PSYCHOANALYTICAL APPROACH TO JUVENILE DELINQUENCY* (1947).

¹⁴ Examples of these are BANDURA & WALTERS, *ADOLESCENT AGGRESSION* (1959); ANDRY, *DELINQUENCY AND PARENTAL PATHOLOGY: A STUDY IN FORENSIC AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY* (1960); Marcus, *A Dimensional Study of a Prison Population*, 1 *BRITISH J. CRIMINOLOGY* 130 (1960); Reiss, *Delinquency as the Failure of Personal and Social Controls*, 16 *AMER. SOC. REV.* 196 (1951); and CHEFN, GERARD, LEE & ROSENFELD, *THE ROAD TO H: NARCOTICS, DELINQUENCY AND SOCIAL POLICY* (1964).

the present study suggest that *both* parents, individually and interactively, play a crucial role in the delinquency of their sons. However, as the type profiles reveal, the *extent* and *type* of influence exerted by each varies both among and within the classes.

Type I cases, for example, had the highest proportion (24%) of fathers with a prior court appearance record. Among Type II cases, the fathers were predominantly emotionally disturbed, the mothers lax in their discipline and anomic in their attitudes towards the law, and both were highly destructive in their socialization techniques. The fathers of Type III cases, on the other hand, were overwhelmingly either dead or verbally inaccessible to their families, and parental controls were bilaterally lax.

Several anthropological investigators¹⁵ have reported that adolescents growing up in female-based working class families develop difficulties in masculine identification which manifest themselves in efforts to demonstrate their masculinity through fighting and other feats of masculine prowess. It is of interest that the relatively advantaged Type III offenders in this sample who came from physically or psychologically fatherless families engaged most often in assaultive types of offenses. This suggests that while working class cultures may generate a high proportion of female-based households, difficulties in sexual identification may be the product of mother-dominated families in all social classes.

The notion that delinquency, like other forms of aberrant behavior, is primarily psychogenic in nature persists among most psychoanalytically-oriented investigators and practitioners. Twain,¹⁶ for example, has recently asserted that delinquency can be described as "psychological deficit moulded by unique patterns of socio-cultural forces." Social science oriented criminologists, on the other hand, tend to confine psychogenic factors mainly to the relatively small proportion of middle class delinquents.¹⁷

¹⁵ See, for example, Miller, *Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency*, 14 J. SOCIAL ISSUES 5 (1959) or ROHRER & EDMONSON, *THE EIGHTH GENERATION: CULTURES AND PERSONALITIES OF NEW ORLEANS NEGROES* (1960).

¹⁶ Twain, *Social and Emotional Concomitants of Delinquent Behavior Patterns*, (mimeo) TRAINING SCHOOL FOR BOYS (1961).

¹⁷ See, for example, Miller's estimate of the distribution of psychopathology among delinquents in KVARACEUS & MILLER, *DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR: CULTURE AND THE INDIVIDUAL* 54 (1959).

Since nearly half of the present sample (the 45% assigned to Class I) were, as a group, markedly free of symptoms of psychological deficit even as assessed by pathology-oriented psychiatrists whose theoretical bias favors the psychogenic explanation of delinquency, the former (or psychogenic) theoretical position is not supported by the findings of this study.¹⁸ Conversely, however, the large proportion of cases in this sample manifesting early developmental difficulties, ego and/or superego defects or emotional disturbance raises serious questions concerning the latter, or sociogenic, position. This study suggests that each of these broad approaches to explanation (and the specific theories embraced by each) pertains to *particular types* of delinquents, rather than to delinquency in general. This, in turn, indicates that a typological approach may contribute importantly to the *explanation* of delinquent behavior as well as to its *control*.

SUMMARY

An empirical treatment typology of court delinquents was derived through combining several levels of analysis by means of multivariate analytic techniques to throw light on the dynamics of delinquent behavior and provide clues for its control. A random sample of 196 cases were assessed psychiatrically, psychologically, interpersonally and socio-environmentally on a series of quantitative rating schedules of known reliability. An analysis of variance model using Fisher's intraclass *R* as the basic statistical device was used in a computer program to derive three highly differentiated types of delinquents and to define them in terms of their varying multivariate profiles. A comparative profile chart is presented and the differential characteristics of the three types described. Implications of the findings for delinquency theory are discussed. It is suggested, in conclusion, that a typological approach may contribute to the explanation of delinquent behavior as well as to its control.

¹⁸ The known tendency of the police in these communities to place juvenile offenders (particularly first or minor offenders like our Type I's) who come from intact and responsible homes in the custody of their parents rather than bring them to court suggests that the actual proportion of Type I offenders in the community is probably considerably larger than their ratio among court cases. If this is true, it would call for a re-examination of psychogenic explanatory theories of delinquency as they apply to smaller communities.