

CHAPTER IV

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

As indicated earlier it was hypothesized that mothers of juvenile delinquents and mothers of normal adolescents would differ in their attitudes in three major areas of rearing practices. This hypothesis was supported by the findings presented in Chapter III.

Table I showed that mothers of normal adolescents were significantly higher ($p > .001$) on the two democratic scales - Encouraging Verbalization and Comradeship and Sharing. This finding is in agreement with those of Peterson¹⁸, Bandura¹⁹ and Glueck who found that mothers of delinquents had fewer "democratic" and "kind" attitudes. It also supports the work of Pismai Vibulswat²¹ who reported that parents of delinquents often avoid communication with their children and provide fewer opportunities for them to express their ideas. Furthermore, mothers of delinquents were found to be significantly higher ($p > .001$) on several scales in the Hostility - Rejection area - Marital Conflict, Strictness, and Irritability. This result compares favorably with

¹⁸ Peterson, Becker, and Others, "parental Attitudes and Child Adjustment", Child Development, 30: 119-130, 1959.

¹⁹ Bandura, A. and Walters, R. H. Adolescent Aggression: A Study of Influence of Child - Training Practices and Family Interrelationship, N.Y., Ronald Press, 1959.

²⁰ Glueck, S and Glueck, Eleanor. Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency, N.Y., The Commonwealth Fund, 1950.

²¹ Pismai Vibulswat, The Perception of Family Relationships between Delinquents and Non-Delinquents, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1967.

those of Hewitt²² and Glueck²³ who found a high correlation between a serious aggressive behavior syndrome and parental hostility - rejection among mothers of delinquents.

In addition, mothers of this group used Authoritarian - Control more than mothers of normals with significant differences ($p > .001$) on the following scales: Fostering Dependency, Seclusion of Mothers, Breaking the Will, Martyrdom, Fear of Harming the Baby, Excluding Outside Influences, Deification, Suppression of Aggression, Approval of Activity, Inconsiderateness of the Husband, Suppression of Sex, Ascendance of Mother, Intrusiveness, and at the .05 level in Acceleration of Development. These results are similar to Madoff's²⁴ findings that mothers of delinquents express higher authoritarian attitudes ($p > .01$) in Suppression of Sex, Deification, Martyrdom, Suppression of Aggression, Fostering Dependency, Excluding Outside Influences, Seclusion, and at the .05 level in Intrusiveness and Breaking the Will. A possible explanation for this finding may include the following factors: unpleasant family life²⁵, a lack of discipline of the mother herself, or parental emotional instability²⁷. All of these factors may contribute to frustration and conflict

²² Hewitt, L.E., and Jenkins, R.L. Fundamental Patterns of Maladjustment: The Dynamic of Their Origins A statistical Analysis Based upon Five Hundred Case Records of Children Examined at the Michigan Child Guidance Institute. Springfield, Illinois: State of Illinois, 1964.

²³ Glueck and Glueck, op.cit.

²⁴ Madoff, op.cit., p. 520

²⁵ Glueck and Glueck, op.cit.

²⁶ Cyril Burt, The Young Delinquent, as quoted by Harold A. Phelps, Contemporary Social Problems, pp. 646 - 647.

²⁷ Robert G. Andry, Delinquency and Parental Pathology, pp. 32 - 70.

within children. Under such circumstances, children in an unhappy family atmosphere might gradually have a reduction in feelings of guilt and mental security which, in turn, would be reflected in emotional and/or personality deviations. As restriction and rejection²⁸ are said to give rise to fear, and fear promotes defensive reactions, this idea gains support from the studies of Hirschi²⁹ and Kahn³⁰ which indicated that delinquents were the victims of indifference or actual hostility of their parents. Furthermore, delinquent behavior is often said to be a substitute satisfaction for frustration endured in a child's relationships with his parents, especially with a mother who generally spends more time with him.

When attention was given to the variable of education - elementary level - (Table II), mothers of normals still expressed higher Comradeship and Sharing, and Encouraging Verbalization. Differences were significant at the .001 level. This is possibly due to the enthusiasm shown by mothers of normals toward modern methods of supervision. Mothers of delinquents showed more hostile and rejecting attitudes as seen in the scales of Marital Conflict, Strictness and Irritability. In addition, they were significantly higher on dominance attitudes as measured by scales 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19 and 20. Both groups were alike in Equalitarianism, Rejection

²⁸ Davita, Joel R. "Contributions of Researches with Children to a Theory of Maladjustment", Child Development, 29: 3 - 7, 1958.

²⁹ Travis Hirschi and Hanan G. Selvin, Delinquency Research: An Appraisal of Analytic Methods, The Free Press, New York, 1967. p. 23.

³⁰ Kahn J. Alfred, "Delinquency", Encyclopedia of Mental Health, A Division of Franklin Watts, Inc., N.Y., 3: 894, 1963.

of Homemaking Role^e, Avoidance of Communication, Acceleration of Development, and Dependency of Mother. When the variable of secondary education is considered (Table III), mothers of normals were higher on Rejection of Homemaking Role, Avoidance of Communication, and Acceleration of Development. There were no significant differences between two groups with secondary education on the Dependency of Mothers and Irritability scales. These results might be due to the higher educational level of the mothers which would provide them with more opportunities to secure jobs outside the home and, thus, make them tend to accelerate their child's development, avoid communication, reject somehow the homemaking role, and be dependent and even - tempered.

However, mothers of delinquents, whether of elementary or secondary education, agreed significantly with authoritarian - control practices. The variable of education, in this case, does not seem to have been a very important contributing factor. It might be that the position of being mothers of difficult sons, instead, was the key to that dominating responses. Furthermore, mothers of delinquents who had secondary education not only expressed higher authoritarianism, but also higher democratic attitudes than did mothers of normals on the Encouraging Verbalization and Equalitarianism scales. In this case, the idea of "Saving face" or, perhaps, defensiveness on the part of the mothers themselves might be a cause. The results might also be attributed to "reaction formation" or "overcompensation". However, there is no enough evidence at the present time from which to draw firm conclusions. There is a need for further investigation of this finding and the reasons for it.

When mothers of normal boys with elementary and secondary education were compared, (Table IV) significant differences occurred only with regard to Authoritarian - Control. Those with elementary education had higher scores

on Breaking the Will, Fear of Harming the Baby, Deification, Approval of Activity, and Ascendance. However, among mothers of delinquents (Table V), those with secondary education agreed more with Encouraging Verbalization and Comradeship and Sharing, while those with elementary education showed higher marital conflict and (coincidentally with mothers of normals who had elementary education), looked forward more to Deification and Ascendance. Education, coupled with a family background involving a "normal or problem" child, appeared to have a strong influence upon these results.

With regard to the variable of trauma in the family (Table VI), no significant differences were found between mothers of normals and of delinquents in democratic attitudes. On the other hand, when the family status of mothers was normal (Table VII), it was found that mothers of normals significantly more often used the democratic dimension - Encouraging Verbalization, and Comradeship and Sharing. Therefore, traumatic status seems to be a factor in these findings. The results lend support to those of Loeb³¹ and Sheldon³².

Mothers of delinquents when compared with mothers of normals, whether from the traumatic or normal family (Table VI and VII), had significantly higher scores on the Hostility - Rejection and Authoritarian - Control dimensions. No significant differences were found between mothers of delinquents with traumatic and normal families. The key to this seems to be the position of being a mother of a disturbed and/or difficult child. Among mothers of normals (Table VIII), there were only two scales - Comradeship and Sharing and Dependency of Mother - which were significantly different at the .05 level. Mothers from a normal family background had strong attitudes

³¹ Loeb, J and Price, J.R. "mother and Child Personality Characteristic Related to Parental Marital Status in Child Guidance Cases, Journal of Consulting Psychology, 30: 112 - 117, 1966.

³² Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, Family Environment and Delinquency, Toughton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1962.

on Comradeship and Sharing in the democratic area. It would appear from these results that a healthy family status is to be preferred. In addition, these mothers showed a stronger Dependency trend. It might be that they once spontaneously received help and shared warmth with other family members (especially with their husbands) whereas mothers from traumatic families had to struggle for long periods of time by themselves.

Turning to working and non - working status, mothers of normals were repeatedly markedly higher in Encouraging Verbalization and Comradeship and Sharing (Tables IX and X). Their routine, inside or outside the home, seems not to interfere with their democratic attitudes. At the same time, mothers of delinquents were higher on Authoritarian - Control, whether having jobs outside the home or at home. Only two scales among the non - working groups, Avoidance of Communication and Dependency, produced significant differences with higher scores for mothers of normals. There were no significant differences in these two scales among the working groups. This may possibly be due to (1) a tiresome daily routine which made them avoid communication with their children and (2) the financial responsibility which fell to the husbands of these non - working women that made them more dependent.

Looking at the hostility - rejection area, both working and non - working mothers of delinquents (Table IX) showed greater Marital Conflict, Strictness, and Irritability. This would seem to be reasonable. As Gianopoulos³³ and La Follette³⁴ have reported, mothers became more strict and

³³ Gianopoulos, A., and Mitchell, H.E. "Marital Disagreement in Working Wife Marriages as a Function of Husband's Attitude toward Wife's Employment?" Marriage Family Living, 19; 373 - 378, 1957.

³⁴ La Follette, G.T. A Study of the Problems of 652 Gainfully Employed Married Women Homemakers, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia Univer., 1934.

moody with the degree of Marital Conflict. In contrast, the non - working mothers of the two groups did not differ significantly in Irritability and Rejection of Homemaking Role Work, then, would seem to be an influence in this case.

The higher scores of working mothers of normals on Rejection of Homemaking Role may be accounted for by their relaxing feeling when working and greater opportunities to enjoy socially stimulating entertainment. Since they did not have to worry very much about their children, they may often rejected the housewifes duty than did nothers of delinquents,. Besides, it may be that they had never enjoyed the duties expected of housewives. At the same time, non - working mothers of both delinquents and normals did not significantly differ in fejection of the housewife task. It might be said that they accepted this as their duty since they did not have to endure work outside the home.

With regard to the comparisons among mothers of delinquents, the working mothers were more irritable. In this case, it appears that a job, together with the conflicting atmosphere in their families, their mood change easily³⁵. However, the working mothers of delinquents expressed stronger Dependency. It might be that they felt uncertain and insecure in their work and as a result felt more dependent than did the non - working mothers.

A final explanation for having no significant differences between working and non - working mothers of normal adolescents might be that they

³⁵ Nye, F.I., "Emploument Status of Mothers and Marital Conflict, Permanace, and Happiness", Social Problems, 6P 260 - 267, 1959

were similar in "healthy emotion" due to a favorable atmosphere within their families. Further research is to classify this point.