An analysis of the social characteristics of recidivists referred to the Fulton County Juvenile Court in 1969

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RECIDIVISTS
REFERRED TO THE FULTON COUNTY JUVENILE COURT IN 1969

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
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THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY
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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
JULY 1970
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problem of recidivism among juveniles is at the very core of the whole problem of juvenile delinquency. The juveniles who continue to recidivate after treatment and other corrective measures form the bulk of the high hardcore caseloads of most probation and parole officers. It is apparent also that the recidivists increase significantly the intake of delinquent cases by their persistence in delinquency, frequently involving companions in their delinquent activities. Maude M. Craig and Laila A. Budd\(^1\) conducted a study on recidivism and companions, and found that offenses committed with the aid of companions ranged from twenty-five per cent (25\%) to ninety-one per cent (91\%) of all cases depending on the age and seriousness of the offense. The study indicated that companionship in delinquent acts increases proportionately with age and the seriousness of the offense.

Recidivism tends to aggravate and play havoc with the primary purpose of probation and parole systems—basically to prevent recidivism. Generally, a treatment technique (probation, commitment to an institution or parole) is considered completely successful if no treated offenders recidivate. However, recidivism, according to authoritative

sources, ranges from forty (40) to seventy per cent (70%) among such offenders.

Recidivism is one of the crucial phenomena in criminal and delinquent behavior. Unlike the first offender, whose identity was unknown before his first offense, and whose offense was unpredictable from a probability standpoint, the recidivist is well known and therefore, should be under administrative control, since by definition, "a recidivist is a person who, having been convicted and subject to correctional treatment, again commits a crime."¹

It might be noted at this point that recidivism varies with method and definition. Recidivism is defined generally in such terms as, "the persistent offender," "the repeaters" and "the habitual criminal." Other methods used in applying the label recidivism, refers to the number of times the person was arrested or taken into custody by the police or the number of times the person was referred to the juvenile court or correctional authorities. Some authorities insist that only a juvenile who commits repeated delinquent acts should be termed a juvenile delinquent. Various definitions of recidivism is used in the various studies.

The terms, "recidivist" and "repeater" are used synonymously in most instances. However, additional investigation into the meaning of the two terms, revealed that they carry a slightly different connotation. According to Norval Morris, "recidivist," carries the idea of

temporary cure. He defines recidivism as, "The habit of relapsing into crime,"¹ and "relapse" as "a falling back into error, heresy or wrong doing—the fact of falling back again into illness after a partial recovery."² H. M. Metcalf defines "recidivism," as "a falling back or relapse into prior criminal habits, especially after punishment."³

For the purpose of this study, the concept of "residivist" will be considered over against the concept of "repeater." The writer acknowledges that the two concepts overlap at points, and concedes that it is not necessary to strictly construe the two concepts for the purpose of this study based on the samples for analysis.

The following definitions to be considered in this study are excerpted from the Georgia Juvenile Court Act of 1951.⁴

According to Juvenile Court Act of 1951 as amended through 1968 by the 1968 session of the General Assembly of Georgia,

"Child" means a person less than seventeen (17) years of age.

"Adult" means a person seventeen (17) years of age or older.


²Ibid., p. 3


"Delinquent Child" shall mean any person under the age of seventeen (17) years who

1. Commits an act, which if committed by an adult, would be a crime, under federal or state law, or a violation of a municipal ordinance or local law;

2. Is incorrigible, ungovernable or habitually disobedient and beyond the control of his parent, guardian, or other custodian;

3. Is in violation of the compulsory school attendance law;

4. Without just cause without the consent of his parent, guardian, or other custodian, deserts his home or place of abode;

5. Engages in an occupation or whose behavior, condition, environment, or associations are such as to endanger his health, morals, or general welfare or that of others;

6. Associates with immoral or vicious persons;

7. Frequents a place the existence of which is in violation of the law;

8. Is found begging, receiving or gathering alms, whether actually begging or under the pretext of selling or offering anything for sale: Provided, this shall not be construed to prohibit solicitation on behalf of a recognized agency;

9. Unaccompanied by parent, patronizes or visits any bar where intoxicating liquors are sold; or is found in possession of intoxicating liquor;

10. Wanders or loiters about the streets of any city, or in or about any highway or any public place between the hours of twelve (12:00) o'clock midnight and five (5:00) o'clock A. M.;

(f) The singular includes the plural, the plural the singular, and the masculine the feminine, when consistent with the intent of the Act.

"Probationer," a person who has been adjudicated delinquent and placed under the supervision of the court by order of the Judge.

"Child" and "juvenile" in this study are used interchangeably with "parolee! and probationer.
The problem.— There has been no descriptive study of recidivism at the Fulton County Juvenile Court up to this present time. This study is designed to obtain factual information concerning a random selected number of recidivists at Fulton County Juvenile Court and give analysis of a number of social characteristics relating to the recidivist population.

This study consists of a sample of forty (40) boys who were placed on probation and parole in 1969 by original court order, and who have subsequently committed additional acts of delinquency since being placed under the supervision of the court. The sample, which was obtained by a stratified random selection, includes seventeen (17) Negro probationers, eleven (11) Negro parolees, ten (10) white probationers and two (2) white parolees. The sample was obtained from a population of five hundred fifty-five (555) probationers and one hundred forty-five (145) parolees who were placed under the supervision of the court by original court order in 1969. All of the recidivists were on active supervision at the conclusion of this research in June 1970. All of the recidivists have received some type of corrective treatment after having been placed on probation and parole.

Purpose of the study.— The purpose of this study is to (1) isolate a selected number of social characteristics of juvenile recidivists; (2) to investigate the characteristics for any tendency toward "clustering" or "concentrating" in the recidivist group; (3) to analyze and interpret the concentration of isolated social characteristics relating to juvenile recidivism.

The following specific questions serve to delimit our focus of interest:
1. What are the social characteristics—age, residence and neighborhood, types of offenses, number of times repeated, other siblings referred to court, parental status of parents, home adjustment, school adjustment, mental health and religious affiliation?

2. What is the marital status of parents, educational background, occupations and income?

3. What is the home life style of family, size of family and housing accommodation?

Hypotheses.--- that there is a high concentration of the social characteristics selected in this study, in the juvenile recidivist group.

Data and method.--- The methods employed in this study are the stratified random sample and case study. The information collected in this study was by studying the court records of each recidivist, by a questionnaire data sheet, interviews with recidivists, their parents, probation officers and other pertinent court personnel at Fulton County Juvenile Court, Atlanta, Georgia.

The writer, who has been employed at the court for over six (6) years as probation officer and the past two (2) years as a probation officer supervisor, collected the data and information for the study.

Survey of Related Literature.--- The recidivist or repeater is one of the major problems in prevention and treatment of delinquency. Some authorities insist that only a juvenile who commits repeated delinquent acts should be termed a juvenile delinquent.

The literature relating to juvenile recidivism tends to indicate that there are precipitating social factors which surround those persons who persist in repeated acts of delinquency.

The most complete information on the relation of childhood background factors to recidivism is supplied by the Gluecks. One thousand
delinquent boys who had passed through the juvenile court and the Judge Baker Foundation of Boston were studied at 5-year intervals until a total span of 15 years had passed from the time of their first examination.¹

One phase of the study compared the background characteristics of the men who reformed with the background of those who continued to recidivate. Certain characteristics were more closely associated with recidivism than with successful adjustment. Factors associated with recidivism included poor discipline by the parents; mental disease or distortion; marked personality liabilities or unusual adolescent instability; truancy and other school misconduct; and one set of delinquent behavior in the preadolescent years.

In another study, the Gluecks traced 500 young male offenders who had been sentenced to the reformatory, from the time of discharge either unconditionally or from parole until a period of 15 years had passed.² At the end of that time they were able to compare 140 reformed offenders with 256 recidivists. Family background factors more closely associated with recidivism than with reform were these: delinquency of other members of the family; low economic status of parents; employment of the mother outside the home; dependence of the family on welfare agencies; broken homes; incompatibility of parents. Characteristics of the offender in his prereformatory period that were more closely associated


with recidivism than with reform were these: mental deficiency; mental pathology; truancy; first delinquency under the age of 14; first departure from home under the age of 14; ability to do only unskilled work; poor work habits; inability to meet economic responsibilities; and lack of affectional ties with parents and siblings.

In general, the factors in youth that were associated with continued delinquency and crime in adulthood centered around the home, the school, mental defect or instability, and work habits. The early family life of confirmed adult offenders appeared disorganized, involving conflict between the parents, low moral standards, poor discipline of the children, and often the absence of one parent. The economic standard was low, and the mother was possibly employed outside the home.

The Glueck studies revealed further that family ties were weak. At school frequent factors were truancy, misconduct, and retardation, often linked with low mental ability. Delinquencies started during childhood. In adolescence, the delinquent tended to leave home and failed to learn either good work habits, or a skill or trade.

The family's relationship to delinquency may be stated as follows as listed by Cavan:

1. Parents, because of personal and emotional difficulties of their own, are unable to give their children adequate personality training.

2. Parents, because of lack of education or unfamiliarity with the culture in which they live, may be unable to cope with destructive community forces.

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3. Parents may be oriented to criminal behavior and find nothing wrong in condoning or actually training their children in similar patterns of attitude and behavior.

4. Men and women often come into marriage and become parents without having previously achieved maturity or an integrated personality. It is extremely difficult for such parents to assume the best parental roles toward their children.

Louis Berlin, a probation officer with Kings County Court, Brooklyn, New York, during a surge of recidivism in his caseload, noted some basic similarities in the precipitating factors which suggested to him an explanation for recidivism.

The cases which suggested the explanation to him were those of teen-agers, sixteen to nineteen years old, who live in residential sections of Queens, N. Y. C. They come from homes with middle-class values and ambitions. When the parents live together, the mother is usually the dominant, overprotective authority. According to Berlin, in some cases, where the parents were divorced or separated, the probationer usually lived with his mother, who is employed. Berlin's study indicated that practically all cases show some disturbance in family-child relationships. Further, that their I.Q.'s range from the sixties to above average.

Berlin states that, "there is always a critical event which threatens the probationer's self-esteem or self worth to precipitate his acting-out."¹

Tracing the dynamics of Violations of Probation, Berlin isolated four distinct links in the chain of phenomena as follows:²

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²Ibid., p. 276.
1. First, a stress situation occurs in life of the probationer which

2. devalues his self-worth or ego-value which

3. arouses in the youth resentment and hostility toward the devaluator, and concomitant feelings of guilt and self destructiveness which

4. the youth expresses in an anti-social act, a way which not only harms other persons or property but puts him in danger as well.

According to John W. Mannering in his study of recidivists, he indicates that the recidivist is more likely to come from blighted areas where privation and criminality prevail and criminal ways are more common than contacts with law-abiding forces.

Mannering states that "Recidivism studies generally reveal that certain types of offenses are more likely than others to be committed or repeated by recidivists. Larceny, burglary, robbery, car theft, and forgery are often cited as being the most recidivistic crimes. Homicide, assault, rape, other sex offenses, embezzlement, and income tax fraud are offenses not likely to be repeated."\(^1\)

It might be noted that Mannering's study consisted primarily of adult recidivists. However, Charles B. Thompson in a recidivist study found little correlation between age and recidivism and observed that, "recidivism is as much a function of youth as age."\(^2\)

Dr. David C. Twain in his current research related to crime and delinquency, relates the extent to which delinquency is associated with

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a huge range of sociocultural factors and problems. The following paragraphs contain some of the highlights:

1. Findings regarding lower class child rearing practices indicates that these parents often fight uphill battles to guide and control their children in their debilitated communities and then collapse under the pressures which are destructive of proper parental functioning; that the relation of unemployment and men's reaction to this fact and to disparagement of lower class men by their wives are probable factors in delinquency at this socio-economic status level.

2. Cross-cultural studies suggest that, among ethnic groups, it is not socio-economic disadvantages per se that promotes delinquency, but a drift away from indigenous norms, group and family loyalties, and social rewards, resulting in a greater vulnerability to disadvantage.

3. Studies of adult urban Negro males have so far yielded the interesting result that their adolescent behavior or misbehavior seems better predicted by stability and presence of their fathers than by socio-economic variables.

The high rate of recidivism for probationers and parolees tend to indicate that the correctional institutions are limited in their efforts to reform and rehabilitate the habitual offenders. The following statement might give some insight into the problem.

Modern investigations show that the inmate leaves without a marketable skill, with low reading and math levels, and returns to his former environment angrier at the world and himself than he was before his incarceration. His existence becomes one cycle after another through the revolving door.

Donald R. Taft, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, University of Illinois, maintains that the general culture has an influence on crime;

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and that there are criminogenic (crime producing) aspects of the American society. In assessing the background of offenders, he relates that thousands of delinquents have lived in broken, strife-torn, or otherwise disorganized or inadequate homes.

The following excerpts give a description of the slum dwellers plight.\(^1\)

They have lived in a neighborhood slum known and despised as a seedbed of crime and populated by a collection of life's discards whose relative poverty and degradation labels them as failures in a period of great prosperity . . . .

The slum dweller may rebel or he may just accept his fate, too discouraged to object openly, and drifting into criminalistic patterns as the easiest reaction . . . .

American youth are dominated by their "desire to rate." Many young criminals have not been admitted to socially acceptable small primary groups and they join other associates and engage in activities which are in conflict with the larger society.

Dr. Taft states that the criminal has lived in a state of anomie with a relative absence of approved moral standards. Other offenders have been members of an underprivileged class or minority group where they have experienced discrimination, exploitation and frustration.

Dr. Taft enumerates the following examples of the criminogenic influence of certain aspects of American culture:\(^2\)

1. Belief that everyone has a racket.
2. Influence of destitution or relative poverty.
3. The search for something for nothing.


\(^2\)Ibid., p. 21.
4. The influence of misrepresentation in advertising.
5. Preferential loyalties.
6. Influence of white collar crime.
7. Growing acceptance of violence.

Dr. Dugald S. Arbuckle, Professor of Education at the Boston University School of Education and D. Lawrence Litwack, Assistant Professor, raised the following question in their study on Recidivism among Juvenile Delinquents:

Why does one boy, legally classified as a juvenile delinquent, and exposed to the rehabilitative measures of a state training school, return to his former illegal pursuits after parole, while another, with the same legal classification, and exposed to the same measures, succeeds while on parole and makes a satisfactory adjustment to society? What seems to be the characteristics that differentiate between the two of them and the groups they represent?¹

Their findings and conclusions concerning the above question indicated that few studies were found that distinguished between recidivists and non-recidivists from a prediction standpoint.

The implications of the Arbuckle and Litwack study is summarized in the following statement:

The success of a training school rehabilitative program can be measured only partially in terms of the rate of success among the parolees from the institution. Trying to judge the efficacy of an institution's program by the rate of success of its parolees fails to take into account the number of uncontrollable and indefinite factors that govern human conduct. The seeds of recidivism may be found within the psychological framework of the boy, within the practices of a training school, within the environment of the boy, or within the parole practices of any given state. The problems of insufficient staff, poorly trained personnel, overcrowded institutions,

and overloaded parole agents merely serve to intensify the problems of recidivism.

Kirkpatrick\(^2\) found eight factors to have a bearing on recidivism. Examining only first offenders, he found the following to be relevant:

a. Age
b. Color
c. School problem
d. School grade
e. Number of Children in family
f. Neighborhood
g. Type of offense
h. Number of Agencies in contact with family

It might be noted that Kirkpatrick's study is over 30 years old and he possibly did not have the benefit of the more recent findings in the area of urbanization, poverty, race and other economic and social factors.

In an article on the "Cultural Background of the Persistent Offender," Alexander Van West, explores some of the social dynamics surrounding the questions of who the recidivist is and where he comes from.

In examining the relationship between crime and social class, Dr. West points out that, "in Detroit, for example, 15 times as many criminals per unit of population came from a blighted area as from a normal residential area. In Jacksonville, Florida, the cost of police protection

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 48.

in underdeveloped areas was 12 times more per unit area than the remainder of the city.\textsuperscript{1}

One can go on almost indefinitely quoting statistics, showing the correlation between substandard living conditions and the crime rate. This does not mean that these substandard conditions cause deviate behavior, for statisticians recognize that correlation does not imply causation.

The recidivists, for the most part, are the lower classes, the slum dwellers, and represent approximately 17 per cent of the total population in our large cities according to West. He states further that of this group, approximately 52 per cent are considered semiskilled, while 46 per cent are unskilled and approximately 2 per cent have never worked at all. The jobs available to these people are usually low-paying, requiring long hours—6 or 7 days a week. West cites an example in Washington, D.C., concerning car washers who make 50\(^\circ\) to 75\(^\circ\) an hour and work 10\(\frac{1}{2}\) hours a day, 6 and sometimes 7 days a week. Because of the low pay received by the men, the wives must also work. The following passage further illustrates their plight:

Further analysis reveals that the lower class has the highest percentage of wives and mothers gainfully employed—approximately 48 per cent. Most of them work at semiskilled factory jobs or are employed as maids, cleaning women, laundry women, and scrub women. A large percentage of the mothers employed have children between the ages of 6 and 16. Where the man alone works, the median income is approximately $2,600 per year. Where both husband and wife are employed, the median income is approximately $4,300 per year. Because of their lack of training and lack of available jobs which they can do, these people earn as much at 26 years as they do at age 45, and after

the income usually drops until the man or woman goes on relief. When hard times come, this is the first group of people to bear the brunt of any recession. Even if the inclination were there, low and inconsistent income preclude any planned saving system. Monies must first be used for the necessities of life and when these are paid for there is very little, if anything, left over.\textsuperscript{1}

The above type of economic existence can easily lead to the philosophy, "live today for who knows what is going to happen tomorrow.?"

"Get what you can now, satisfy your immediate needs, and to hell with the consequences," which is an attitude common among offenders.

In terms of education Dr. West found that the median number of years of school is approximately 6 for the men and 8 for the women. Further, that 54 per cent of the men and 39 per cent of the women have less than 7th grade education. Dr. West relates to tests administered by himself in the District of Columbia to persons who have completed the 8th, 9th or 10th grade, but who are reading at the 3rd, 4th or 5th grade level. Many of the teachers who teach in these schools, says Dr. West, have long since given up the idea of educating these students. These teachers are now a cross between policeman and entertainer. They try to keep the children entertained and interested and out of trouble.

Commenting about the families of the lower class and slum dwellers, Dr. West makes the following statement:

Approximately 41 per cent of the children under 17 years of age live as a result of death, desertion, separation, or divorce. These families usually have mixed constellations which include a parent, children, roomers and/or boarders, common-law wives, husbands, boy friends, etc. Desertion of the family by either the mother or the father is not uncommon and a good majority of the homes have three generations living

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., p. 18.
in the same apartment. This conglomeration makes an excellent bed for pathology.\(^1\)

Sterling Tucker, Director, Field Services Department, National Urban League, Inc. gives some insight into some of the problems which face the ghetto dwellers. Tucker contends that the most serious of all criminal offenses occur with greatest frequency in the slum areas of our largest cities. And, over 40 per cent of the population of inner-city slums is black.

There are many, says Tucker, who juxtapose facts and statistics thus in an effort to prove a relationship between race and the perpetration of crime, between blackness and criminality. However, neither race nor color -- in and of itself -- is a factor which bears any relation whatsoever to the commission of crime according to Tucker. Rather, "Numerous studies indicate that what matters is where in the city one is growing up, not religion or nationality or race."\(^2\)

It is no cliche that slums breed despair, hopelessness, degradation, disease of the body and disease of the mind. Slum areas are colorless, drab, monotonous. There is little of beauty while examples of dilapidation and shabbiness abound. The slum dweller feels little pride as he looks around the outside or the inside of his home. Indeed, shame is the more common reaction. . . home has little holding power for the child -- it is not physically pleasant or attractive; it is not a place to bring his friends; it is not even very much the reassuring gathering place of his own family . . . .

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 19.

A lack of space also characterizes the slum environment; there is not enough room for privacy; there is but limited space for recreation and play. Space is always at a premium -- inside or out; privacy and freedom are sought but in vain. Apartments or homes are shared with relatives or with friends. Rooms are shared with brothers, sisters, cousins, parents.

Ghetto property, more often than not, is in a state of poor repair. Facilities are inadequate to meet the need...plumbing and heating frequently fail; appliances are old and rickety and highly erratic. There are no traces of stability or permanence or durability to be found. Residents are forced to live with no assurances. The heating system may fail on the bitterest of winter evenings; rats may appear or reappear....

Slum neighborhoods team with criminal activity that is apparent to even the youngest pair of eyes. Dope pushers, numbers runners, prostitutes, pimps, and drunks are on the streets when the children leave for school in the morning; they are on the streets when children pass by again after class or after work. Bars are everywhere. Violence is part of the landscape. A sense of frustration and failure is in the air...holding ghetto dwellers back is not a lack of will, but lack of opportunity. By following conventional routes, they can't get a good education, they can't get decent employment, they can't become upwardly mobile, they can't get out.1

The foregoing description of the ghetto and the ghettoized seems to fit the definition phrased by Julius Horwitz, "A slum is a neighborhood where people infect one another with the virus of failure, and where children are infected long before the virus is detected."2

It is apparent that the literature is replete with environmental conditions and social characteristics surrounding the whole area of crime, delinquency and recidivism. The most common and reoccurring


social characteristics of juvenile recidivists seem to be related to the areas of poverty, blighted neighborhoods, broken homes, a lack of achievement and adjustment in school, inadequate care and supervision, a lack of healthy emotional and family ties.

Further summary and analysis of literature on recidivism reveals that there is a gap between aspiration and opportunity. Because many delinquents and criminals are denied acceptance in the general mainstream of American society these persons have acquired certain social values and a general philosophy of life that is in conflict with the general society. The delinquent is bored; he is not at peace with himself; he is not at peace with society; he is not comfortable with his values; he is not comfortable with either the way he or the world is.

The crux of the delinquency problem seems to be related to the discrepancy between what adults teach children and what adults do themselves; a discrepancy between what adults believe and what they practice. The delinquent, sensing this confusion in values, the discrepancy between what he is taught and what he experiences instinctively, seeks immediate gratification as a substitute for harmony. Once he seeks immediate gratification, the emphasis on long-range goals is lost.

Dr. Donald J. Tyrell makes the following statement concerning the groups from which delinquents are referred:

It is interesting to note at this point that the family Court at Chicago in the past 10 years has not had one referral of an oriental child. In terms of the population in Cook County, there should have been approximately 100 such referrals during this time. Jewish children are very seldom referred to the court. The great bulk of referrals are from Protestants and Catholic groups. Of these, the
largest per cent is from the Negro Protestant group.\textsuperscript{1}

It seems apparent from the literature on juvenile recidivism and other related literature, that there is no single cause of juvenile recidivism and no single theory to describe it. However, there are some factors associated with juvenile recidivism. It is suspected that some of these factors surrounding recidivism will emerge in the study at Fulton County Juvenile Court.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RECIDIVISTS

The social characteristics of juvenile recidivists cover a wide range. It is not the purpose of this chapter to attempt to include all of the social characteristics within this wide range. Also, many of these social factors can be applied to some juveniles who are not considered delinquents, and to some delinquents who have not been adjudged recidivists. However, it is suspected that when these social characteristics apply to the non-delinquents and the non-recidivists, it will be in isolated and individual cases. This chapter aims at examining those social characteristics which seem to be more commonly applied to juvenile recidivists referred to Fulton County Juvenile Court. It appears that these characteristics are more common to, and concentrated in the juvenile recidivist group. This chapter is concerned with an analysis of the following characteristics of the juvenile recidivist:

1. Age
2. Residence and Neighborhood Status
3. Types of Offenses
4. Number of Times Referred to Court
5. Other Siblings Referred to Court
6. Parental Status
7. Home Adjustment
8. School Adjustment
9. Mental Health
10. Religious Affiliation

Age.— In Table 1, the present chronological ages of the recidivists are presented. There is no analysis in this study of the ages of the recidivists when they were first referred to the court. However, the dates covering their offenses and referrals to the court will be presented in this study. Age, as residence, is a factor in determining jurisdiction of the court. The jurisdictional age varies from state to state. The Georgia Juvenile Court has original jurisdiction of persons under 17 years of age who are referred to the court as being in an apparent state of delinquency or dependency.¹ The above age jurisdiction refers to age of child at time the child was found in the state of delinquency and/or dependency. Once the court gets jurisdiction, it can by court order, extend its services to the youngster until he reaches his 21st birthday. The Fulton County Juvenile Court seldom extends services to juveniles beyond their 18th birthday for various reasons.

Usually, children under 10 years of age when referred to the court fall in the category of "dependency" with allegations of neglect or a lack of supervision by parents. Children between the ages of 10 and 17 are the ones brought before the court and adjudicated as delinquent.

Table 1, indicates the highest percentage of recidivists, 57.5% are between 15 and 16 years of age, followed by the second highest per cent,

TABLE 1

AGE OF RECIDIVISTS AT FULTON COUNTY JUVENILE COURT

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<thead>
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<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27.5%. Twelve point five per cent are between the ages of 17 and 18. Only 2.5% fell between 11 and 12 years of age. The 15 and 16 years old group account for slightly over half of the recidivists in the sample, 57.5%, followed by the 13 and 14 year old group which consists of 27.5%. It is apparent that the low per cent, 2.5% of the 11 and 12 year old group is partly accounted for by the fact that this age group has not had as much time to recidivate as the older groups. Secondly, a child must be at least 10 years of age (with few exceptions) before he is adjudicated delinquent by the court. Thirdly, the probation officers make every effort, especially on misdemeanor type offenses, to adjust or otherwise dispose of the case without a formal court hearing.

Residence and neighborhood.-- Where in Fulton County do the recidivists live? Generally, from what types of residence and from what neighborhood areas do they come? The samples indicate that no particular neighborhood is immune to delinquency and recidivism. However, none of the persons in the samples represented the upper class. There were about
three individual cases in three neighborhoods that could be classified as middle class. However, only one municipality outside of the City of Atlanta was represented.

The sample indicates that there is a higher incidence of delinquency and recidivism in some neighborhoods than others. There appears to be a higher concentration of recidivists in the lower socio-economic status neighborhoods than in the higher socio-economic status neighborhoods.

The 40 samples represented approximately 18 community areas in Metropolitan Atlanta. However, 75% of the samples fell in, roughly, 8 community areas with names and percentages as follows:

1. Summerhill (15%)
2. West End (15%)
3. Cabbage Town (10%)
4. Fourth Ward (7.5%)
5. Perry Homes Area (7.5%)
6. Pittsburgh (7.5%)
7. Vine City (7.5%)
8. Dixie Hills (5%)

It might also be noted that 11 recidivists or 27.2% live in low rent Government Housing Projects. Also, many of the recidivists live in the Model Cities Area of the city.

The recidivists seem to be more highly concentrated in the Atlanta Metropolitan Area in the lower socio-economic neighborhoods predominantly populated by Negroes. These neighborhoods seem to be characterized by a conglomeration of low rent apartment dwellings, unstable and deteriorating housing, with numerous businesses and other public concerns. With
the crowded conditions there seems to be a lack of space and facilities for wholesome recreation.

Twenty-one or 52.5% of the recidivists live in apartments. Eighty per cent of the homes where recidivists live are rented. The average rent is $66.50 per month. Eight or 20% of the houses where recidivists live are owned or being bought.

The homes where the recidivists live consist of an average of 4½ rooms. An average of 6 persons live in these homes.

The mobility and number of times the recidivists and their family relocated was not a factor for analysis in this study. However, it was noted from the recidivists' records that they relocate frequently, primarily within the same class of neighborhoods.

Types of offenses.— The 40 recidivists committed a total of 316 offenses beginning at the first offense in December 1962 through June 1970. Each recidivist has been referred to the court on an average of 8 times. This does not include multiple offenses. In many instances a juvenile is arrested for burglary, and the investigation later reveals that he committed several burglaries or other offenses. Therefore, the total number of 316 more accurately gives the number of times the juveniles were referred to the court and not an accurate number of the offenses. The total number 316 can be safely used as a conservative estimate. Also, the total number 316 does not include traffic offenses. Traffic offenses are not considered to be in the delinquent category unless they are of a substantially serious nature or habitually repeated by the same juvenile.
As Table 2 indicates, there are about 11 different offenses with relatively high frequencies. Thefts, Burglary, Auto theft, Acts of Malicious Mischief, Ungovernability, Shoplifting, Violation of Compulsory School Attendance Law, Drinking or possessing Alcoholic Beverages, Running away or Escape, Glue Sniffing and Injury to persons, are the most frequently occurring offenses. The other 8 classes of offenses were committed less than 10 times.

Many, if not most of the 316 offenses were adjusted or disposed without a formal court hearing. Many of the juveniles had committed several offenses over a period of years before they were taken to court and adjudicated delinquent. All of the 27 Probationers of this sample were found delinquent by the court and placed on probation in 1969. In order to be considered recidivists, all of the probationers have committed additional acts of delinquency since they were placed on Probation in 1969.

The 13 parolees used in the sample, likewise have committed several or many offenses before being found delinquent and sent to the Youth Development Center. Most of the parolees had their probation revoked before being committed to the Youth Development Center. However, each parolee was placed on parole in 1969 and has committed a subsequent act or several subsequent acts of delinquency.

This research is not a comparative study and race is not used as a factor for analysis. However, Table 3, shows the numbers of times the recidivists repeated acts of delinquency for the 28 Negro samples and the 12 White samples.
### TABLE 2
DELINQUENT COMPLAINTS OF FORTY RECIDIVISTS
FROM DECEMBER 1962 -- JUNE 1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complaints (Offenses)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Automobile Theft</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Burglary</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Thefts</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation of Compulsory School Attendance Law</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Away or Escape</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungovernable</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Offense</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury to person (Assault and Battery)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts of Malicious Mischief</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking or possessing Alcoholic Beverages</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessing and/or using Dangerous Weapons</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation of Curfew Ordinance</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation of probation and parole</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glue Sniffing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoplifting</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation of States Narcotics Law</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>316</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above complaints do not include traffic offenses.

**Siblings referred to court.**—Twenty-five or 62.5 per cent of the recidivists had other siblings who had also been referred to court for delinquent offenses. Twelve or 30 per cent of the recidivists had 1 sibling referred to court. Seven or 17.5 per cent of the recidivists had two siblings who were referred to juvenile court. Three or 7.5 per cent of the recidivists had 3 siblings who were referred to court. Three or 7.5 per cent of the recidivists had 4 siblings who were referred to
court. With the exception of two cases, the siblings were boys.

Most of the other siblings were older, and many had passed the age of Juvenile Court jurisdiction. They had committed in most instances, the same, or similar offenses.

**TABLE 3**

**NUMBER OF TIMES JUVENILE RECIDIVISTS REPEATED ACTS OF DELINQUENCY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Times Repeated</th>
<th>Negro Boys (Frequency)</th>
<th>White Boys (Frequency)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Parental status of Recidivists' Parents.--** The highest percentage of the recidivists lived with one parent, the mother. Living with the "mother only" category accounts for over half of the sample, which is more than all of the other categories where child was living when referred to the Court combined.
The next highest percentage category of the whereabouts of the child when referred to the Court is with both parents, which accounted for less than half the number living with the mother. These two categories combined, account for 77 per cent of the sample. The remaining 23 per cent live with foster parents, father, cousin, aunt, sister and self as indicated in Table 4.

**TABLE 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lives with</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother only</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both own parents</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father only</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster parents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cousin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 seems to indicate that when the mother and father are living apart, the probability that the juvenile will live with the mother is greatest. Considering that the juvenile is living with his mother when the mother and father are living apart in 52.5 per cent of the cases, and also with the mother when both parents are living together in 25 per cent of the cases, indicates that the mother lives in the home with the recidivist in 77.5 per cent of the cases.
By contrasting the percentage of cases the recidivist lives with his father when the parents live apart and when they are living together, it is found to be 5 per cent and 25 per cent respectively.

Therefore, when recidivists' parents are living apart, the probability of the child living with the father is slight. Combining the two percentages with parents together and apart the father is in the home with the child 5 per cent of the cases compared to the mother's 52 per cent of the cases; 30 per cent of the cases compared to mother's 77 per cent of the cases.

In three of the cases there were indications that the maternal grandmother lived in the home with the mother where the father was away. Two cases where the father was away indicated step-fathers in the home. However, the marital status of these step-fathers was not clear.

Home adjustment.— There are frequent and consistent indications from the recidivists' court records and from interviews with them and their parents, that most of them have extremely unhappy home situations. The recidivist often expresses rebellion and hostility towards his parents and other authoritative figures.

Thirty out of 40 of the recidivists were referred to Court for being ungovernable, running away from home or for some other severe conflict with their parents. Seventy-five per cent of the recidivists have problems growing out of their home and parental relationships.

In many instances, if not most, the parents are inadequate and have insufficient resources to cope with their own problems, not to mention the child's problem.

The above paragraph will be better understood as the parents of
recidivists are treated in the next chapter.

**School adjustment.**—A school problem seems to be one of the most constant characteristics of the recidivist. The sample does not indicate a single successful student in school. Fifteen, or 37.5 per cent of the recidivists were found to have disturbing and disrupting behavior at school, in addition to excessive absences and failures in class work. Eleven, or 27.5 per cent, were found to have excessive unexcused absences and chronic truant problems. There were indications to show that 85 per cent of the recidivists had definite problems in school; ranging from cutting classes, excessive unexcused absences, truancy, disruptive behavior to incorrigibility.

There were 2 out of 40 recidivists with no indications that they were serious school problems. Four recidivists, assumed to have dropped out of school, had no indications of school adjustment.

Table 5 indicates the schools where recidivists were enrolled during the second semester of the 1969-70 school year. Table 6 indicates the grades of the recidivists.

Over ninety per cent are under achievers in school. Many are retarded, functionally illiterate and cannot read.

**Mental Health.**—Fifteen or 37.5 per cent of the recidivists were referred to the Mental Health Clinic at the Juvenile Court. The diagnoses reveal that most of their intelligence quotients (I.Q.'s) measure under 90. The psychological and psychiatric reports frequently indicate defective character structure because of disturbed home; rejected by parents; resentful and hostile towards mother; poor self concept and image; no masculine authority figure in the home; confused and frustrated;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Recidivists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archer H. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown H. S.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryant E. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carver H. S.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Jr. H. S.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas H. S.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulton (S) H. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulton (W) H. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grady H. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harper H. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope E. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard H. S.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northside H. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price H. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitts E. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks Jr. H. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell H. S. (East Point)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt H. S.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvan H. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Street E. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith H. S.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaton E. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott E. S.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington H. S.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H. S. - High School;  E. S. - Elementary School
TABLE 6
SCHOOL GRADES OF RECIDIVISTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School * Grade</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None given</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mean grade is 8th.

spoiled and indulged by grandparents; Broken home; unstable mothers and deserted fathers. To mention an extreme example, one recidivist along with two younger siblings, were born in prison while the mother was doing a life sentence for murder.

Religious Affiliation.— The highest per cent of the recidivists claimed affiliation with a Baptist Church. Sixty-two per cent of the recidivists along with their parents, made the claim of being affiliated with a Baptist Church. Ten or 25 per cent made no claim of religious
The other religious groups represented were as follows: Methodists 2 or 5 per cent; Presbyterians 1 or 2.5 per cent; Holiness 1 or 2.5 per cent; Jewish 1 or 2.5 per cent.

Most of the recidivists have no recent church attendance. A few indicated that they attend church occasionally. It can be concluded from the recidivists' records and from interviews with them and their parents that religion played no significant role in their lives.

TABLE 7

RECIDIVISTS' CLAIMS OF RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None Claimed</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER III

THE PARENTS AND HOME ENVIRONMENT OF RECIDIVISTS

Marital status of parents.-- The varied marital statuses of the recidivists' parents is suggestive of marital conflicts, confusion, embarrassment, instability and disharmony in the family. It is not uncommon to find a high percentage of unmarried mothers with large numbers of children fathered by many different putative fathers. It is not uncommon for a delinquent recidivist to not know who his father is. There is often no contact between the child and the putative father. It is not uncommon for putative fathers to deny being the father of many delinquents. It is recognized that this kind of situation is not limited to the delinquents and recidivists. However, because of the high rate of parents who never married, separated, deserted by father, divorced and living separately or alone for other reasons, it is suspected that the recidivists have a higher concentration of these unfortunate marital conflicts and broken home situations.

The sample indicated that 13 or 32 per cent of the recidivists' parents were separated; ten or 25 per cent were never married; three or 7.5 per cent were widowed.

The 8 or 20 per cent that were married gave indications that there was a lack of harmony in the home. There were reports of drinking problems, temporary separations, a lack and mismanagement of money, long hours away from home and a lack of congenial love and consideration between the spouses.
Table 8 gives the varied marital statuses of recidivists' parents.

**TABLE 8**

**MARITAL STATUS OF RECIDIVISTS' PARENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowered</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home life style of family.— Interviews with the recidivists and their parents concerning their home life indicates that the children are often left unsupervised. The children, including the recidivists, wander through the neighborhoods and play in and outside of each other's homes with the benefit of little, if any, adult guidance and supervision. It is difficult to determine, but it appears that the family relationships are often tense and antagonistic. It seems that time, resources, family circumstances and estranged relationships don't permit many, if any, meaningful and enjoyable family experiences together.

The home life seems to be characterized generally, by disorganization, a lack of planning, an indifference on the part of parents to set long range meaningful goals for educational, social and economic
betterment and progress.

Education of parents.— The sample indicated that two parents, a mother and a father, finished high school. The same father also finished a business school. These two represented the highest known educational achievement among the parents.

Because of the large number of fathers living away from the home with the child, the educational background on 18 or 45 per cent of the fathers could not be determined. One father had no formal education, 5 had less than a seventh grade education; 15 had less than a twelfth grade education.

The education of the mother followed a pattern similarly to the father. Twenty mothers had less than a twelfth grade education; 12 had less than a sixth grade education; 7 were indicated as unknown.

From the indications in the Court records and from the questionnaire and interviews, the parents also have a background of poverty. Therefore, in all probability, they have substantially far less education than is indicated by their highest completed grades.

Occupation and income of parents.— The range of occupations clearly indicates that none of the parents are professionally employed. Most of the known occupations, with few exceptions, indicate that these parents have few marketable skills. Most of them are employed in the common labor and nonskilled type jobs. As has been the case throughout this research, the information on the fathers is limited because of the high frequency of their being away from the home and generally unavailable. It is noted that the occupational and income status on 17 or 42.5 per cent are unknown.
Table 9 gives an indication of the various occupations, disabilities and incapacities of the mother and father of the recidivists.

Most of these families appear to be economically dependent. Fifteen or 37.5 per cent are receiving welfare assistance from the Division of Family and Children Services.

The average annual income of these families from all visible sources, including welfare, pensions, disability checks, moneys paid through Court for non-supporting fathers and earnings of parents amounted to $4200.

When one considers an average number of 6 people living in each home, the $4200 figure is further deflated. However, it is possible that some money might be received by the family from such invisible sources or unreported income as relatives and friends.

The occupations, disabilities and incapacities listed in Table 9 further illustrates some of the background reasons why the recidivists have such a large number of broken homes, disorganized living patterns and disruptive home situations. It also explains, in part, why the recidivists are often misguided, unsupervised, unmotivated, uninspired and undisciplined. They have a combination of some of the most inadequate, uneducated, disabled, unfit, economically dependent, socially and culturally disadvantaged parents in the community. There is also a high percentage of deceased parents and an extraordinary number of parents, and especially fathers, away from the home of the children without any support or meaningful contact.

Living under the deprived conditions as stated above, the limited number of available parents do not often have adequate time or resources to meet or have met, the many needs of themselves and their children.
Thus, it seems that the recidivist group has a concentration of negative social characteristics in their environment, which are conducive to a pathological breeding ground.

Table 9

OCCUPATIONS, DISABILITIES AND INCAPACITIES OF PARENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father Occupations</th>
<th>Father Frequencies</th>
<th>Mother Occupations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Disable</td>
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<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Nurses Aide</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Housing accommodation and size of family.-- According to the sample, over half of the recidivists live in four room apartments with an average number of 6 persons living in the apartment. By adding the rooms of the 18 houses and the rooms of the 21 apartments, gives an average of four and one-half rooms for each family. There was no significant difference in the number of persons reported to have been living in the houses. Considering that two of the rooms are generally used for the kitchen and living room, it would seem that the homes are relatively crowded.

There were indications that the recidivist's home is often shared with relatives of both sexes and various ages. The recidivist's family also consists of both sexes and various ages which increase the need for more room and privacy.

There is not only a lack of physical space, but a lack of social space as well. The recidivist cannot always "turn off" or escape what he considers the unpleasant chatter, the constant nagging and the old fashion lectures by his parents. Many of the recidivists appear to be the "scape goat" of the family and often gets more than his share of the blame and punishment. With such limited space to accommodate such a large number of people, hardly anyone, and especially the recidivist, can claim a room, a chair, a bed, or anything in the home that will be preserved for his own personal and private use. Consequently, the four or five rooms become too inhibitive, repressive and intimidating for the recidivist. This, among other reasons, could possibly contribute to the high percentage of running away from home and being ungovernable. If there are sufficient physical and social space in the recidivist's
home environment for him to escape some of those things which are un-
pleasant and threatening to him, he might not seek the many harmful and
unlawful means of escape outside the home which result in repeated acts
of delinquency.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The findings in this study seem to be consistently conclusive from the data presented and analyzed that there are certain social characteristics which are common to, and highly concentrated in, the juvenile residivist group. It is acknowledged that many of the analyzed social characteristics have some degree of commonality in other similar groups. But it is doubtful that such a high percentage of negative and unfavorable social characteristics are concentrated in the general delinquent population. As a probation officer of six years experience, the writer, having had numerous contacts with delinquent children, their parents and having familiarity, social environment was nevertheless, amazed at the large number of recidivists living under such unfavorable social conditions — conditions which are not only unfavorable but also inimical to the natural processes of wholesome and healthy growth and development.

Basic findings.-- The following list indicates the basic findings relating to the recidivists:

1. The majority of the recidivists are between 15 and 16 years of age.

2. With few exceptions, most of the recidivists live in the low socio-economic status neighborhoods.

3. General thefts, burglary, automobile theft, acts of malicious mischief, shoplifting, violation of the Compulsory School Attendance Law, ungovernability and glue sniffing were the
most frequent occurring offenses.

4. Each recidivist was referred to the court on an average of seven times each from December 1962 through June 1970.

5. Twenty-five of the forty recidivists had other siblings who had also been referred to the court—with the number of siblings per recidivist, ranging from one to four.

6. The highest number of the recidivists live with one parent, the mother. Living with "mother only" category accounts for over half of the sample.

7. The study revealed that most of the recidivists were poorly adjusted at home. Thirty of the forty recidivists were often uncontrollable by their parents.

8. A school problem was found to be one of the most constant characteristics of the recidivist.

9. Fifteen of the recidivists had been referred to the Mental Health Clinic at the Juvenile Court.

10. Of the reported religious affiliations, most were Protestants with a high concentration of the Baptist denomination. Religion seems to play a very minor role in the lives of the recidivists.

The following list indicates the basic findings relating to the parents and home environment of the recidivists:

1. The marital status of the recidivists' parents were varied. However, the highest number were separated, followed by those who never married. These two categories accounted for over half of the marital statuses.

2. The home life style of the recidivists indicate that there is a lack of family cohesion and harmony. The parents are frequently away and the children are unsupervised.

3. Only two parents reported in the sample completed high school. Twelve of the mothers had less than a sixth grade education and five of the reported educational backgrounds of the fathers had less than a sixth grade education.

4. The range of occupations ranged from unskilled to semi-skilled type jobs. Fifteen of the families were receiving welfare assistance. There were a large number of non-supporting fathers. Forty-two hundred dollars is the average family income.
5. According to the sample, over half of the recidivists live in four room apartments with an average of six persons living in the apartment.

While it cannot be concluded that these social characteristics are causes of delinquency and recidivism, or that a plausible theory could be based on them, the analyzed data seem to give evidence that in some way, these social characteristics are contributing factors to be considered with the utmost concern.

It seems that the findings will support the generalization that recidivism is a potentiality at the core of delinquency, and that to the extent that unfavorable social environmental conditions are concentrated in the recidivist group, recidivism is predictable in the delinquency population. This being the case, it would seem to indicate that recidivism will be, or can be, reduced in proportion to the reduction of the unfavorable environmental and social factors which will contribute to delinquency. Consequently, the core of the delinquency problem will begin to dissolve if such an approach is adopted.

There are several factors that stand out very conspicuously in this study. First is the observation that in this population are an unusual incredible number of children living apart from their fathers. The influence of this single factor may be excuse of decisive influence on the development of the recidivist. The number of fathers being away from the home and the number of broken homes reported seem to suggest that much attention, planning and preparation must be given to the planning of the family structure. Secondly, poverty and its many ramifications also is revealed as a major factor in recidivism. This factor is highlighted and reinforced by the fact that most of the
Recidivism is concentrated in the inner core or outer city sections of Metropolitan areas where there are constant reminders of wealth and affluence. It was not surprising that the greatest number of recidivists came from impoverished neighborhoods. This seems to add strength to the theory that the environment gets into the person, and that culture is a dominant influence on a person's behavior. Thirdly, the fact that an overwhelming majority of the recidivists are lacking in self control would seem to suggest that there is a serious breakdown in the parent-child social relationships which is detrimental to all concerned--the child, the parents and society. A high percentage of this behavior extends into the school system also. It seems that our institutions must give more attention to character building and instilling more ethical and social values in human relations that are more positive and socially acceptable. The fourth outstanding factor was that religion did not seem to have any influence or place in the lives of the recidivists.

Future programs for rehabilitating and treating delinquency and recidivism must not be geared to the individual approach alone. Future programs must also include working with the whole child, the whole family, the whole community. They must be aimed at rebuilding impoverished neighborhoods and enriching fetal soil.
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