AN INVESTIGATION OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE INTERACTION
BETWEEN A GROUP OF DELINQUENT BOYS
AND THEIR MOTHER-FIGURES

DISSERTATION
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12  Significance of Difference (two-tail test) Between the Members of Different Groups in Amount of Ambiguity
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency is one of the nation's major social problems. Communities throughout the land are alarmed at the increasing rate of juvenile crime. Almost every citizen has a belief about the causes of delinquency. Likewise, the man-on-the-street can tell you how the juvenile delinquent should be handled. Many persons, including professionals working with delinquents, seem to arrive at their diagnoses and treatment plans on the basis of tradition rather than on the basis of scientific fact. It is not uncommon to hear individuals state that all delinquent acts have a common causal variable. A particular type of treatment program may be as universally applied to delinquents as electric shock treatment was once applied to inmates of mental institutions. In order that preventive, diagnostic, and treatment procedures may be scientifically established much research is needed in the area of juvenile delinquency.

Stella Chess (25, p.2) wisely stated that delinquency is a description, not a diagnosis. Essentially, a juvenile delinquent is an individual who falls within a certain broad descriptive category. This descriptive category is defined by state law. In general, delinquents from a particular state have two things in common. First, the delinquent falls within a specified age range. Second, the delinquent has performed an act which is considered to
be illegal. The delinquent act covers a wide range of human behavior. The child may be called a delinquent because he has run away from his home; he is considered incorrigible by his parents or his school; he has performed a normal adult or perverted sex act; he has stolen something; or he has done bodily harm to another individual. Similarly, the ages included in this category cover many critical developmental phases. Thus, calling an individual a juvenile delinquent merely informs one that the individual is relatively young and that he has performed some act which is considered illegal by the state or community.

The importance of the parent-child relationship in regard to delinquency has been stressed by many professional persons. L. Kanner stated:

If one can generalize at all at the present time, it may be possible to suggest tentatively three types of delinquency on the basis of principal determinants: 1) delinquency founded primarily on the pathology of brain structure, ...; 2) delinquency founded primarily on the pathology of relationships within the family unit, ...; 3) delinquency founded primarily on social dislocations, ... (26, p.215).

These determinants may interact in a functional relationship.

Harris B. Peck stated:

At our clinic we often find that the disturbance which brings the child into court has had its historical origins many years before. These have often been largely confined to the family circle and manifested by symptomatology which is more likely to be of an 'internalized' nature than the expressions of the genetically related concerns which bring the adolescent into court (26, p.269).
Percival M. Symonds (142, p.3) asserted that recent research indicates that personality is very largely a product of the interactions between parent and child.

Most professional workers consider that the relationship between the child and his parents needs definite consideration when handling a juvenile delinquent. The majority perceive the child as reacting to his total environment, including himself, in a functional relationship. Thus, a child's delinquency may be primarily a function of his relationship with his parents or it may be a function of many variables, including the parent-child relationship, or it may be primarily a function of a variable other than the parent-child relationship. It is impossible to exclude any facet of the child's life.

Frederick B. Allen has stated:

The behavior of people is strikingly uniform, in both its normal and abnormal manifestations. They have a very limited number of ways in which to behave. The delinquent acts of juveniles show this striking uniformity, and yet how diverse are the personalities and the backgrounds and the individual life experiences that are back of this behavior and that determine its direction! (1, p.764).

On the whole, Allen's statement seems very reasonable; but perhaps subtle uniformities of personality, background, and experience, do exist.

Most children have some person or persons who may be labeled parent-figures. All children react in certain manners to these parent-figures. While these reactions are limited by the child's behavior repertoire, they are diverse enough to require scientific
investigation to ascertain whether children with similar behavior patterns are reacting to fairly uniform experiences. Also, parents react in certain ways to their children. They too are restricted by their behavior repertoire. It seems logical to ask whether parents with children who are presenting certain behavior patterns are behaving in a similar fashion.

The present investigator was intrigued by uniformities observed in certain delinquent groups. Some delinquents seem to lack the ability to express verbally their feelings about their parents. This seemed to be most evident in those delinquents charged with some type of theft. On the other hand, the child who was charged with home truancy or incorrigibility seemed to be uniformly able to verbalize his feelings concerning his parents. While the backgrounds and experiences of these groups seem equally diverse, their perceptions of their parents and their ability to express these perceptions seemed, in some respects, to be almost stereotyped in relation to the type of delinquent behavior. Likewise, the parents of children who were classified as home truants, incorrigibles, and thieves seemed to differ in certain respects.

The investigator proposed to test hypotheses concerning the relationship of the above three types of delinquents with their parents. It was thought that these groups would differ significantly in respect to the child's and the parent's awareness of each other's self-concept. The hypotheses and the theoretical basis of the hypotheses are presented in Chapter III.
CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Research concerning juvenile delinquency, parent-child relationships, interpersonal behavior, perception, and the communication process has been based on a variety of theoretical assumptions; has made use of the methodological gamut; and has applied practically every sociological and psychological measuring device contrived to date. A complete review of the relevant literature would fill many volumes. The references that will be cited seem to be the most relevant in light of the present investigator’s theoretical position and hypotheses.

Theory and Methodology

The major personality theories based on the self-concept and perceptual process have been adequately reviewed (22, 9). Essentially, the self-theorists are concerned with the relationship of the individual’s self-perception to the external world, and the function an individual’s perception plays in his behavior. Interpersonal behavior as a function of perception is of major concern. The concepts of sympathy (35) and empathy (15) represent specific constructs developed to explain certain aspects of interpersonal behavior.
Morphy stated:

Human society is based largely upon the capacity of individual human beings to interpret and respond to the behavior of other human beings; the more cooperative and closely knit the structure of a given society becomes, the more demands are put upon individuals to respond to the needs of others (35, p.3).

Mead (33), Asch (2), and Newcomb (36), have assumed similar bases for their particular theoretical positions. Sears proposed:

In any social interaction, the interests, motives, habits or other psychological properties of the acting individual determine to some degree the kind of interaction that will occur...Conversely, the social milieu the interpersonal relationships, within which a person acts determine his psychological properties (39, p.478).

In the same article, Sears proposed that monadic units and diadic units could be congruently studied if the researcher would take into consideration one individual's expectancies of the other's behavior.

Steiner made two propositions:

1. the more knowledge an individual has concerning the intentions, preferences, and beliefs of other persons, the more effectively he can participate in group activity with those other persons.
2. groups composed of individuals with accurate social perceptions will be more efficient than groups composed of members with less accurate social perceptions (40, p.268).

Steiner discovered that these propositions were not totally supported by the literature. To account for the discrepancies he further suggested that "...accurate perception of irrelevant qualities [not relevant to the task at hand] in the other person may only prove to be distracting" (40, p.270). This latter proposition applies to highly complex groups in which the participants
are neither required nor permitted to let their perceptions of
other people's intentions and preferences affect their role. In
such a complex group, if a person inadequately performs his role
the entire system may be disrupted. The distinguishing feature
of such a group seems to be whether the individual's role is fixed
or whether he is free to change his role.

Gage (18) suggested that social perception has four components:
the perceiver, the individual perceived, the evidence or stimuli
available to the perceiver, and the judgment reported by the per-
ceiver. Tagiuri (43), in a slightly different fashion, claimed
that an analysis of any interpersonal relationship must include
the nature of the response of each person to the other and the
perception each person has to the other person's response toward
him. Taylor (46), representing the sociometric viewpoint, has
suggested a three dimensional basis for conceptionalizing "emo-
tional interactions": the public dimension, which refers to events
in the whole group; the dyadic dimension, which refers to per-
son-to-person interactions; and the autistic dimension, which
refers to the intra-psychic sphere. Bales stated:

The ultimate stuff or empirical phenomena
which the social scientist can observe, record,
interpret, and arrange in many ways may be
thought of under two headings: (1) action or
interaction, i.e., the overt behavior of con-
crete human individuals, and (2) situation.
Those things to which action is addressed - the
self, other individuals, physical objects, etc. -
may be said to comprise the concrete situation
of action for the acting individual (3, p.31).
Investigators who have studied interpersonal behavior have made use of a variety of methodologies. Bales (3) has developed a model based on interaction content which permits expert outside observers to quantify interpersonal behavior as it takes place. Robinson (38) has proposed certain dimensions and has developed rating scales which permit an outsider to judge certain aspects of interpersonal behavior in the counseling process. Moreno (34) has developed and extensively used the sociometric method of studying group dynamics. Dymond (15) and La Forge and Suczek (29) have developed paper-pencil tests for the specific purpose of studying the interpersonal behavior. The major methodological distinction seems to be whether the participants or outsiders, or a combination of both, rate the interpersonal behavior under investigation.

Relevant Research

Accuracy of Perception, Relevant Variables

Taft (45) has extensively reviewed the literature pertaining to an individual's ability to judge people. He concluded that age in children, high intelligence and academic ability, insight into one's status with respect to one's peers on specific traits, good emotional adjustment and integration, and social skills, are positively correlated with the ability to judge the personality characteristics of others. Social dependence seems to be negatively correlated with this ability. Sex of the judges shows a fairly con-
sistent lack of correlation with the ability to judge others. Es-
pecially poor judges may be characterized by poor social adjust-
ment and either good or poor (not average) ability to judge self.

Taft further reported that the literature indicates that there
seems to exist a significant but low consistency between one test
of ability to judge others and another test. Analytic test may
differ significantly from non-analytic tests. He concluded:

The degree to which a person can make accurate
judgements about others is a function of his general
ability and of specific situational and interactional
factors, but the greater his ability to judge, the
less will be the relative influence of specific
factors (45, p.6).

Recent research has further corroborated and elaborated upon
some of the studies cited by Taft. Bieri, Blacharsky, and Reid (8),
using forty undergraduates in small tutored groups, employed the
Rotter Incomplete Sentence Blank as a measure of adjustment, and
the Manifest Anxiety Scale as a predictive measure. The hypothesis
that the degree of maladjustment would be negatively related to
accuracy of predictive behavior was not supported by the data. The
data do indicate that the better adjusted subjects tended to pre-
dict most accurately on the basis of similarities between themselves
and others while maladjusted subjects emphasised to a greater de-
gree than adjusted subjects the accurate prediction of differences
between themselves and others. The writers concluded that the
well-adjusted subject protects not because of conflict but because
he has less need to discriminate differences between self and
others. An early study by Bieri (6) indicated that perceptional
changes, following interaction, are in the direction of perceiving the other individual as more similar to oneself, as a result of increasing agreement with and knowledge about the other person.

As a result of another study Bieri stated:

...cognitive complexity relates especially to the tendency to predict accurately the differences between oneself and others...the tendency to engage in inaccurate projections concerning the similarity between self and others relates significantly to cognitive simplicity...It is concluded that the complexity of one's cognitive system for perceiving others is effectively related to one's ability to predict accurately the behavior of others and to one's tendency to engage in assimilative projection in such behavior (7, p.267).

Tagiuri (43), using a group of well-adjusted and a group of maladjusted boys, made use of the usual sociometric procedure, but in addition had the subjects guess who would choose and reject them. The data suggest that the well-adjusted subjects significantly exceeded the maladjusted subjects in terms of predicting the actual social situation and the perceived social situation. He further found that the well-adjusted and maladjusted groups had means respectively above and below those of the average boy in school.

Chance (13) reported findings which seem to be a contradiction to the above. Elementary psychology students predicted their instructor's performance on forty items of the Edwards Personal Preference Inventory. The results indicated a trend for adjustment as measured by the Rotter Incomplete Sentences Blank to be negatively related to adequacy of prediction. While these findings are not in agreement with those of Bieri, Blacharsky, and Reid (8) it
should be emphasized that the individuals being predicted about in the two studies are quite different. The subjects of the former study judged peers while Chance's subjects judged Ph. D.'s in psychology. Also, the kinds of interactions were quite different. Chance (13, p.193) concluded that "the hypothesis of a negative relationship between adjustment and adequacy of predictive behavior is neither clearly refuted nor confirmed."

Thus, it would seem that in most instances adjustment has been found to be positively related to the accuracy of perceiving others and that the particular dynamics of the perceptional process seem to differ in respect to the degree of adjustment.

Accuracy of Perception, Group Effectiveness

The relationship of group effectiveness and leadership ability to accuracy of perception has received considerable attention. Taft's review of the literature (45) indicates that group effectiveness and leadership ability seem to be positively related to the ability to judge others.

Gage and Suci (19) hypothesized that teachers who perceive their pupils attitudes more accurately should be regarded more favorably by their pupils. The data indicate that the greater the teacher's mean error in estimating student opinion the lower his mean rating by students.

Dymond (16) investigated the relationship between accuracy of perceiving the marriage partner with the effectiveness of the relationship. Fifteen couples, being married for an average of 10.4
years, individually rated their relationship on a "happiness" dimension. Each subject then took the MMPI in respect to self and spouse. Dymond found that the happy couples predicted each other's MMPI responses significantly better than the unhappy couples. In keeping with Bieri, Blacharsky, and Reid (8), Dymond found that happy couples had a significantly higher degree of similarity of their self-concepts and made significantly fewer projection type errors than unhappy couples.

Greer, Galanter, and Nordlie (21) hypothesized that the knowledge of interpersonal relationships by individuals in a group would be related to effective group behavior. A performance problem designed to measure effectiveness of infantry rifle squads in carrying out common combat missions was employed as the criterion. The data indicate that the appointed leaders were significantly more accurate than non-leaders in perceiving the preference hierarchy structure of the squad. The more popular members of the squad perceived social relationships significantly more accurately than the less popular. Further, the data indicate that members of the more effective groups were significantly more accurate in estimates of the group preference hierarchy structure than members of ineffective groups.

Van Zelst (47), in two separate studies found that sociometric groupings of laborers in the building trades out performed a matched group in job performance and that members of the sociometric groups reported a greater degree of satisfaction with their job. While the sociometric approach does not explicitly involve
predicting other individual's behavior, it would seem that such predictions are implicitly a part of the choosing process.

Chowdhry and Newcomb concluded:

Group status, understanding, communication, and adjustment are interdependent variables; it seems likely that better understanding, ready communication, adequate adjustment, and high status are apt to be associated, whereas relative lack of understanding, blocked communication and lower status are similarly apt to be found together (14, p.57).

Fiedler's study (17), using basketball and surveying teams, superficially seems to contradict the studies cited above. Fiedler compared self-description with the individuals' own descriptions of the person with whom the subjects stated they could cooperate with the least and the best. He concluded that members of the effective teams preferred highly task-oriented persons as co-workers and that the most preferred cooperators in effective teams tend to be somewhat less warm and emotionally less involved with persons whom they choose as work companions than is the case of keymen in less effective teams. Fiedler claimed that his findings are contradictory to those of Van Zelst (147). This is difficult to understand as Van Zelst did not investigate the bases of his subjects' sociometric choices. Steiner's proposition (140) concerning groups with fixed roles may account for the discrepancy between the data.

In general, the research available seem to indicate that accuracy of perception is positively related to leadership ability and to group effectiveness.
Accuracy of Perception, a Realistic Phenomenon

Can the findings in the above studies be accounted for on the basis of the phenomenon of perceptual accuracy? Berg (5), after investigating cooperation within a group where communication and observation variables were eliminated, concluded that when a group problem was posed which could not be solved in any way other than by chance occurrence that the subjects' contributions were based on presuppositions as to what the other group members would do. Thus, when observation and communication variables are eliminated in a group situation, the members of the group continue to function in terms of their predictions of the others' behavior. In a similar effort, Tagiuri, Blake and Bruner (44) concluded that the general perceptual accuracy of humans is significantly better than that of groups of matched robots. Thus, it appears that the phenomenon, perceptual accuracy, is legitimately scientific. The results of the cited studies can be accounted for in terms of perceptual accuracy.

The literature seems to support the proposition that interpersonal behavior is a function of perception. While there is disagreement concerning the specific variables affecting accuracy of perception, there does not seem to be any real disagreement with Steiner's propositions (40).

Accuracy of Perception and the Parent-Child Relationship

The theme, parent-child relationships, has consumed many pages in professional journals and popular magazines. Parental behavior
has been categorized, dimensionalized, and placed on continua.

Particular aspects of parental behavior have been quantified on
the basis of the parents' statements, their children's statements,
and the statements of outside observers. These measures have been
related to every possible aspect of their children's behavior.

The parent-child relationship as a function of perceptual
accuracy has received very little attention. Researchers have
gathered the opinions of children about parents and of parents
about children, but have failed to ascertain if these opinions
are accurate from the standpoint of the persons being judged.

After reviewing the literature, Cass (11) reported that the greatest
single discrepancy in methods seems to be in the matter of whether
parents or their children were consulted as to the parent's attitudes.
Cass reported that she was unable to find anything in the litera­ture
which attempted to measure degree of awareness of the parent
for the child's specific behavior preferences or attitudes. The
available research suggested that "affection" and "control" vari­ables in parent behavior seem to be associated with children's
behavior differences and that the behavior of the child is a
function of these variables. Specifically, asocial and unstable
behavior, on the part of the child seems to be related to parental
behavior which is high on the dominance continuum and low on the
affection continuum.

Bender (4, p.242) speculated that "the child acts as though
there were an inherent awareness of his needs and there is thus
the expectation of having them met." Hirschberg and Gilliland (23)
proposed that parents represent one of the environmental agencies which bring about specific attitudes of children. Two hundred university students and their parents responded to questionnaires concerning the New Deal, the Depression, and God. The data indicated a positive relationship between the attitudes of the children and both of their parents. However, for all three attitudes measured the mothers had a closer relationship to their children's than the fathers. Hirschberg and Gilliland concluded that the degree of relationship depends on the home situation, the subjects, and the attitudes studied. Of most significance was the conclusion that the home is a source for the development of attitudes but in some cases the influence is much stronger than in others. Perhaps, perceptual accuracy is a subtle factor in such discrepancies.

C. H. Patterson (37) studied the relationship of the parent's personality and other parental characteristics. He concluded that neurotic mothers appear to show parent-child behavior commonly regarded as less desirable. Of particular relevance was the observation that the general picture of the neurotic mother includes a lack of concern for the child except as a necessary evil or an unnecessary addition to the family. Again, perceptual accuracy may be a factor. It seems logical to speculate that less communication is taking place between the neurotic mother and her child than between the normal mother and her child.

Stott (41) found that 18 percent of his subjects objected to punishment administered to them by their parents because they,
the children, were not told the reason for the punishment or did not understand the reason given by their parents. Again, it seems that communication and perceptual accuracy may be inferred as relevant factors.

The above studies concerning parent-child relationships, as well as those cited by Cass (11) do not deal with or clearly indicate any relationship between accuracy of perception and behavior in the family situation.

Langford and Alm (30) compared children's responses on the California Test of Personality with the parents' predictions of their children's responses. The data indicate that the parents were likely to underestimate child responses in areas of self adjustment and to overestimate child responses in areas of social adjustment. The parental estimates were closer to social adjustment than to self adjustment. When close and divergent groups, as concerned parent estimates and child scores, were considered, it was found that parents in the divergent groups seemed likely to underestimate children more than most parents in both areas of self adjustment and social adjustment. Unfortunately, the study did not investigate the children's judgments of their parents.

Itkin (21) attempted to determine whether college students' attitudes toward their parents were related to the parents' attitudes toward their children; the parents' attitudes toward the supervision or discipline of children; the parents' attitudes toward them; and the students' attitudes toward the supervision exercised by their parents. Different scales were employed to test the parent
and student groups. The data indicate that the students who had favorable attitudes toward their parents tend to approve of the supervision which their parents employed and to judge their control as not dominant, regardless of whether the parents' attitudes toward control were dominant or submissive. Students who had negative attitudes toward their parents tended to disapprove of their parents' supervision and to judge it as dominant, regardless of their parents' attitudes toward control. The study would have been greatly enhanced if outside observers had also rated parental control. It seems evident that the specific kind of control exercised by the parent was less important than the perception the child had of parental attitudes toward him.

To date Cass's study (12) represents the most relevant piece of research in respect to the present investigator's theoretical position and hypotheses. A group of twenty-one seriously maladjusted delinquents was matched with a group of normal non-delinquents on the basis of age, sex, race, and fathers' occupation. The variables of awareness, identification and projection were measured and defined operationally. The data indicate that the awareness of the mother for her child and the identification of the child with the mother are positively related. Projection and awareness, by the mothers, were negatively related. Projection and identification were positively related. Mothers of delinquents were less aware of their sons than mothers of non-delinquents. The non-delinquent and delinquent groups did not differ signifi-
cantly in respect to the variables of identification and projection. Of particular relevance is the finding that parent-child conflict, as measured by an incomplete sentence test, was found to be higher in the delinquency group than in the non-delinquency group.

Thus, it would seem that accuracy of perception is significantly related to the parent-child relationship. It can be inferred that conflict in the parent-child relationship may be a function of perceptual accuracy.

More research is needed in the area of perceptual accuracy and its relationship to the parent-child relationship. Cass' study (12) represents a one-sided view of the situation. She did not investigate the three variables, awareness, identification, projection, in terms of the children. Do delinquent children project more concerning their parents than non-delinquents? Are non-delinquents more aware of their mothers than delinquents?

The relevant psychological literature supports the position that interpersonal behavior is a function of the participant's ability to perceive himself and the other members of the group accurately. The psychological literature is practically barren of such research in the area of parent-child relationships. This would seem to be a vital area for investigation.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL BASIS AND HYPOTHESES

George A. Kelly (27, p.3) stated that "each man contemplates in his own personal way the stream of events upon which he finds himself so swiftly borne." A similar belief is assumed as a basis for the present theoretical position. In a sense both Kelly and the present writer assume a philosophical viewpoint which attempts to reconcile the extremes of realism and idealism. This is not a new position. Kelly stated this reconciliation most succinctly:

We presume that the universe is really existing and that man is gradually coming to understand it... but we should like, further more, to make clear our conviction that people's thoughts also really exist, though the correspondence between what people really think exists and what really does exist is a continually changing one (27, p.6).

The present theoretical position does not include any new concepts. Perhaps the concepts are reshuffled or combined in a unique manner. Then, again, it may be that the present position and the arrangement of concepts only will appear unique and significant to the writer. It is hoped that this will not be the case, but that the uniqueness and significance will be perceived and felt by others.
The hypotheses proposed for investigation were an outgrowth of the theoretical position and beliefs which follow:

1. There is an interaction between two individuals the nature of which seems to be an important variable in the behavior process of both. Thus, a study concerning the relationship of one individual with another should be a study of mutual effect.

2. This interaction is a dynamic, ongoing process which may undergo change due to normal developmental processes, psychotherapy, counseling, guidance, education, traumatic experience, or other experiences.

3. Interaction may be defined operationally as the behaving of one individual with another in such a manner that each has an opportunity to be aware of the other's behavior. This interaction process is dependent upon the participants' sensory system. Two individuals may interact even though their senses are limited. Helen Keller is a person who is able to interact with others even though she is extremely limited from a sensory viewpoint. Thus, it is necessary for two individuals to sense each other in order that they may interact.

4. The function of any interaction by two or more individuals is the communication of the participants' needs, desires, attitudes, values, feelings, et cetera. Interaction does not assure communication. It is possible for two individuals to interact for a long period of time without either being able to communicate to the other.
5. Implicit in the interaction process is the response made by one individual to another's behavior. This response is dependent upon the respondent's perception of the other individual's behavior. This perception is a function of cognitive and conative variables.

6. A person's behavior may be systematized into two classifications. The first classification contains that behavior which an individual performs knowingly and to which he attaches meaning, e.g., verbal statements, the signals used by a catcher in a baseball game, the young man's wink to the girl at the other end of the bar. The second classification contains that behavior which an individual performs knowingly or unknowingly and to which he does not attach meaning, e.g., a client's increased rate of breathing during therapy. The important differential between these classifications of behavior is whether the individual attaches meaning to his behavior or not.

7. Similarly, an observer's perception of another individual's behavior may be systematized. The first classification contains that behavior which an individual has an opportunity to observe and to which he assigns meaning. The second classification contains that behavior which he has an opportunity to observe and to which he does not assign meaning.

8. Communication takes place when the observer assigns the same meaning to the behavior as the person behaving does himself. The observer may also have his own personal interpretation of the behavior witnessed.
9. When two individuals interact the following variables seem significant:
   a. #1's perception of himself
   b. #1's perception of #2
   c. #2's perception of himself
   d. #2's perception of #1.

10. The degree of communication between two individuals can be inferred from the relationship of the above variables. By definition:
   a. The closer #1's perception of #2 is to #2's self-perception the greater the degree of communication.
   b. The closer #2's perception of #1 is to #1's self-perception the greater the degree of communication.
   c. Communication is greatest when a and b above are both evident to the maximum degree.

The above position is not a judgmental one. It makes no claims about the adjustment of the individuals involved. This position is concerned with communication as a function of the interaction of two or more individuals and the role communication plays in interpersonal relationships.

Observations of adolescents who have been involved in delinquent acts have suggested certain hypotheses concerning the communication variable and the parent-child relationship which seemed worthy of investigation. The investigator repeatedly observed
that children who were arrested for home truancy were quite capable, vigorous, and spontaneous at describing their parents. The parents of these children seemed to be at a loss to explain their children's behavior. Also, it often appeared that the child had a fairly good conception of his own feelings and those of his parents. The parents, on the other hand, seemed to have little understanding of their children and their relationship to their children. Thus, as judged by an outsider the home truant seemed to have a clearer perception of the home situation than the parent had.

Those cases which involved stealing seemed, on the whole, to reveal different dynamics in the home situation. These children were literally unable to express their feelings about themselves or their parents. The parents of these children seemed relatively more aware of their children and the home situation than the children seemed aware of the parents and the home situation.

A third group which varied from the above groups was composed of those children before the court on the charge of home incorrigibility. In these cases the parents and the children seemed to be equally capable of expressing their feelings toward each other.

Thus, the above three groups appeared to be distinguished not only by the type of delinquency but also by the degree of communication. On the basis of these "armchair" observations and the present theoretical position hypotheses were established.
The variables to be measured are:

A. The child's perception of himself
B. The child's perception of his mother
C. The mother's perception of herself
D. The mother's perception of her son

The groups to be measured are:

1. Home truancy
2. Theft involving threat of and/or harm to another individual
3. Theft not involving threat of and/or harm to another individual
4. Home incorrigibility

The hypotheses to be tested are (numbers and letters refer to the above groups and variables):

1. #1's will more accurately perceive C than #2's.
2. #1's will more accurately perceive C than #3's.
3. #1's will more accurately perceive C than #4's.
4. #2's will be no more accurate in their perceptions of C than #3's.
5. #2's will more accurately perceive C than #4's.
6. #3's will more accurately perceive C than #4's.
7. Mothers of #1's will not perceive A as accurately as mothers of #2's.
8. Mothers of $#1$'s will not perceive A as accurately as mothers of $#3$'s.

9. Mothers of $#1$'s will not perceive A as accurately as mothers of $#4$'s.

10. Mothers of $#2$'s will be no more accurate in their perceptions of A than mothers of $#3$'s.

11. Mothers of $#2$'s will not perceive A as accurately as mothers of $#4$'s.

12. Mothers of $#3$'s will not perceive A as accurately as mothers of $#4$'s.

13. In group $#1$ there will be more agreement between B and C than between A and D.

14. In group $#2$ there will be more agreement between A and D than between B and D.

15. In group $#3$ there will be more agreement between A and D than between B and C.

16. In group $#4$ there will be no significant difference between A and D and B and C.
CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

In order to test the hypotheses developed in Chapter III instruments were required to provide data relevant to the variables under investigation.

The Study Sample

It was necessary to establish certain criteria on which to base the selection of subjects. The subjects selected were obtained from the Detention Home, Franklin County, Ohio. The following criteria was employed in the selection of subjects, regardless of the delinquent act:

1. The child was male.
2. The child had lived with his present mother-figure for the last five years.
3. The child was not under twelve years of age nor had he reached his sixteenth birthday.
4. The child was in the seventh, eighth, or ninth grade of school.
5. The child was not mentally defective, psychotic, or physically handicapped.
6. The child had not been previously confined in a correctional institution.
7. A complaint was filed with the Franklin County Juvenile
Court, Columbus, Ohio, stating that the child had committed a delinquent act.

8. The child was housed in the Franklin County Detention Home.

9. The child was guilty of the delinquent act as stated in the complaint.

Since the subjects were grouped according to the specific nature of their delinquent act, it was necessary to establish criteria which permitted this distinction. The statements of the police, the court, and other persons were considered in conjunction with the following criteria:

1. Home truant - A child who left his home without the permission of his parent-figures for the expressed purpose of staying away for a considerable length of time. The child might have committed other kinds of delinquent acts while away from home if these were secondary to his home truancy.

2. Home incorrigible - A child whose parents stated that they were unable to control his behavior in the home situation.

3. Thief who threatened and/or harmed another individual - The child's act of stealing involved direct contact with a person or persons who objected and/or attempted to prevent the child from stealing.
4. Thief who did not threaten and/or harm another individual - The child's act of stealing did not involve direct contact with a person or persons who objected and/or attempted to prevent the child from stealing.

In order to obtain a representative sample of the defined delinquent groups all such cases referred to the court after a given day were used. Thus, an attempt was made to see all delinquent boys who were referred to the court and who met the above criteria during a period of ninety-eight consecutive days, May 11 - July 30, 1958. Because of personal demands placed upon the investigator it was necessary to eliminate all cases involving theft which were referred to the court between the fifty-second and sixty-sixth days (July 1 - July 13). Collection of data had to be terminated on July 30 as the investigator was leaving the vicinity of Columbus, Ohio.

It was not deemed necessary to control for such factors as socioeconomic status, cultural environment, et cetera, since a subject was compared with his mother-figure. Thus, if two boys judged an item differently this had little relevance to the data, for each boy was compared with his own mother-figure and not with another boy. The boys were compared with each other in reference to distance between accuracy of perceiving their mothers.

Over the years the statistics of the Franklin County Juvenile Court have shown a decrease in the rate of juvenile delinquency for the late spring and early summer months. This has been a possible factor determining the size of the sample obtained in the
present study. The exact effect of this seasonal factor cannot be determined since the court's statistics are not refined sufficiently to determine the effect on the three types of delinquent groups investigated.

The procedure employed to select cases and to make appointments was such that it appeared to be a normal function of the court's activities. The investigator received the daily complaint sheets which gave certain identifying data plus the details of the crime. After the court's intake officer had ascertained the circumstances of the crime and had determined whether the boy would be detained in the detention home, the investigator verbally determined with the intake officer whether the boy met the established criteria. If the boy was selected as a subject his mother was contacted by letter or telephone in order to set up an appointment with the investigator. Since the boys were detained in the detention home prior arrangements concerning appointments were not necessary. If the mother refused to set up an appointment, the boy was eliminated as a subject. Such refusal occurred with only two cases.

During the period of time set aside for the collection of data nine home incorrigibles, eleven home truants, and eighteen thieves were selected as subjects. Hereafter reference to the theft group or to thieves will mean "thieves who did not threaten and/or harm another individual." The group called "thieves who
threatened and/or harmed another individual" was eliminated be­
cause no such cases were referred to the court during the desig­
nated time period.

The final group of subjects deviated slightly from the estab­
lished criteria. This deviation was made necessary by cer­
tain reality factors, such as obtaining sufficient subjects. 
However, the deviations that were made have not biased the re­
sults as all court referrals showing such deviations were em­
ployed as subjects. It was simply a matter of loosening the 
criteria.

Court records reveal that twenty-nine home truants were re­
ferred to the court during the ninety-eight day period. Eleven 
of these boys were used as subjects. Eleven of the twenty-nine 
cases were closed by the intake officer; six of this eleven were 
truant from state institutions. One boy was released to his parents.
Two boys were previously used as subjects; they were repeating 
their delinquent act. Two mothers would not cooperate with the 
investigator. One mother did not understand the items on the 
Interpersonal Check List. One boy was not living with a female 
who could be considered a mother-figure.

The final group of home truants consisted of boys ranging in 
age from eleven years, ten months, to seventeen years, eleven months. 
The average age of the home truants was 14.86 years. This group of 
boys ranged in school placement from the sixth to the twelfth grade. 
The average school grade was 8.18. Six of the eleven boys had always
lived with their present mother-figure. One had lived with his mother-figure for seven years; one, for three years. One of the boys had lived with his mother since birth except for occasional absences on the part of the mother. Two boys had always lived with their mothers except when attending private boarding schools. One of the latter boys had been in a boarding school for two years; the other had been in a boarding school for only one year.

Twenty-one home incorrigibles were before the court. Nine of these twenty-one cases were used as subjects. Four of the cases were closed by the intake officer. One complaint was withdrawn. One child was released to his parents. One boy was repeating the same offense within the ninety-eight day period. One mother would not cooperate. Three boys were not living with a female who could be considered a mother-figure. One case was referred by a community agency in order that the child might be removed from the home of emotionally disturbed parents.

The final group of home incorrigibles consisted of boys ranging in age from twelve years, four months, to seventeen years, nine months. The average age of the home incorrigibles was 15.6 years. This group of boys ranged from the fifth grade to the tenth grade in school placement. The average grade level was 8.5. Eight of these boys had always lived with their mother-figure. One of this eight had been in a private boarding school for a school year. Another had lived with his father for a year. The ninth boy had lived with his mother for the last five years.

One hundred and nine theft cases were referred to the court.
Eighteen boys were used as subjects. Forty-one cases were closed by the intake officer. Twenty boys were released to their parents. Five were seen previously in the group of eighteen subjects but were referred to the court as second offenders. Four referrals involved either a son or mother who did not understand the items on the Interpersonal Check List. Two mothers had been told the probable outcome of the court hearing by the probation officer. Prior knowledge of the court's decision would probably have biased the data. Two boys who were identical twins were excluded because of the uniqueness of the situation in reference to the hypotheses to be tested. Three boys had been previously confined at the Boys Industrial School, a state correctional institution. One boy, originally charged with rape, was, because of a legal technicality, recharged with burglary. Three boys were not living with a female who could be considered a mother-figure. Six complaints were not received due to clerical mishandling. It is doubtful if all six would have met the remaining criteria.

The final group of thieves ranged in age from twelve years, four months to fifteen years, nine months. The average age of the thieves was 14.5 years. These boys ranged in school placement from the fifth to the tenth grade. The average school grade level was 7.5. With the exception of one, boy, the thieves had lived with their mother-figures for at least the last twelve years. The one exception had lived with his mother-figure for three years.

Although the number of subjects involved is small, it seems
safe to assume that a representative sample of the defined groups from the city of Columbus was obtained. It should be mentioned that these cases represent clear-cut delinquent acts which probably fall toward the extreme end of the delinquency continuum in reference to the specific type of act committed. This is a function of the screening procedure employed by the court intake officer who detained in the detention home those cases in which the child was guilty and which seemed to represent to him, the intake officer, "real" delinquent behavior.

**Assessing the Perceptual Variables**

**The Interpersonal Check List**

After reviewing various tests and techniques the investigator decided that the Interpersonal Check List (31) would provide an adequate measure of the defined variables. This test was adopted because it could be employed with both the mother and son groups. Although reliability data on oral administration of the ICL were not available, sufficient research has been done by the staff of the Kaiser Foundation to insure the test's reliability. La Forge and Suczek stated:

Test-retest reliability correlations are available on 77 of the obesity sample who were retested after an interval of two weeks. Because this sample is a somewhat homogeneous all-female group, these correlations are not likely to be larger than ones obtainable with other groups. On the other hand, obese women may have more stable self-pictures than many individuals. The sort of unreliability which results from changes in one's view of self is not of course undesirable in a test designed to depict view of
self. Therefore, the correlations..., which average .73 for sixteenth reliability and .78 for octant reliability may be thought of as suggesting that ICL scores can have sufficient stability to be useful in personality research and clinical evaluation (29, p.105).

Since the investigator was not concerned with the particular personality variables the test is supposed to measure, it was not necessary to be concerned with the test's validity in reference to these variables. The investigator was concerned with intervariable correlations. La Forge and Suczek (29) report that the circular continuum employed to portray the relationship of the personality variables is a valid means of describing their degree of relationship one to another. They further report that the adjacent variables on the circular continuum are more closely related than non-adjacent, and the relationship between the two variables is a monotonic decreasing function of their separation. They further report that opposite variables are negatively correlated when the over-all likelihood of a "yes" response is taken into consideration.

A further reason for employing the ICL is its containment of a large number of socially desirable items (28). Thus, it was felt that the probability of either the mothers or the sons being threatened by the items was negligible. This seemed to be significant since the test was to be employed in a court setting.

Because of the apparent difficulty juvenile delinquents have with reading, it seemed necessary to use a test which could be administered orally and which contained terms they would understand. The ICL seemed to fit these requirements. It was thought advisable to establish some synonymous terms for various items on the ICL.
Thus if a child or parent did not understand a particular item, a second definition was given by the investigator. These substitute items are included in the Appendix.

**Scoring procedures.** In terms of quantifiable data it was necessary to arrive at a measure of the difference between the child's perception of himself and the mother's perception of the child and, on the other hand, the difference between the mother's perception of herself and the child's perception of the mother. Because of the structure of the ICL it is possible to make use of four different scores which represent the desired differences.

1. **Summary point.** The ICL scores can be plotted on a grid in such a fashion that all of the responses can be represented by a single point. This point is based on the notion that a vector in two-dimensional space may be represented numerically by the magnitude of its components in two arbitrarily selected directions. After determining the points which represented two of the variables it was only necessary to determine the distance between the points in order to numerically quantify the difference between two individuals' perception of the same object.

2. **Trait rating.** Since the ICL is based on eight personality traits and since the scale has an intensity dimension built into it, it was possible to use
the sum of the differences between ratings on the various traits as a measure of difference in perception.

3. **Item agreement.** The number of item agreements is another means of arriving at a measure of perceptual difference. If the son's perception of his mother was in agreement with his mother's self-perception on 90 items, and if the mother's perception of her son was in agreement with her son's self-perception on 80 items, then a score of 10 represented the difference between the son's awareness of his mother and the mother's awareness of her son.

4. **Concomitant index.** McNemar (32, pp.117-118) cited the following mathematical formula as a means of showing relationship:

\[
\text{nc} = \frac{r_{xy}}{\sqrt{n_x + n_c} \sqrt{n_y + n_c}}
\]

- \(n_x\) = the number of units unique to X
- \(n_y\) = the number of units unique to Y
- \(n_c\) = the number of units common to X and Y

The formula assumes that each of the two variables can be thought of as a summation of a number of equally potent, equally likely, independent elements, which can either be present or absent. In the present study the concomitant index was justifiably used as a raw score.
Structured, Open-ended Interview

The investigator felt that a structured, open-ended interview might be helpful in throwing still more light on the dynamics of particular families. It was hoped that such an interview might be useful in dealing with those cases which showed marked deviations. The interview consisted of specific questions which served to focus the subjects on a given theme, but which still permitted the subjects considerable freedom and flexibility in answering the questions. The interview in addition to the material in the court's files would provide a bridge between the case study approach and the statistical sampling approach. The format of the interview is included in the Appendix.

Interview notes were taken by the investigator during the interviewing procedure. A formal, systematized analysis of the interview data was not deemed necessary.

Procedure

When a mother arrived for an interview the investigator explained that the court was concerned about her son and wanted to be of assistance. It was further explained that the court's records were confidential and that only court personnel had access to them. After this preliminary explanation the mother was administered orally the ICL which she answered in terms of her perception of her son. Upon completion of the ICL the investigator conducted the structured, open-ended interview. The interview
was followed by asking the mother to verbally answer the questions which appear on the first page of the Record Booklet for Interpersonal Diagnosing of the Family Dynamics (31, p.57). This technique was used to obtain certain identifying data and to act as a distracter between the interview and the readministration of the ICL. The mother was instructed to answer the second administration of the ICL in respect to her self-perception.

A similar procedure was followed with the delinquent boys. The boys first answered the ICL in terms of their perception of their mothers. Then, the structured, open-ended interview was conducted. The latter was followed by the administration of the Similarities and Information subtests of either the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (49) or the Wechsler-Bellevue Intelligence Scale (48) depending on the individual's age. These subtests were administered in order to obtain a rough estimate of the boy's intelligence level so that possible mental defectives could be eliminated as subjects. The boys, like their mothers, answered the readministration of the ICL in terms of their self-perception.

Instructions for the administration of the ICL and the interview questions are included in the Appendix.

Statistics

Fisher's "t" test was the statistical technique used to determine whether the data supported the differences as hypothesized.
Response Set and Ambiguity

Response set. During the data collecting process the investigator wondered whether one group might have given more "yes" responses than another group. In order to determine whether such a response set might be a factor, four statistical comparisons were made. The number of "yes" responses given by the mothers concerning themselves was compared with the number of "yes" responses their sons gave in reference to themselves and in reference to their mothers. The number of "yes" responses given by the mothers concerning their sons was compared with the number of "yes" responses their sons gave in reference to themselves and in reference to their mothers.

Ambiguity. The analysis of the data concerning response set suggested certain other speculations. The investigator became concerned with whether the boys were more ambiguous in reference to themselves than they were in reference to their mothers; whether the mothers were more ambiguous in reference to themselves than in reference to their sons; and whether there was a significant difference in ambiguity when the mothers were compared with the sons.

The structure of the ICL made such an investigation possible (31, pp.1-6). Ambiguity was operationally defined as the amount of overlap between traits which are opposite on the circular continuum representative of ICL scores. Overlap was measured in the following fashion: If the subject gave 7 "yes" re-
responses on one trait and 5 "yes" responses on the opposite trait, the amount of overlap was represented as being 5. The overlap for the four opposite traits was summed to yield a total ambiguity score.

In rating overlap only the items from the latter half of the ICL were used. This was justifiable, since the individual items for any trait are arrayed on an intensity dimension (31, p.3). The first half of the ICL was not considered because the items are of such relatively low intensity that considerable overlap would be expected.
CHAPTER V
RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The results to be presented in this chapter are based on the subjects' responses to the Interpersonal Check List. Hypotheses I, IV, V, VII, I, XI, and XIV were not tested because of lack of subjects in the group "theft involving threat and/or harm to another individual."

The investigator, in advance, determined arbitrarily that differences at the .05 level of confidence or less would be considered significant.

Test of Hypothesis II

It was hypothesized that the home truants would more accurately perceive their mothers' self-perceptions than the thieves.

Results of the test of this hypothesis are indicated in Table 1. It should be cautioned that the higher the item agreement and concomitant index scores, the more accurate the measured perceptions; the higher the summary point and trait rating scores the less accurate were the measured perceptions. This holds for Table 1 through Table 9.

The results indicate that the thieves and home truants did not differ significantly in predicting their mothers' self-perceptions. Therefore, the hypothesis is not upheld.

Test of Hypothesis III

It was hypothesized that the home truants would more accurately
Table 1

Significance of Difference (one-tail test) Between the Thieves' Accuracy of Perceiving Their Mothers' Self-Perceptions and the Home Truants' Accuracy of Perceiving Their Mothers' Self-Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Score</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary point</td>
<td>Thieves</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.12</td>
<td>.34</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Truants</td>
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<td>Concomitant Index</td>
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<td>1.23</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truants</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.7321</td>
<td></td>
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None of the "t" ratios is statistically significant.

Table 2

Significance of Difference (one-tail test) Between the Home Truants' Accuracy of Perceiving Their Mothers' Self-Perceptions and the Incorrigibles' Accuracy of Perceiving Their Mothers' Self-Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Score</th>
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<th>Mean</th>
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None of the "t" ratios is statistically significant.
perceive their mothers' self-perceptions than the home incorrigibles.

The results of the test of this hypothesis are indicated in Table 2.

The results indicate that the home truants and the home incorrigibles did not differ significantly in predicting their mothers' self-perceptions. The hypothesis is not supported by the data.

Test of Hypothesis VI

It was hypothesised that the thieves would more accurately perceive their mothers' self-perceptions than the home incorrigibles.

The results of the test of the hypothesis are indicated in Table 3.

The results indicate that the thieves and the home incorrigibles did not differ significantly in the accuracy of perceiving their mothers' self-perceptions. Thus, the hypothesis is not supported.

Conclusions. It is concluded that the three groups of delinquent boys did not differ significantly in the accuracy of perceiving their mothers' self-perceptions as measured by the Interpersonal Check List.

Test of Hypothesis VIII

It was hypothesized that the mothers of home truants would not perceive their sons' self-perceptions as accurately as the mothers of thieves.

The results of the test of this hypothesis are indicated in
Table 3

Significance of Difference (one-tail test) Between the Thieves' Accuracy of Perceiving Their Mothers' Self-Perceptions and the Incorrigibles' Accuracy of Perceiving Their Mothers' Self-Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Incor.'s</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.7512</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the "t" ratios is statistically significant.

Table 4

Significance of Difference (one-tail test) Between the Mothers of Thieves and the Mothers of Home Truants in Accuracy of Perceiving Their Sons' Self-Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Score</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary point</td>
<td>Thieves</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.47</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truants</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trait rating</td>
<td>Thieves</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23.94</td>
<td>2.10*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truants</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item agreement</td>
<td>Thieves</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>87.00</td>
<td>3.17**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truants</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>76.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concomitant index</td>
<td>Thieves</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.7105</td>
<td>4.97***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truants</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.5809</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant between the .025 and .01 levels of confidence; **between the .0025 and .001 levels; ***above the .0005 level.
Table 4.

With the exception of the summary point scoring method, the results indicate that the hypothesis is supported. The "t" ratio based on the summary point scoring method is between the .10 and .05 levels of confidence. Thus, the hypothesis is upheld by three of the scoring methods and tends to be upheld by the fourth.

Test of Hypothesis IX

It was hypothesised that mothers of home incorrigibles would perceive their sons' self-perceptions more accurately than the mothers of home truants.

The results of the test of this hypothesis are indicated in Table 5.

When the data were analysed with the trait rating scoring method, the hypothesis seems to be supported. However, the other three methods of scoring when applied to the data do not uphold the hypothesis.

An artifact distorts the data when they are analysed by the trait rating method of scoring. This method is dependent upon the number of "yes" responses yielded. The mothers of incorrigibles and their sons did not differ significantly in respect to the number of "yes" responses they gave when the sons were being described. The mothers of home truants and their sons did tend to differ significantly in this respect. The latter difference was between the .10 and .05 levels of confidence. Thus, the observed difference, when the trait rating scoring method
### Table 5

Significance of Difference (one-tail test) Between the Mothers of Incorrigibles and the Mothers of Home Truants in Accuracy of Perceiving Their Sons' Self-Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Score</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary point</td>
<td>Truants</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incor.'s</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trait rating</td>
<td>Truants</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31.27</td>
<td>2.89*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incor.'s</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item agreement</td>
<td>Truants</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>76.73</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incor.'s</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>78.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concomitant Index</td>
<td>Truants</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.5809</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incor.'s</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.6087</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant between the .005 and .0025 levels of confidence.

### Table 6

Significance of Difference (one-tail test) Between the Mothers of Incorrigibles and the Mothers of Thieves in Accuracy of Perceiving Their Sons' Self-Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Score</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary point</td>
<td>Thieves</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.47</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incor.'s</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trait rating</td>
<td>Thieves</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23.94</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incor.'s</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item agreement</td>
<td>Thieves</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>87.00</td>
<td>2.57*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incor.'s</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>78.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concomitant index</td>
<td>Thieves</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.7105</td>
<td>3.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incor.'s</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.6087</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant between the .01 and .005 levels of confidence; **between the .0025 and .001 levels.
was employed, seems to be a function of not only perception but also of the number of "yes" responses given by the subjects. Thus, of necessity the observed difference would occur when the two groups of mothers were compared in terms of accuracy of perceiving their sons' self-perceptions.

It is concluded that the hypothesis is not supported.

Test of Hypothesis XII

It was hypothesized that the mothers of thieves would not perceive their sons' self-perceptions as accurately as the mothers of home incorrigibles.

The results of the test of this hypothesis are indicated in Table 6.

The results do not support the hypothesis. In fact, when the data were analyzed by the item agreement and concomitant index scoring methods, it was found that the mothers of thieves were significantly more accurate at perceiving their sons' self-perceptions than the mothers of home incorrigibles.

Conclusions. It is concluded that the mothers of thieves were significantly more accurate at perceiving their sons' self-perceptions than either the mothers of home truants or home incorrigibles. There is some indication that the mothers of home truants are less accurate in this respect than the mothers of the other two groups.
Test of Hypothesis XIII

It was hypothesized that in the home truancy group the sons would more accurately perceive their mothers' self-perceptions than the mothers would perceive their sons' self-perceptions.

The results of the test of this hypothesis are indicated in Table 7.

All four scoring methods support the hypothesis.

Test of Hypothesis XV

It was hypothesized that in the theft group the mothers would more accurately perceive their sons' self-perceptions than the sons would perceive their mothers' self-perceptions.

The results of the test of this hypothesis are indicated in Table 8.

The data do not support the hypothesis. In fact, three of the scoring methods indicate that the sons were more accurate at perceiving their mothers' self-perceptions than the mothers were at perceiving their sons' self-perceptions.

Test of Hypothesis XVI

It was hypothesized that in the home incorrigibility group the sons and mothers would not differ significantly in perceiving each others' self-perceptions.

The results of the test of this hypothesis are indicated in Table 9.

The summary point and trait rating methods of scoring uphold
### Table 7

Significance of Difference (one-tail test) Between the Mothers' Accuracy of Perceiving the Home Truants' Self-Perceptions and the Home Truants' Accuracy of Perceiving Their Mothers' Self-Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Score</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary point</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>2.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trait rating</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31.27</td>
<td>2.91**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item agreement</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>76.73</td>
<td>4.56***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>92.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concomitant index</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5809</td>
<td>4.76***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7321</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant between the .05 and .025 levels of confidence; **between the .005 and .0025 levels; ***above the .0005 level.

### Table 8

Significance of Difference (one-tail test) Between the Mothers' Accuracy of Perceiving the Thieves' Self-Perceptions and the Thieves' Accuracy of Perceiving Their Mothers' Self-Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Score</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary point</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.47</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trait rating</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23.94</td>
<td>1.59*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item agreement</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>87.00</td>
<td>3.48**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>96.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concomitant index</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.7105</td>
<td>2.62***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.7603</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant between the .10 and .05 levels of confidence; **between the .001 and .0005 levels; ***between the .01 and .005 levels.
Table 9

Significance of Difference (two-tail test) Between the Mothers' Accuracy of Perceiving the Incorrigibles' Self-Perceptions and the Incorrigibles' Accuracy of Perceiving their Mothers' Self-Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Score</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary point</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.13</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trait rating</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.67</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item agreement</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>78.44</td>
<td>2.87*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>92.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concomitant index</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.6087</td>
<td>2.64*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.7512</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant between the .02 and .01 levels of confidence.
the hypothesis. The data, when analyzed by the item agreement and concomitant index, indicate that the home incorrigibles were significantly more accurate at perceiving their mothers' self-perceptions than the mothers were at perceiving their sons' self-perceptions.

Conclusions. It is concluded that the delinquent subjects tended to perceive more accurately their mothers' self-perceptions than the mothers perceived their sons' self-perceptions.

Methods of Scoring

The analysis of the data indicate that the results tend to differ with the type of scoring methods employed. With one exception the item agreement and concomitant index methods of scoring tend to be more revealing than the other two methods. This is probably due to the fact that the item agreement and concomitant index methods of scoring take into consideration both "yes" and "no" agreements and that both are types of item analysis. Thus, it seems safe to conclude that they are more refined measurements than scores which represent the data in a more general fashion.

The summary point method of scoring is probably the most inferior of the four methods. All of the subjects responses are represented by a single point. Leary (31, p. 3) readily admitted the weaknesses of such a method of representing people. This method does not reveal ambivalent feelings or other subtleties.

The trait rating method of scoring is more revealing than the summary point method of scoring, but it, too, has certain drawbacks.
It is based on rather broad categories which have not been completely validated. Also, certain artifacts may affect the data when this method of scoring is used. This was demonstrated in Table 5. Still another disadvantage is the fact that this scoring method does not take into consideration the intensity dimension which is built into each of the trait scales. Thus, if one person judged another low in "competitiveness" and the person being judged only checked the more intense items, this method of scoring would indicate agreement in perception along the "competitiveness" dimension.

It is concluded that the data are most accurately portrayed by the item agreement and concomitant index scoring methods. Subsequent discussion and summarization of the results were based on the findings when these two methods of scoring were employed.

Response Set

It was proposed that either the boys or the mothers might have given significantly more "yes" responses on the ICL.

The results of the test of this proposition are indicated in Table 10.

It is concluded that the mothers of the home truants gave significantly more "yes" responses in reference to themselves than their sons did in reference to either themselves or their mothers. No significant differences were found in respect to the number of "yes" responses yielded by the mothers and sons of the other two groups.

It is concluded that the above results cannot satisfactorily
Table 10

Significance of Difference (two-tail tests) Between the Number of "Yes" Responses Given by the Mothers and the Sons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Units Compared</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incorrigibles</td>
<td>Mother of self</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>70.67</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of mother</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>66.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of self</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>70.67</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of self</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of son</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>68.00</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of mother</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>66.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of son</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>68.00</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of self</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Truants</td>
<td>Mother of self</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>70.64</td>
<td>3.06*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of mother</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>59.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of self</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>70.64</td>
<td>2.90**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of self</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of son</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>67.64</td>
<td>1.84**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of mother</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>59.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of son</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>67.64</td>
<td>2.06**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of self</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thieves</td>
<td>Mother of self</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>67.94</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of mother</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>66.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of self</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>67.94</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of self</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>66.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of son</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>73.17</td>
<td>1.78**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of mother</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>66.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of son</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>73.17</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of self</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>66.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant between the .01 and .005 levels of confidence.

**Significant between the .10 and .05 levels of confidence.
Ambiguity

The above phenomena might be better handled by the concept of ambiguity. Thus, it was proposed that the degree of ambiguity, as derived from the responses to the ICL, might differ significantly when the groups were compared and when the mothers and sons were compared.

The comparisons of within group ambiguity are indicated in Table 11.

The analysis of the data indicates that the mothers of all the groups were significantly more ambiguous in describing their sons than the sons were in describing their mothers. The thieves were significantly more ambiguous in describing themselves than in describing their mothers.

The comparisons of between group ambiguity are indicated in Table 12.

The mothers of incorrigibles were significantly more ambiguous in describing themselves than the mothers of thieves were. This same tendency, although not statistically significant, was found between the mothers of thieves and the mothers of home truants.

The groups of delinquent boys tended to be equally ambiguous in describing themselves and their mothers.

Conclusions

In general, it is concluded that the different delinquent groups differ not only in respect to perceptual accuracy, but
Table 11

Significance of Difference (two-tail tests) Between the Mothers and the Sons in Amount of Ambiguity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Units Compared</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incorrigible</td>
<td>Mother of self</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of mother</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of self</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of self</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of son</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>2.65*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of mother</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of son</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of self</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Truants</td>
<td>Mother of self</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.32</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of mother</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of self</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of self</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of son</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>2.31**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of mother</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of son</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of self</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thieves</td>
<td>Mother of self</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of mother</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of self</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.09**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son of self</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mother of son</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>2.10**</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>.97</td>
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<td>Son of self</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.17</td>
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*Significant between the .02 and .01 levels of confidence.
**Between the .05 and .01 levels.
Table 12

Significance of Difference (two-tail tests) Between the Members of Different Groups in Amount of Ambiguity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Groups Compared</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<td>1.72**</td>
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*Significant between the .05 and .02 levels of confidence.
**Between the .10 and .05 levels.
also in respect to the degree of ambiguity present. On the whole, the boys seemed to perceive their mothers more accurately than the mothers perceived the boys. Also, the mothers were more ambiguous in their perceptions than the boys were. Thus, in part, the differences in perceptual accuracy are a function of ambiguity.
CHAPTER VI
DISCUSSION

INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

The analysis of the data presented in Chapter V indicated that the three delinquent groups differed in certain respects and were similar in other respects. An attempt is made below to interpret the findings in terms of the theory discussed in Chapter III.

The Theft Group

The dynamics of the interaction process between the boys and mothers of the theft group seemed to differ from that of the other two groups. Accuracy of perception and ambiguity measures indicate that of the three groups, the theft group exhibited the greatest degree of communication. That is, the mothers and sons of the theft group were relatively more accurate at agreeing on the meaning of each other's behavior than were the mothers and sons of the other two groups.

Within the theft group, the mothers were more accurately perceived than their sons. It may be inferred that the mothers, in contrast to their sons, more accurately communicated the meanings they, the mothers, attached to their own behavior. This implies that the mothers more accurately communicated their perceived needs, desires, values, attitudes, and feelings.
For example, if a mother perceived her behavior as meaning "I am dependent," and if her son agreed with his mother on this perception of her behavior, the mother had successfully communicated her self-perception to her son. Further, the son recognizing his mother's self-perception is in a position to behave in a manner which will satisfy and/or give recognition to his mother's needs, desires, attitudes, values, and feelings which are related to her perception of being dependent. The son might respond to this perception of his mother by obtaining a newspaper route in order to assist her financially; or he might respond to this perception by giving support to his mother's plans and decisions or by assisting his mother in the formulation of plans and decisions; or he might respond, much as a counselor or therapist, by verbalizing his perception of his mother's dependency.

The boys of the theft group were less accurately and more ambiguously perceived than the mothers. Thus, it may be inferred that the boys, in contrast to their mothers, had more difficulty in assigning meaning to their behavior and in communicating this to their mothers. For example, if the son perceived his behavior as meaning "I am dependent," and if the mother perceived her son as being independent, the son had not successfully communicated his perception of himself to his mother. Further the mother is not in a position, other than on a chance basis, of responding in a manner which will satisfy her son's needs, desires, attitudes,
values, and feelings, which are related to his perception of being dependent. In fact, she would probably respond in terms of "he wants to be independent." Thus, the boy must satisfy his perceived needs, desires, values, attitudes, and feelings, in some other manner, perhaps by communicating his self-perception of dependency to other persons, such as teachers, siblings, or peers.

Further, if the son is uncertain, ambiguous concerning certain aspects of his self-perception, if he fails to assign meaning to his behavior then he is unable to communicate his specific needs, desires, values, attitudes, and feelings. He may communicate his ambiguous self-perception to others but this may be even more frustrating to him as he is never certain if the other person will perceive his self-perception accurately at a specific given time. Thus, chances are less likely that his mother or others will respond in a manner which will be satisfying to him. In fact, because of the boy's own ambiguous feelings satisfaction of his needs may be practically impossible.

When the three groups of boys were compared, the thieves were found not to differ significantly in respect to perceptual accuracy or ambiguity. The boys' perceptual accuracy and ambiguity scores on the ICL may reflect a general, developmental phenomenon rather than the results of specific interpersonal relationships. Appropriate research is needed in this area.

It is suggested that the thieves' behavior, which was ambi-
guous and which lacked meaning, was that behavior which was most closely related to their anti-social symptoms. The thieves' responses to the interview questions concerned with the motivation or reasoning behind their delinquent act give some support to this proposition. A few typical statements will be illustrative:

"I just decided to do it. I don't know why."
"I don't know. I guess it was more like fun."
"I don't know. One boy urged me on...he said the gun was on the table and why don't you take it. He was suppose to pay for it."
"Just stole to have fun...guess we wanted a car so took it."

Thus, the thieves seemed to be unable to attach meaning to the very acts which brought them before the court. The mothers' responses were equally confused. Perhaps the mothers' confusion can be attributed, in part, to a lack of opportunity to observe certain critical aspects of their sons' behavior. Further, the mothers' inability to perceive certain of their sons' needs, desires, values, attitudes, and feelings, may be a function of their irrelevance in the home situation. The latter statement is in keeping with the propositions set forth by Steiner (40). Thus, other persons may have been in a more appropriate position to assist the boys in the clarification and/or satisfaction of these needs, desires, values, attitudes, and feelings. However, if as stated previously, the boys' own ambiguous feelings prevent the satisfaction of his needs, he may resort to behavior, such as stealing, to which he does not assign meaning but which in some
manner satisfies and symbolizes his unperceived, undefined needs, desires, values, attitudes, and feelings.

If the above interpretation of the data is realistic, then it should have certain implications for the treatment process. First, the data indicate that the boys need to be assisted to assign consistent and realistic meanings to their behavior and to communicate this meaning to others. This implies that the boys should become aware of their needs, desires, values, attitudes, and feelings, and be able to communicate these to others in such a fashion that they can be dealt with adequately.

Thus, the data indicate that the boys should be the focus of the treatment process. Working with the mothers would be a mere supplement in the treatment process. However, the mother may play a vital role in the treatment process if she is not assigning meaning to or misperceiving certain critical aspects of her son's behavior which are particularly relevant to the home situation.

The Home Incorrigible and Home Truancy Groups

The home incorrigible and home truancy groups were quite similar in respect to the interpersonal dynamics exhibited. As in the theft group, the mothers were more accurately perceived than their sons. The mothers and sons did not differ significantly in the ambiguity of their self-descriptions. The mothers' perceptions of their sons were more ambiguous, however, than the sons' perceptions of their mothers. The three groups of mothers did
not differ significantly in the ambiguousness of their perceptions of their sons. The home incorrigible and home truant mothers, in contrast to the other group of mothers, were more ambiguous concerning themselves and less accurate at perceiving their sons.

Thus, the home incorrigible and home truant groups, in contrast to the theft group, are characterized by less perceptual accuracy and more ambiguity. It can be inferred that the mothers were inconsistent in assigning meaning to both their sons' and their own behavior. The mothers seemed to have communicated this ambiguity to their sons. The sons were aware of their mothers' ambiguity concerning their, the mothers', needs, desires, attitudes, values, and feelings, but found it difficult to respond in an adequate manner. In a sense, the boys were required to respond to and perceive repetitions of the mothers' behavior differently at different times. The adequacy of the boys' responses as perceived by the mothers may be no greater than if the boys selected their responses on a chance basis. Further, if the mothers were unable to assign meaning to their own behavior and if they had ambiguous perceptions of their needs, desires, attitudes, values, and feelings, the sons were literally unable to respond adequately to their mothers' behavior.

The interpersonal dynamics become even more complicated when it is realized that the sons' behavior was perceived less accurately and more ambiguously by the mothers than the mothers' behavior was
perceived by their sons. The sons were not only unable to respond adequately to their mothers' behavior but found it difficult to communicate their needs, desires, values, attitudes, and feelings, and have these satisfied or perceived in a consistent, accurate manner by their mothers. Essentially, neither the mothers nor the sons were able to respond in a satisfying manner to each other's behavior. The boys could not respond adequately because of the mothers' ambiguous self-perceptions; the mothers could not respond adequately because of their inaccurate perceptions of their sons' self-perceptions. Thus, the chosen mode of delinquent behavior becomes even more understandable.

The data indicate, although not at a statistically significant level, that the above dynamics existed to a greater degree in the home truancy group than in the home incorrigibility group. The home incorrigible's next significant reaction might be that of running away from his home.

The data and the above interpretation indicate that the treatment plans must be focused on the mothers. Further, research cited in Chapter II tend to support the hypothesis that degree of maladjustment is negatively related to accuracy of predictive behavior (7, 43, 45). Thus, the conclusion that the mothers of the home incorrigible and home truancy groups should be the focus of the treatment process seems justified. Until the mothers assign consistent meaning to their behavior, the sons will persist in
their incorrigibility and truancy. Supplemental treatment of the sons may be helpful and may be necessary in order to somewhat stabilize the home situation during the treatment of the mothers.

Conclusions. It is concluded that the analysis of the data and the above interpretations indicate that the interpersonal dynamics exhibited in the relationship between the mothers and their sons could be differentiated when the groups were categorized according to the sons' delinquent acts. Further, the interpersonal dynamics exhibited seemed to indicate the individuals upon whom treatment plans and procedures should be focused. It seems significant that the parent-child relationships could be dynamically portrayed without the use of the usual behavioral symptoms, such as "rejection," "over-dependence," "punitiveness," and "submissiveness."

The Limitations and Implications of the Study

The present study has certain limitations. First, the items on the ICL are limited in scope. That is, they deal with only a part of an individual's behavior. However, the items are applicable in almost any interpersonal situation. Cass' measuring devices (12) have certain advantages. Specifically, her items dealt with ambitions, fears, preferences, and parental controls. The items were not applicable to both the children and their parents. If such items are developed and if they are applicable to both parents and children, they would provide a significant
supplement to measuring devices like the ICL.

Second, the structured, open-ended interview did not serve the desired purposes. Future research would be enhanced by combining the method used in this study with expert judgments of the interpersonal relationships and/or by structured interaction situations such as reported by Bales (3) and Garmezy (20). Such an approach might permit inferences concerning the relationship of perceptual accuracy to interpersonal efficiency in the family situation.

A third limitation concerns the applicability of the findings. The three groups of subjects represent an extremely narrow range of behaviors. Further, only one interpersonal relationship within a family unit was considered. Normal, developmental patterns cannot be directly related to the data. Future research will have to be relied upon to provide normative data in this area. Given enough data of this kind, the professional worker might more adequately predict behavior and hence prevent juvenile delinquency.

In general, the present research tends to lend support to the theoretical statements set forth in Chapter III. The investigator believes that the methods and techniques applied in this study have provided a basis upon which to infer the degree of communication in an interpersonal situation. Further the results indicate that certain modifications and elaborations must be made in the theory.

The hypothetical construct of ambiguity should be included in the theory and its function made explicit. The incorporation of
the ambiguity construct would permit the theoretical handling of much of the research findings in Chapter II. Thus, it seems logical that phenomenon such as group efficiency and personal adjustment can be explained, in part, by formulating certain assumptions concerning the role of ambiguity in interpersonal relationships. Bordin (10) has done this quite effectively in his assumptions concerning the relationship between ambiguity and anxiety. While Bordin's formulation was specifically relevant to the counseling situation, similar assumptions can be made concerning any interpersonal relationship. The data do permit the formulation of hypotheses concerning the possible role of ambiguity as a variable in interpersonal relationships.

First, it is suggested that an individual's ambiguous self-perceptions may be accurately communicated to another individual. This implies the conditions that the performer perceive and assign specific alternative meanings to the behavior in question; it further implies that the observer have an opportunity to witness the behavior, or a symbolic representation of the behavior, and that the observer assign the same alternative meanings to the behavior as the performer.

Thus, it can be inferred that the three groups of boys, in contrast to their mothers, were more accurate at predicting their mothers' self-perceptions because they, the boys, were perceptive of the alternative meanings the mothers attached to certain aspects of their own behavior.
Second, it is proposed that ambiguous perceptions of another individual may result from the lack of opportunity to observe or the failure to assign meaning to certain behavior of the person being observed. Thus, it may be that future research will disclose that when the latter situation is evident the performer will be described ambiguously and that the ambiguous description could have been derived on the basis of chance alone or on the basis of defense mechanisms such as identification and projection.

Thus, ambiguity of one's self-perception can be accurately or inaccurately perceived by another individual. It is speculated that the inaccurate perception of ambiguity may lead to increased anxiety and decreased efficiency in the interpersonal situation. Such dynamics may account for some of the findings cited in Chapter II. Also, these dynamics may account for the interpersonal relationships evidenced in the home truancy and home incorrigible groups. For example, the ambiguity in the interpersonal relationship between mother and son might have been to such an extent that the boy could no longer tolerate the anxiety created by the ambiguity hence he ran away from the situation, his home.

When ambiguity is accurately perceived by the participants in an interpersonal relationship the possibility of increased anxiety cannot be discounted. However, it is suggested that in this latter case the ambiguity may be perceived in its proper perspective and handled in an adequate, effective manner which
may result in more efficient interpersonal relationships. Such
dynamics are common to the interpersonal situation known as
counseling or psychotherapy. These dynamics may take place in
the normal, healthy, effective family situation.

A third possibility is that the ambiguous self-perceptions
are not relevant to the specific interpersonal relationship,
hence, may not interfere with the efficiency of this relationship.
This latter proposal is in keeping with the position taken by
Steiner (140). Such a possibility has previously been discussed
in connection with the theft group.

It would seem that the present study has served two functions.
First, it has provided certain empirical data relevant to the field
of juvenile delinquency and parent-child relationships. The data
indicate that the groups studied could be differentiated on the
basis of the subjects' perceptual accuracy and ambiguity scores
on the ICL. The data provide the basis for certain inferences
concerning the dynamics of the interpersonal relationships be­
tween the mothers and their sons and the relationship these dy­
namics may have to the specific delinquent acts committed by the
sons. The data seem to supplement Cass' findings (12) by indi­
cating if perceptual accuracy is related to juvenile delinquency
the dynamics involved may differ in respect to the delinquent
acts committed. Further, the data seem to indicate that the
techniques applied in this study may be useful in the diagnostic
evaluation and treatment planning of the individual parent-child
situation.
Second, the results of the present study have suggested hypotheses which may prove fruitful in the further study of interpersonal relationships. In particular, the relationship between ambiguous perceptions and anxiety, and perceptual accuracy as a developmental phenomenon seem worthy of investigation.
It was the purpose of this study to measure communication between three groups of juvenile delinquents and their mother­figures. The three groups of delinquents were selected on the basis of their delinquent acts - theft, home incorrigibility, and home truancy; age - between 12 and 17; length of time with mother-figure - at least three years; guilt of crime and detainment in the Franklin County Detention Home, Columbus, Ohio.

Measures of the degree of communication were the Interpersonal Check List and a structured, open-ended interview. The latter proved to be empirically ineffective. Four different scoring methods were used on the Interpersonal Check List to evaluate the mother's perception of herself, the son's perception of his mother, the mother's perception of her son, and the son's perception of himself. The degree of communication was inferred from the relationship of the above four variables.

Results of the study would indicate that the following conclusions are justified:

1. The three groups of delinquent boys did not differ significantly in the accuracy of perceiving their mothers' self-perceptions.
2. The mothers of thieves were significantly more accurate at perceiving their sons' self-perceptions than either the mothers of home truants or home incorrigibles.

3. The delinquent subjects were significantly more accurate at perceiving their mothers' self-perceptions than the mothers were at perceiving their sons' self-perceptions.

4. The mothers of all the groups were significantly more ambiguous in describing their sons than the sons were in describing their mothers.

5. The thieves were significantly more ambiguous in describing themselves than in describing their mothers.

6. The mothers of incorrigibles were significantly more ambiguous in describing themselves than the mothers of thieves were. This same tendency, although not statistically significant was found between the mothers of thieves and home truants.

7. The groups of delinquent boys tended to be equally ambiguous in describing themselves and their mothers.

8. These specific findings justify the general conclusion that the interpersonal dynamics exhibited in the relationship between the mothers and their sons could be differentiated when the groups were categorized according to the sons' delinquent acts.
REFERENCES


39. Sears, R. E. A theoretical framework for personality and social behavior. Amer. psychologist, 1951, 6, 476-484.


Appendix A

Directions for Administering the Interpersonal Check List
Directions for Administering the Interpersonal Check List

Directions for the boys:

1. I am going to read some phrases to you. These phrases describe different ways people act or feel. As I read each phrase to you answer either "yes" or "no". Answer "yes" to those phrases which describe your mother's behavior or the way you think she feels. Answer "no" to those phrases which do not describe your mother's behavior or the way you think she feels. If you are in doubt, it is usually best to answer with the first thought that enters your mind after hearing the phrase.

2. I am going to read some phrases to you. These phrases describe different ways people act or feel. As I read each phrase to you answer either "yes" or "no". Answer "yes" to those phrases which describe your behavior or the way you feel. Answer "no" to those phrases which do not describe your behavior or the way you feel. If you are in doubt, it is usually best to answer with the first thought that enters your mind after hearing the phrase.

Directions for the mothers:

The directions were the same except that in "1" the mother was asked to respond in terms of her son's behavior and feelings.
Appendix B

Synonymous Terms for Various Items on the Interpersonal Check List
### Synonymous Terms for Various Items on the Interpersonal Check List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICL item</th>
<th>Synonymous term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forceful</td>
<td>Can get a point across with feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-respecting</td>
<td>Respects self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Do what you like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be indifferent to others</td>
<td>Can ignore others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical of others</td>
<td>Criticises others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considerate</td>
<td>Looks out for others' rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confident</td>
<td>Has confidence in self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reliant and assertive</td>
<td>Stands on own two feet and speaks mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard-boiled when necessary</td>
<td>Tough when necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritable</td>
<td>Disagreeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straightforward and direct</td>
<td>Doesn't beat around the bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modest</td>
<td>Not boastful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominating</td>
<td>Tries to run others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud and self-satisfied</td>
<td>Proud and satisfied with self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrewd and calculating</td>
<td>Schemes and cleverly plans ahead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-seeking</td>
<td>Seeks to get own way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outspoken</td>
<td>Speaks mind</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-punishing</td>
<td>Punishes self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive and unagressive</td>
<td>Seldom acts on em</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meek</td>
<td>Gives in to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>Relies on others</td>
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</table>
Oversympathetic—Sympathizes too much
Generous to a fault—Too generous
Overprotective of others—Worries too much about others
Dictatorial—Bosses others around
Egotistical and conceited—Stuck on self, self-centered
Sarcastic—Makes cruel remarks, rubs it in
Spineless—Hasn't any backbone
Clinging vine—Clings to others
Appendix C

Structured, Open-ended Interviews
Structured, Open-ended Interviews

Lead questions for the mothers:

1. What can you tell me about your son's behavior at home?
   a. His good behavior?
   b. His bad behavior?

2. Why does he behave this way?

3. Can you name or describe things which worry or bother your child which may account for his behavior?

4. How can you account for your child's doing (specific delinquent act)?

5. How do you think you can help your son?

Lead questions for the sons:

1. What does your mother think of your behavior at home?
   a. Your good behavior?
   b. Your bad behavior?

2. Is she right?
   a. If she isn't why does she act this way?
   b. If she is why do you act this way?

3. What problems do you have?

4. Why are you here at the Detention Home?
   a. Why did you do (specific delinquent act)?

5. What can your mother do to help you?
I, William Barry Sharp, was born in Moorestown, New Jersey, April 20, 1930. I received my secondary school education in the public schools of Moorestown, New Jersey, and my undergraduate training at Denison University, which granted me the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1952. From Ohio University, I received the Master of Arts degree in 1954. While in residence there, I was an assistant to the Dean of Men. During my period of residency at the Ohio State University, I served as a research assistant to Professor Frank M. Fletcher, as a counselor in the Pre-college Conference, and as Assistant Instructor to Professor Francis P. Robinson.