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A STUDY OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND DEPENDENCY
IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY FOR THE YEAR 1912.¹

EMORY S. BOGARDUS.²

This study covers all the cases which were entered in the Juvenile Court of Los Angeles County for the year 1912. The cases number from "3,645" to "5,124," and hence include 1, 479. Of this 1,479, the writer finds 381 were dismissed (a small part of this number were contributory). Nearly all of the remaining 1,098 cases were placed on probation (a small percentage were sent to the state or other industrial schools).

TABLE I.

Delinquency and Dependency, Los Angeles County, 1912; 1,098 Cases.

	Nos.	Per Cent.
Delinquent boys	374	34.0+
Delinquent girls	55	5.0+
Dependent boys	342	31.1+
Dependent girls	327	29.8+
Total	1,098	100.0

Table I shows that of the 1,098 cases in which the court sustained the charge, 716, or 65.2 per cent, are credited to boys and 382, or 34.7 per cent, are credited to girls. The proportion of boys to girls is almost exactly two to one.

The writer has taken the 1,098 cases for the year 1912 in which the charge was sustained and analyzed them from a sociological point of view. Many cases which for legal purposes would be classified as dependency for sociological purposes would come under the term

¹This study was initiated by Mr. E. Guy Talbot, formerly of Los Angeles, now (1914) of Sacramento. The court records were made available through the courtesy of Mr. Hugh Gibson, chief probation officer, and Judge Curtis D. Wilbur. Much of the tabulation and classification was done by students in the Department of Economics and Sociology, the University of Southern California. A considerable part of the credit for the work involved in this paper belongs to Miss Martha Dresslar and Miss Romaine L. Poindexter. They were assisted by Mr. Wilson McEuen, Mr. Ross Hodson, Mr. William Malan, Miss Josephine Rogers, Miss Martha Steele and Mr. C. J. Pfaffenberger.

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delinquency. In other words, the legal term "dependency" is interpreted by the court to include certain cases of delinquency.

Some boys and girls seems to be both delinquent and dependent, but in nearly every case it was evident that one condition was more or less primary to the other. Table II gives the results of the preliminary analysis.

TABLE II.
Sociological Analysis, 1,098 Cases.

	Nos.	Per Cent.
Delinquent boys	502	45.7+
Delinquent girls	179	16.3+
<hr/>		
Total	681	62.0+
Dependent boys	213	19.3+
Dependent girls	204	18.5+
<hr/>		
Total	417	37.9+
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Grand total	1,098	100.0

Of the 1,098 charges that were upheld, 681, or 62.0 per cent, may be classed as delinquency (sociologically) and 417, or 37.9 per cent, as dependency. The proportion is not quite two to one. With reference to delinquency, 502 cases were boys and 179 were girls. The proportion of boys to girls is not quite three to one. Dependency is rather evenly divided between boys and girls, a result that might be expected, since dependency is a state more directly related to environment (largely social) than is delinquency and since dependency hence would fall alike upon both boys and girls. Delinquency is also vitally a matter of social environment, but it depends very definitely upon the personal equation, temperament and so forth; hence boys, either by virtue of a different reaction or as a result of having a different social environment than girls, appear to be in nearly three times as great a danger of becoming delinquent as are girls.

On the basis of the analysis as given in Table II, the delinquent boys and girls were classified according to ages. Table III gives the age statistics.

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TABLE III.

Delinquency Age Statistics.

Age. Years.	Boys.		Girls.		Total.	
	Nos.	Per Cent.	Nos.	Per Cent.	Nos.	Per Cent.
8	6	1.1+	..	..	6	0.8+
9	10	1.9+	..	..	10	1.4+
10	16	3.1+	..	..	16	2.3+
11	23	4.5+	..	..	23	3.3+
12	34	6.7+	3	1.6+	37	5.4+
13	24	4.7+	4	2.2+	28	4.1+
14	53	10.5+	20	11.1+	73	1.0+
15	81	16.1+	37	20.6+	118	11.3+
16	107	21.3+	33	18.4+	140	20.5+
17	101	20.1+	39	21.3+	140	20.5+
18	28	5.5+	28	15.6+	56	8.2+
19	11	2.1+	11	6.1+	22	3.2+
20	3	0.5+	4	2.2+	7	1.0+
Others	5	0.9+	..	..	5	0.7+
Totals ...	502	100.0	179	100.0	681	100.0

The table shows that the period from fifteen to seventeen years of age is especially dangerous for boys. Bodily development comes ahead of the corresponding mental control. There is insufficient control or inhibition of instinctive impulses. The adolescent is unusually susceptible to suggestion of all kinds, without possessing needed discriminatory power.

As far as Table II presents typical facts, it shows that delinquency begins later with girls than with boys, perhaps due to longer protection in the home.

In spite of this apparent delayed delinquency, the problem of delinquency with girls reaches its height at about the same age period as with boys. Chart I is based on Table III and gives the age curve for delinquency among boys and among girls. It also shows in a crude way the much greater proportion of delinquency among boys than among girls.

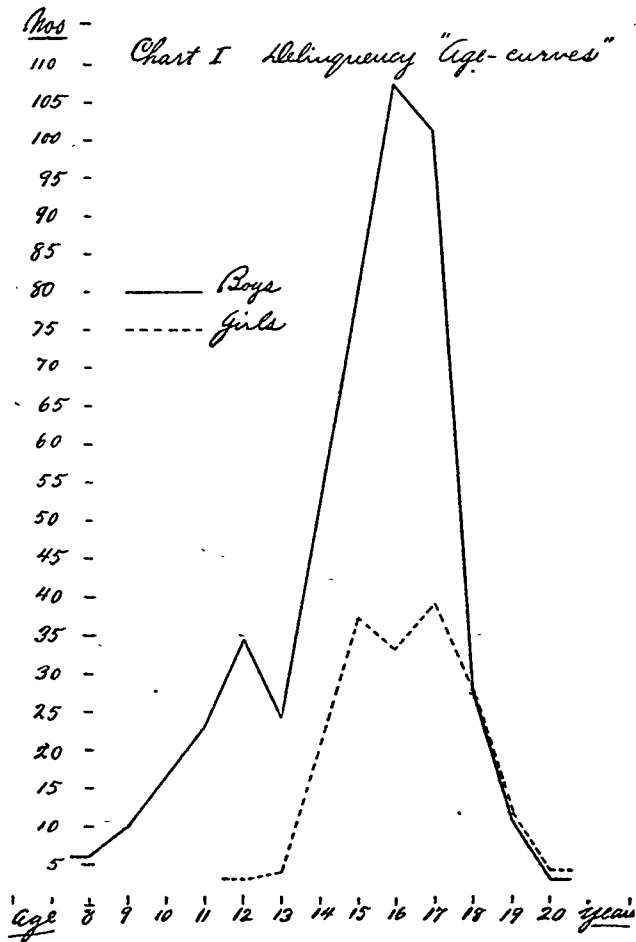


Table IV, which gives the dependency age statistics, shows that the numbers in the age column for dependent boys run remarkably parallel with the numbers in the age column of dependent girls. The causes in both cases are to be found outside the lives of both boys and girls; namely, with parents. The "high" years are from birth until the beginning of the "teens." From birth until the child can begin to earn his own living he is in especial danger of becoming the victim of his parents' inability or unwillingness to support him.

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TABLE IV.

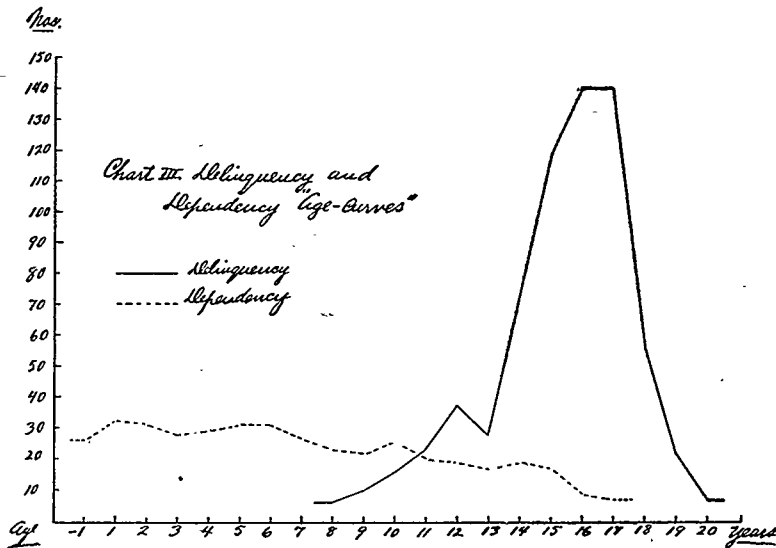
Dependency Age Statistics.

Age. Years.	Boys.		Girls.		Total.	
	Nos.	Per Cent.	Nos.	Per Cent.	Nos.	Per Cent.
Under 1	13	6.1+	13	6.3+	26	6.2+
1	15	7.0+	17	8.3+	32	7.7+
2	16	7.5+	15	7.3+	31	7.5+
3	14	6.5+	14	6.8+	28	6.7+
4	17	7.9+	12	5.8+	29	7.0+
5	16	7.5+	15	7.3+	31	7.5+
6	16	7.5+	15	7.3+	31	7.5+
7	14	6.5+	13	6.3+	27	6.4+
8	9	4.2+	14	6.8+	23	5.5+
9	14	6.5+	8	3.9+	22	5.3+
10	15	7.0+	11	5.3+	26	6.2+
11	9	4.2+	11	5.3+	20	4.8+
12	13	6.1+	6	2.9+	19	4.5+
13	9	4.2+	8	3.9+	17	4.0+
14	9	4.2+	10	4.8+	19	4.5+
15	8	3.7+	9	4.4+	17	4.0+
16	1	0.4+	8	3.9+	9	2.1+
17	3	1.4+	4	1.9+	7	1.6+
Others	2	0.9+	1	4.0+	3	0.7+
Totals ...	214	100.0	204	100.0	417	100.0

Chart II Dependency "Age-Curves"



Chart II is based on Table IV and shows the comparative age curves for dependent boys and dependent girls. Chart III is based on columns 5 and 6 of Tables III and IV and shows in a comparative



way the age curves for juvenile dependency and for juvenile delinquency. When the dependency curve begins to fall, the delinquency curve begins to rise. It should be noted that the curves cross at about the eleven year age point, and that they begin distinctly to separate at the beginning of the "teens."

Hence, it may be inferred from this study that many children of the congested centers of our large cities are in danger of suffering from poverty until they reach their years of adolescence. But at the beginning of adolescence the danger of poverty is replaced by relatively twice as great a danger—that of delinquency—due to the appeal made by the environment to the feelings and passions before adolescents have had opportunity to acquire control over those passions.

In classifying the charges against delinquent boys and girls I have again used a different method from that of the probation office. In nearly every case there were two or more anti-social tendencies. In going over the records I have tried to determine as far as possible the probable "primary" charge or charge which is more or less fundamental to the others in the given case. In 44 cases of delinquency among boys and in 4 among girls it was not possible to make such an analysis. Table V gives the results for boys.

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TABLE V.

Charges Against Delinquent Boys.

Offense.	Nos.	Per Cent.
Petty larceny	98	19.3+
Burglary	84	16.7+
Incorrigible	72	14.3+
Speeding	46	9.1+
Immorality	35	6.9+
Grand larceny	34	6.7+
Disturbing the peace.....	27	5.3+
Assault	23	4.2+
Forgery.....	14	2.7+
Vagrancy	8	1.5+
Destroying property	8	1.5+
Highway robbery	4	0.7+
Murder	3	0.5+
Gambling	2	0.3+
Unclassified	44	9.1+
Total	502	100.0

Petty larceny and burglary head the list for boys and offenses against property stand high in the total. In the adolescent boy the desire to acquire things is strong, the things which satisfy these desires are at hand, but, as would be expected, sufficient individual self-control has not yet developed, and delinquency is the result. In the fact that self-control is slow in developing, or in being developed by the parents in the adolescent, the modern complex city life and conditions have much for which to answer.

TABLE VI.

Charges Against Delinquent Girls.

Offense.	Nos.	Per Cent.
Being lewd and dissolute.....	114	63.0+
Incorrigible	49	27.3+
Petty larceny	5	2.7+
Vagrancy	3	1.6+
Burglary	2	1.1+
Disturbing the peace.....	2	1.1+
Unclassified	4	2.2+
Total	179	100.0

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From Table VI it will be seen that the charge of "being lewd and dissolute" among delinquent girls is very prominent. This fact has been found to be paralleled in an interesting way by the results of a study of women offenders.³ This study included the cases of 183 women offenders who were received into the city jail of Los Angeles from March 1, 1914, to April 25, 1914. Of the 163 offenses which were given in the records, 90, or 55 per cent, were for prostitution in one form or another. Hence the high percentage of immorality charges against delinquent girls is paralleled by the fact that among women offenders the same charges are larger in numbers than all other charges combined.

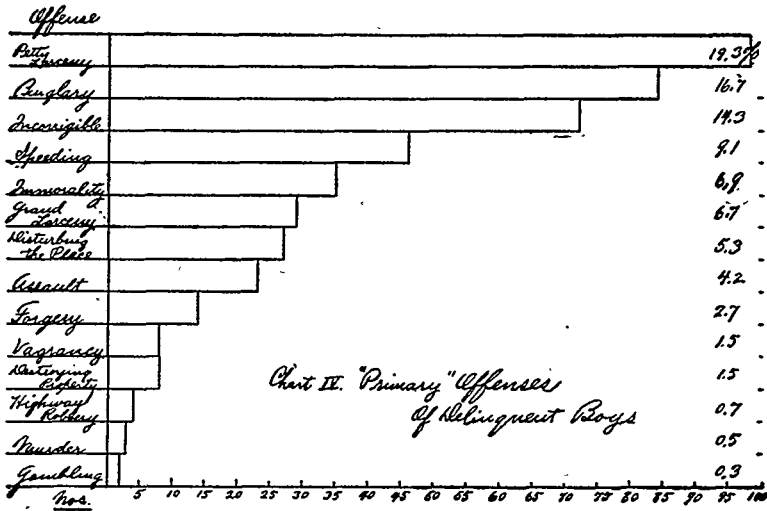
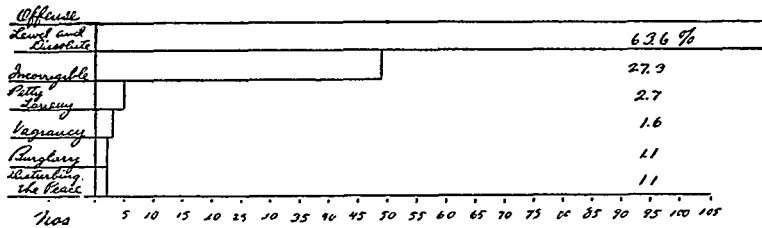


Chart V Primary Offenses of Delinquent Girls



³Made by Miss Alice Bates an advanced student in the Department of Economics and Sociology, The University of Southern California.

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It should be noted, also, that girls cannot escape the results of their acts as readily as boys and that probably there is a higher percentage of immorality among boys than Table IV indicates. A marked percentage of disobedience and incorrigibility is shown in both the boys' and girls' records. There are many modern city conditions which tend to distract the parents' attention from the adolescent and to draw the adolescent away from the influences of parental control at an abnormally early age. Charts IV and V are based on Tables V and VI respectively.

The records concerning the marital condition of the parents of delinquent and dependent boys and girls afford a basis for interesting statistics. Table VII refers to the parents in the delinquency cases.

TABLE VII.

Marital Condition of Parents of Delinquent Boys and Girls.

	Boys.	Pet.	Girls.	Pet.	Total.	Pet.
Parents living together....	262	52.1+	63	35.1+	325	47.7+
Father dead	50	9.9+	18	10.0+	68	9.9+
Father away	24	4.7+	10	5.5+	34	4.9+
Both parents dead.....	22	4.4+	7	3.9+	29	4.2+
Both parents away.....	12	2.3+	8	4.4+	20	2.9+
Mother dead	22	4.4+	14	7.8+	36	5.2+
Parents separated	12	2.3+	9	5.0+	21	3.0+
Parents divorced	11	2.1+	6	3.3+	17	2.4+
Step-father	14	2.7+	7	3.9+	21	3.0+
Step-mother	5	0.9+	3	1.6+	8	1.1+
Unclassified	68	13.5+	34	18.9+	102	14.9+
Totals	502	100.0	179	100.0	681	100.0

It will be seen from Table VII that 325 delinquents, or 47.7 per cent, came from homes in which the parents were living together. Many of the charges, especially in the girl's cases, were preferred by the parents. Hence it will appear that in 47.7 per cent of the cases the home life was not of a successful order. On the other hand, 52.2 per cent of the delinquents came from homes where the parents are not living together. This fact implies that a broken-up home is a definite factor in juvenile delinquency. In only 35.3 per cent of the cases of delinquent girls were the parents reported as living together. Since broken-up homes were more frequent in the case of delinquent girls than in the case of delinquent boys, it may be inferred that a broken-up home signifies even a greater danger for girls than for boys.

Table VIII gives the marital conditions, objectively considered,

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of the parents in juvenile dependency cases. Chart VI is based on Tables VII and VIII.

TABLE VIII.

Marital Condition of Parents of Dependent Boys and Girls.

	Boys.	Pct.	Girls.	Pct.	Total.	Pct.
Parents living together....	60	28.1+	46	22.5+	106	23.0+
Parents separated	41	19.2+	42	20.5+	83	19.9+
Never married	17	7.9+	31	15.1+	48	11.5+
Parents divorced	15	7.0+	12	5.8+	27	6.4+
Mother dead	15	7.0+	19	9.3+	34	8.1+
Father dead	14	6.5+	14	6.8+	28	6.7+
Father away	9	4.2+	10	4.9+	19	4.5+
Both parents away.....	9	4.2+	..	..	9	2.1+
Both parents dead.....	8	3.7+	8	3.9+	16	3.3+
Step-mother	3	1.4+	3	1.4+	6	1.4+
Step-father	2	0.9+	4	1.9+	6	1.4+
Unclassified	20	9.3+	15	7.3+	35	8.3+
Totals	213	100.0	204	100.0	417	100.0

In only 106 cases, or 23.0 per cent, of the 417 dependent cases were the parents found to be living together. It would seem that a broken-up home is even a greater factor in juvenile dependency than in the delinquency cases. In this table the item "parents never married" stands high with its accompanying implications of illegitimacy and child abandonment. In both Tables VII and VIII the item "father living, but away" figures noticeably, but, on the other hand, in both groups of figures the item "mother living, but away" is almost negligible.

The study of the Los Angeles Juvenile Court records for the year 1912 implies the existence of other interesting and valuable facts. Data, however, for the other implied facts are not to be found in the records in a high enough percentage of cases to justify the drawing of conclusions.

Chart II. Marital Condition of Parents

