

JUVENILE OFFENDERS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA 1972-1973

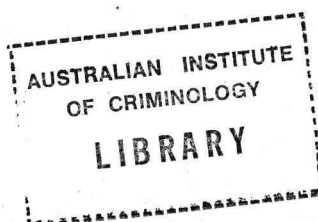
A SOCIOLOGICAL PILOT STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

A sociological background study of Juvenile Offenders was undertaken in South Australia during the period 1st July, 1972 to 30th June, 1973. Similar studies are being undertaken in Victoria and Queensland, and these together form a pilot for a proposed nation-wide survey into the sociological background of the Juvenile Offender. The project is being sponsored by the Criminology Research Council under Research Grant 17 of 1973.

The South Australian study was limited to those cases in which a Social Background Report (.D.C.W. Form 566 - See Appendix 1) was prepared. This Report is prepared by a Community Welfare Worker and contains questions relating to occupational status of both offender and parents, educational level, ethnic background, family stability and personal health. The nature of the offence and the result of the appearance in a Juvenile Court or before a Juvenile Aid Panel were provided by a Departmental Officer. The information so obtained on each juvenile was coded into a form which could then be included in a computerised statistical output of all offenders for the desired period.

Separate tables were obtained for male and female offenders and for Juvenile Court and Juvenile Aid Panel appearances. However, because of the non-statutory nature of the Social Background Report, a considerable volume of information remained unknown, and it was not possible to analyse the above categories separately.

Using the computerised output, the following factors were investigated :

1. Socio-economic status of the offender, as measured by -

- (a) Occupation and Income of Parents
 - (b) Occupation and Income of Offender, if not a student
 - (c) Size of Family
2. Relationship of socio-economic factors to the result of the appearance in Juvenile Court or before a Juvenile Aid Panel
3. Mobility of offender as measured by -
- (a) Number of schools attended
 - (b) Number of previous jobs
4. Educational level of offender, taking into account number of years at school and degree of truancy
5. Family stability and relationship to re-offending -
- (a) Marital status of mother and father
 - (b) Person with whom child is living
 - (c) Position of child in family
6. (a) Ethnic origin of the offender and his parents
- (b) Period of residence in Australia, if not Australian-born

No attempt has been made to investigate factors outside these terms of reference, but recommendations were made to include other factors in the event of the major study.

In addition, First Offenders were compared with Re-offenders. First Offenders were defined as having only one record of appearance in a Juvenile Court or before a Juvenile Aid Panel, whilst Re-Offenders were defined as having two or more records of appearance. Problems arose when defining these terms for offenders who had records of appearance before both Juvenile Courts and Juvenile Aid Panels. These offenders were counted twice in the output, once as offenders appearing in Juvenile Courts and a second time as offenders appearing before Juvenile Aid Panels. There are approximately 50 children in this category, 1.4% of the sample.

Where possible, the results were compared with population figures obtained from the 1971 Census data on South Australia. This merely provided a crude statistical comparison. It would have been more desirable to compare the characteristics of the offending group with those of a control group of randomly selected juvenile non-offenders. Such a comparison was not possible in this survey because a control group was not within the terms of reference. In the event of the major study, it is strongly recommended that a control group be included.

RESULTS

There were 3,495 Juvenile Offenders with Social Background Reports out of a total of 4,978 offenders (70.2%) during the period 1st July, 1972 to 30th June, 1973, 22.1% of whom were girls and 70.9% boys (see Table 1.1). This constitutes 2.9% of the male juvenile population and 0.9% of the female juvenile population during that period. 77.2% of this number were First Offenders and 22.8% were Re-offenders. 44.6% appeared in Juvenile Courts and 55.4% appeared before Juvenile Aid Panels.

Social Background Reports were not obtained in the case of minor offences such as; disorderly behaviour, hindering police, resisting arrest, under-age drinking, unlawfully on premises, unregistered firearms and minor traffic offences.

Table 1.1
NUMBER OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS : 1972-1973

| Place of Appearance | Sex | First Offenders | Re-offenders | Total |
|---------------------|-------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Juvenile Court | Girls | 211 | 87 | 298 |
| | Boys | 619 | 643 | 1262 |
| Juvenile Aid Panel | Girls | 466 | 8 | 474 |
| | Boys | 1402 | 59 | 1461 |
| | TOTAL | 2698 (77.2%) | 797 (22.8%) | 3495 (100%) |

1. Socio-economic Status of Offender

(a) Occupation and Income of Parents :

Occupational status was classified into 3 categories - high medium and low, and incomes were grouped into below average, average and above average. An explanation of these categories and others discussed in the results is given in Appendix 2.

62.6% of the fathers of all offenders occupy low status jobs (see Table 1.2). This is comparable to the percentage of males with low status jobs in South Australia (62.8%), (Table 1.3). However, in the community, 32.4% of male occupations can be classified as being high or medium status.

yet of fathers of offenders, only 22.5% are so classified, a difference of 9.9%.

The Chi-square 2 x n test was used to compare the characteristics of First Offenders with those of Re-offenders. When applied, the results are given at the bottom of the table.

First Offenders and Re-offenders differ significantly with respect to the occupational status of their fathers.

Fathers of Re-offenders are under-represented in higher status jobs by 8.4%, but equally represented in low status jobs.

Table 1.2
OCCUPATIONS OF FATHERS OF OFFENDERS

| Status of Job | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % | Total | % |
|---------------|-----------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| High | 286 | 24.4 | 64 | 16.0 | 350 | 22.5 |
| Medium | 371 | | 64 | | 435 | |
| Low | 1692 | 62.7 | 497 | 62.4 | 2189 | 62.6 |
| Unemployed | 35 | 1.3 | 23 | 2.9 | 58 | 1.7 |
| Unknown | 314 | 11.6 | 149 | 18.7 | 463 | 13.2 |
| TOTAL | 2698 | 100 | 797 | 100 | 3495 | 100 |

Chi-square = 27.3 on 3 degrees of freedom (d.f.)

Significant at .01% level

Table 1.3
1971 CENSUS DATA ON OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

| Occupational Status | Males | % | Females | % | Total | % |
|------------------------|---------|------|---------|------|-----------|------|
| High | 54,807 | 32.4 | 26,619 | 21.8 | 81,426 | 26.5 |
| Medium | 52,092 | | 64,242 | | 116,334 | |
| Low | 207,451 | 62.8 | 55,168 | 13.3 | 262,619 | 35.2 |
| Unemployed | 4,682 | 1.4 | 3,673 | 0.9 | 8,355 | 1.1 |
| Household | - | - | 260,271 | 62.6 | 260,271 | 34.9 |
| Inadequately described | 11,132 | 3.4 | 6,057 | 1.4 | 17,189 | 2.3 |
| TOTAL | 330,164 | 100 | 416,030 | 100 | 746,194 | 100 |
| Students | 146,265 | | 134,195 | | 280,460 | |
| TOTAL | 586,051 | | 587,656 | | 1,173,707 | |

Since the provision of information for the Social Background Report is not obligatory, there are a considerable number of unknown values in the data (father's occupation is unknown in 13.2% of all cases). This may act as a source of bias in the analysis since the distribution of these non-responses across the socio-economic scale is itself unknown. A cut-off point of 25% was used, whereby any tables containing more than this number of unknowns were rejected.

Whereas 62.6% of the adult female population of South Australia are reported as being engaged in household duties, only 55.9% of the mothers of offenders are so classified, a difference of 6.7% (see Table 1.4). Similarly, the mothers of First Offenders are more likely to be at home than are the mothers of Re-offenders, the difference here is 11.2%.

Of females within the workforce, the mothers of offenders are over-represented in low status and under-represented in high status jobs by 6.6% and 3.9% respectively. This effect is also seen when comparing mothers of Re-offenders and mothers of First Offenders (8.5% and 2.9% respectively). In the case of single parent families, re-offending also appears to be related to the holding of relatively low status positions by the parent (see Table 1.5).

Table 1.4
OCCUPATIONS OF MOTHERS OF OFFENDERS

| Occupational Status | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % | Total | % |
|---------------------|-----------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| High | 150) | 18.6 | 31) | 15.7 | 181) | 17.9 |
| Medium | 351 | | 94 | | 445 | |
| Low | 485 | 18.0 | 211 | 26.5 | 696 | 19.9 |
| Household | 1578 | 58.5 | 377 | 47.3 | 1955 | 55.9 |
| Unknown | 134 | 4.9 | 84 | 10.5 | 218 | 6.3 |
| TOTAL | 2698 | 100 | 797 | 100 | 3495 | 100 |

Chi-square = 39.4 on 3 d.f.

Significant at .01% level

Table 1.5

OCCUPATIONS OF SINGLE PARENTS OF OFFENDERS

| Occupational Status | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % | Total | % |
|---------------------|-----------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| High | 24 | 6.1 | 4 | 2.4 | 28 | 5.0 |
| Medium | 43 | 11.0 | 15 | 9.0 | 58 | 10.4 |
| Low | 195 | 49.7 | 112 | 67.1 | 307 | 54.9 |
| Household | 97 | 24.8 | 33 | 19.7 | 130 | 23.3 |
| Unknown | 33 | 8.4 | 3 | 1.8 | 36 | 6.4 |
| TOTAL | 392 | 100 | 167 | 100 | 559 | 100 |

Chi-square = 10.5 on 3 d.f.

Significant at .05% level

There were too many unknown incomes to permit statistical analysis of income characteristics of offenders' parents, however, it seems that a high percentage of known incomes are below average and this is in keeping with the high proportion of low status jobs held by the group (see Table 1.6).

Table 1.6

INCOMES OF PARENTS OF OFFENDERS

| | Incomes | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % |
|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|------|--------------|------|
| <u>Fathers</u> | Below Average | 474 | 17.6 | 343 | 43.1 |
| | Average | 143 | 5.3 | 79 | 9.9 |
| | Above Average | 68 | 2.5 | 21 | 2.6 |
| | Unknown | 2013 | 74.6 | 354 | 44.4 |
| | TOTAL | 2698 | 100 | 797 | 100 |
| <u>Mothers</u> | Below Average | 1708 | 63.3 | 590 | 74.0 |
| | Average | 13 | 0.5 | 2 | 0.3 |
| | Above Average | - | - | 1 | 0.1 |
| | Unknown | 977 | 36.2 | 204 | 25.6 |
| | TOTAL | 2698 | 100 | 797 | 100 |
| <u>Single Parents</u> | Below Average | 185 | 47.2 | 102 | 61.1 |
| | Average | 11 | 2.8 | 8 | 4.8 |
| | Above Average | 7 | 1.8 | 3 | 1.8 |
| | Unknown | 189 | 48.2 | 54 | 32.3 |
| | TOTAL | 392 | 100 | 167 | 100 |

In summary, it can be seen that parents of offenders and in particular, of Re-offenders tend to be over-represented in low status jobs and under-represented in high status jobs by comparison to general population standards.

Similarly, the mothers of offenders and particularly of Re-offenders, tend to be in the workforce to a greater extent than do women generally. It is stressed however, that a more statistically valid comparison would be parents of non-delinquent children, rather than total population characteristics.

(b) Occupations and Incomes of Offenders

Whereas 69.3% of all offenders are students (see Table 1.7) a significantly large difference emerges when First Offenders are compared with Re-offenders, 79.3% vs 35.3%. In the non-student group, 52.5% of offenders occupy low status jobs and 32% are unemployed, and once again marked differences exist between First Offenders and Re-offenders; the latter are over-represented in the unemployed category by 14.1% and under-represented by 9.9% in the high job status category.

Table 1.7
OCCUPATIONS OF OFFENDERS

| Occupational Status | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % | Total | % |
|---------------------|-----------------|------|--------------|------|--------|------|
| High | 9) | 18.8 | 4) | 8.9 | 13) | 14.1 |
| Medium | 96 | | 42 | | 138 | |
| Low | 308 | 55.2 | 256 | 49.6 | 564 | 52.5 |
| Unemployed | 141 | 25.3 | 203 | 39.4 | 344 | 32.0 |
| Unknown | 4 | 0.7 | 11 | 2.1 | 15 | 1.4 |
| TOTAL | 558 | 100 | 516 | 100 | 1074 | 100 |
| Students | 2140) | 79.3 | 281) | 35.3 | 2421) | 69.3 |
| TOTAL | 2698 | | 797 | | 3495 | |

Chi-square = 36.8 on 3 d.f.

Significant at .01% level

33.4% of working offenders earn \$20 per week or less and 46.4% earn above \$20 per week (see Table 1.8). Comparing First Offenders with Re-offenders, 2.7% more First Offenders earn above \$20 and 12.5% more Re-offenders earn below \$20. Often, when a child is living-in, money is deducted from his wages, so that the recorded income is lower than his actual earnings. A more satisfactory method of recording incomes is being developed.

Table 1.8
INCOME OF WORKING OFFENDERS

| | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % | Total | % |
|----------------|-----------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| \$20 or less | 153 | 27.4 | 106 | 39.9 | 359 | 33.4 |
| More than \$20 | 266 | 47.7 | 232 | 45.0 | 498 | 46.4 |
| Unknown | 139 | 24.9 | 78 | 15.1 | 217 | 20.2 |
| TOTAL | 558 | 100 | 516 | 100 | 1074 | 100 |

Chi-square = 9.7 on 1 d.f.

Significant at .01% level

To summarise, offenders and in particular re-offenders, are more frequently represented in the lower socio-economic groups than in those higher up the scale, as is the case with their parents. In addition, First Offenders are more frequently students and less frequently unemployed than Re-offenders.

(c) Size of Family

The number of children in the families of offenders was compared with corresponding population figures (Table 1.9) and a significant difference was recorded :

- (a) In the overall population, 15.6% of families have only 1 child, however, 2.1% of offenders are only children
- (2) 70.2% of families in the population have 2, 3 or 4 children, whereas 49.2% of offenders belong to families of that size

- (3) 14.2% of families in the population have 5 or more children, whereas 46.4% of offenders belong to families of that size.

Thus the majority of offenders come from large families.

Re-offending is also occurring in large families, as 15.8% more Re-offenders than First Offenders belong to families of 5 or more children.

Table 1.9
SIZE OF FAMILY

Size of family was unknown for 89% of offenders appearing before Juvenile Aid Panels, thus this analysis was restricted to offenders appearing in Juvenile Courts.

| No. of Children in Family | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % | Total | % | Population Data (%) |
|---------------------------|-----------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|---------------------|
| 1 | 19 | 2.3 | 14 | 1.9 | 33 | 2.1 | 15.6 |
| 2 - 4 | 459 | 56.5 | 299 | 41.0 | 768 | 49.2 | 70.2 |
| 5 - 10 | 312 | 39.0 | 378 | 54.8 | 690 | 46.4 | 14.1 |
| 11 or more | 12 | | 22 | | 34 | | 0.1 |
| Unknown | 18 | 2.2 | 17 | 2.3 | 35 | 2.3 | |
| TOTAL | 830 | 100 | 730 | 100 | 1560 | 100 | 100 |

Chi-square = 41.4 on 3 d.f.

Significant at .01% level

2. Relationship of Socio-economic Factors to the Result of the Appearance

The result of the appearance in a Juvenile Court or before a Juvenile Aid Panel was examined in relation to the occupation of the offender and his parents. Sufficient data was available to enable separate analysis of boys and girls, and of Juvenile Court and Juvenile Aid Panel appearances.

Results of Juvenile Court and Juvenile Aid Panel appearances fall into the following categories :

Juvenile Court : Bond

Bond and Supervision

Care and Control (C/C)

C/C with Ancilliary Committal

Dismissed

Fine (see Appendix 2 for the complete list)

Juvenile Aid Panel :

Warning and Counselling
 Undertaking by Child
 Undertaking by Parent
 Undertaking by Child and Parent
 Undertaking by Child & Parent & Supervision
 Warning & Counselling, with Voluntary
 Youth Counselling

2.1 Boys Appearing in Juvenile Courts

Results of appearances are distributed approximately as follows (see Table 2.1):

Bond (15%)

Bond and Supervision, Fine (25% each)

Care and Control, Care and Control with Ancilliary Committal
 and Dismissed (10% each)

Results vary significantly according to the occupational status of the father. The low status group has 3% more Care and Control orders and 7.5% more Ancilliary Committals, whereas the higher status group has 4.5% more Bonds, 5.5% more Fines and 1.6% more Dismissals. This difference is also apparent when the status of the mother's occupation is considered.

In relation to the offender's occupation, Care and Control orders are more prevalent in the unemployed and student groups, the unemployed receiving by far the largest number of Ancilliary Committals. Unlike the statistics on parents, Bonds and Fines were incurred more frequently in the low status group, but Dismissals are again more prevalent in the high status group.

Table 2.1

BOYS APPEARING IN JUVENILE COURTS

a. Father's Occupation

| Result of Appearance | High & Medium | % | Low | % | Total | % |
|--------------------------|---------------|------|-----|------|-------|------|
| Bond | 42 | 17.1 | 122 | 14.9 | 164 | 15.4 |
| Bond and Supervision | 67 | 27.2 | 204 | 24.9 | 271 | 25.4 |
| Care and Control | 16 | 6.5 | 78 | 9.5 | 94 | 8.8 |
| C/C Ancilliary Committal | 11 | 4.5 | 98 | 12.0 | 109 | 10.2 |
| Dismissed | 35 | 14.2 | 103 | 12.6 | 138 | 13.0 |
| Fine | 73 | 29.7 | 198 | 24.2 | 271 | 25.5 |
| Other | 2 | 0.8 | 16 | 1.9 | 18 | 1.7 |
| TOTAL | 246 | 100 | 819 | 100 | 1065 | 100 |

15.6% of occupations unknown

Chi-square = 17.4 on 6 d.f.

Significant at .01% level

b. Mother's Occupation

| Result of Appearance | High & Medium | % | Low | % | Household | % | Total | % |
|--------------------------|---------------|------|-----|------|-----------|------|-------|------|
| Bond | 39 | 18.0 | 48 | 14.6 | 89 | 14.7 | 176 | 15.3 |
| Bond & Supervision | 62 | 28.6 | 84 | 25.5 | 140 | 23.1 | 286 | 24.8 |
| Care & Control | 18 | 8.3 | 30 | 9.1 | 58 | 9.6 | 106 | 9.2 |
| C/C Ancilliary Committal | 9 | 4.2 | 41 | 12.5 | 76 | 12.6 | 126 | 11.0 |
| Dismissed | 27 | 12.4 | 39 | 11.9 | 78 | 12.9 | 144 | 12.5 |
| Fine | 60 | 27.6 | 76 | 23.1 | 156 | 25.8 | 292 | 25.4 |
| Other | 2 | 0.9 | 11 | 3.3 | 8 | 1.3 | 21 | 1.8 |
| TOTAL | 217 | 100 | 329 | 100 | 605 | 100 | 1151 | 100 |

8.8% of occupations unknown

c. Offenders Occupation

| Result of Appearance | High & Medium | % | Low | % | Unemployed | % | Student | % | Total | % |
|--------------------------|---------------|------|-----|------|------------|------|---------|------|-------|------|
| Bond | 7 | 11.7 | 73 | 15.7 | 27 | 12.1 | 79 | 15.7 | 186 | 14.9 |
| Bond & Supervision | 10 | 16.7 | 95 | 20.4 | 49 | 21.9 | 154 | 30.6 | 308 | 24.6 |
| Care & Control | 5 | 8.3 | 17 | 3.7 | 30 | 13.4 | 73 | 14.5 | 125 | 10.0 |
| C/C Ancilliary Committal | - | - | 24 | 5.2 | 59 | 26.3 | 62 | 12.3 | 145 | 11.6 |
| Dismissed | 14 | 23.3 | 49 | 10.5 | 9 | 4.0 | 87 | 17.3 | 159 | 12.7 |
| Fine | 21 | 35.0 | 199 | 42.8 | 44 | 19.6 | 43 | 8.6 | 307 | 24.5 |
| Other | 3 | 5.0 | 8 | 1.7 | 6 | 2.7 | 5 | 1.0 | 22 | 1.7 |
| TOTAL | 60 | 100 | 465 | 100 | 224 | 100 | 503 | 100 | 1252 | 100 |

2.2 Girls Appearing in Juvenile Courts

A similar pattern was observed for girls appearing in Juvenile Courts (see Table 2.2). However, Dismissals are approximately 20% more frequent among girls than boys, and fines are approximately 12% less frequent.

Table 2.2

GIRLS APPEARING IN JUVENILE COURTS

a. Father's Occupation

| Result of Appearance | High & Medium | % | Low | % | Total | % |
|--------------------------|---------------|------|-----|------|-------|------|
| Bond | 9 | 13.4 | 18 | 9.8 | 27 | 10.8 |
| Bond and Supervision | 14 | 20.9 | 42 | 22.8 | 56 | 22.3 |
| Care and Control | 1 | 1.5 | 32 | 17.4 | 33 | 13.1 |
| C/C Ancilliary Committal | 4 | 6.0 | 19 | 10.3 | 23 | 9.2 |
| Dismissed | 30 | 44.8 | 46 | 25.0 | 76 | 30.3 |
| Fine | 9 | 13.4 | 25 | 13.6 | 34 | 13.5 |
| Other | - | - | 2 | 1.1 | 2 | 0.8 |
| TOTAL | 67 | 100 | 184 | 100 | 251 | 100 |

15.8% of occupations unknown

Chi-square = 17.4 on 5 d.f.

Significant at .01% level

b. Mother's Occupation

| Result of Appearance | High & Medium | % | Low | % | Household | % | Total | % |
|--------------------------|---------------|------|-----|------|-----------|------|-------|------|
| Bond | 3 | 6.7 | 10 | 12.2 | 17 | 11.7 | 30 | 11.0 |
| Bond and Supervision | 14 | 31.1 | 16 | 19.5 | 29 | 20.0 | 59 | 21.7 |
| Care and Control | 7 | 15.5 | 11 | 13.4 | 21 | 14.5 | 39 | 14.3 |
| C/C Ancilliary Committal | - | - | 14 | 17.1 | 9 | 6.2 | 23 | 8.5 |
| Dismissed | 13 | 28.9 | 20 | 24.4 | 48 | 33.1 | 81 | 29.8 |
| Fine | 8 | 17.8 | 11 | 13.4 | 19 | 13.1 | 38 | 14.0 |
| Other | - | - | - | - | 2 | 1.4 | 2 | 0.7 |
| TOTAL | 45 | 100 | 82 | 100 | 145 | 100 | 272 | 100 |

8.7% of occupations unknown

c. Offender's Occupation

| Result of Appearance | High & Medium | % | Low | % | Unem- ployed | % | Student | % | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|---------------|------|-----|------|-----------------|------|---------|------|-------|------|
| Bond | 3 | 4.9 | 4 | 13.8 | 13 | 15.1 | 14 | 11.5 | 34 | 11.4 |
| Bond & Super- vision | 13 | 21.3 | 6 | 20.7 | 20 | 23.3 | 24 | 19.7 | 63 | 21.1 |
| Care & Control | 4 | 6.6 | 3 | 10.3 | 12 | 14.0 | 24 | 19.7 | 43 | 14.4 |
| C/C Ancilliary Committal | 3 | 4.9 | 1 | 3.5 | 16 | 18.6 | 10 | 8.2 | 30 | 10.1 |
| Dismissed | 22 | 36.1 | 6 | 20.7 | 16 | 18.6 | 42 | 34.4 | 86 | 28.9 |
| Fine | 15 | 24.6 | 9 | 31.0 | 8 | 9.3 | 8 | 6.5 | 40 | 13.4 |
| Other | 1 | 1.6 | - | - | 1 | 1.1 | - | - | 2 | 0.7 |
| TOTAL | 61 | 100 | 29 | 100 | 86 | 100 | 122 | 100 | 298 | 100 |

No unknown occupations

2.3 Boys Appearing before Juvenile Aid Panels

Results of Juvenile Aid Panel appearances (for both boys and girls) are distributed approximately as follows (see Table 2.3) :

Warning and Counselling (80%)

Undertaking by Child (15%)

Undertaking by Parent, Undertaking by Child & Parent (with or without supervision), Warning and Counselling - Voluntary Youth Counselling (total of 5%)

More frequent Undertaking by Child and less frequent Warning and Counselling was observed in the lower status and unemployed groups than in higher status groups, but this difference was not significant.

Table 2.3

BOYS APPEARING BEFORE JUVENILE AID PANELS

a. Father's Occupation

| Result of Appearance | High & Medium | % | Low | % | Total | % |
|---|---------------|------|-----|------|-------|------|
| Warning & Counselling | 300 | 84.5 | 766 | 79.7 | 1066 | 81.0 |
| Undertaking - Child | 38 | 10.7 | 150 | 15.6 | 188 | 14.3 |
| Undertaking - Parent | 4 | 1.1 | 7 | 0.7 | 11 | 0.8 |
| Undertaking-Child-Parent | 7 | 2.0 | 20 | 2.1 | 27 | 2.1 |
| Undertaking-Child-Parent and Supervision | 1 | 0.3 | 2 | 0.2 | 3 | 0.2 |
| W & C - VYC | 5 | 1.4 | 16 | 1.7 | 21 | 1.6 |
| TOTAL | 355 | 100 | 961 | 100 | 1316 | 100 |

9.9% of occupations unknown

Chi-square = 5.7 on 4 d.f.

Not significant at .05% level

b. Mother's Occupation

| Result of Appearance | High & Medium | % | Low | % | Household | % | Total | % |
|--|---------------|------|-----|------|-----------|------|-------|------|
| Warning & Counselling | 214 | 83.6 | 153 | 77.7 | 763 | 80.0 | 1130 | 80.3 |
| Undertaking-Child | 30 | 11.7 | 35 | 17.8 | 144 | 15.1 | 209 | 14.8 |
| Undertaking-Parent | 3 | 1.2 | - | - | 8 | 0.8 | 11 | 0.8 |
| Undertaking-Child-Parent | 1 | 0.4 | 7 | 3.5 | 24 | 2.5 | 32 | 2.3 |
| Undertaking-Child-Parent and Supervision | - | - | - | - | 3 | 0.3 | 3 | 0.2 |
| W & C - VYC | 8 | 3.1 | 2 | 1.0 | 13 | 1.3 | 23 | 1.6 |
| TOTAL | 256 | 100 | 197 | 100 | 955 | 100 | 1408 | 100 |

3.6% of occupations unknown

c. Offender's Occupation

| Result of Appearance | High & Medium | % | Low | % | Unemployed | % | Student | % | Total | % |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|------|-----|------|------------|------|---------|------|-------|------|
| Warning & Counselling | 9 | 81.8 | 51 | 81.0 | 15 | 75.0 | 1089 | 79.7 | 1164 | 79.7 |
| Undertaking-Child | 2 | 18.2 | 12 | 19.0 | 5 | 25.0 | 204 | 14.9 | 223 | 15.3 |
| Undertaking-Parent | - | - | - | - | - | - | 13 | 1.0 | 13 | 0.9 |
| Undertaking-Child-Parent | - | - | - | - | - | - | 33 | 2.4 | 33 | 2.2 |
| Undertaking-Child-Parent-Supervision | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 0.2 | 3 | 0.2 |
| W&C-VYC | - | - | - | - | - | - | 25 | 1.8 | 25 | 1.7 |
| TOTAL | 11 | 100 | 63 | 100 | 20 | 100 | 1367 | 100 | 1461 | 100 |

No unknown occupations

2.4 Girls Appearing before Juvenile Aid Panels

As in the case of boys appearing in Juvenile Courts, results vary significantly according to the occupational status of the father. The low status group received more Undertaking by Child penalties and less Warning and Counselling (see Table 2.4). This is also apparent in relation to the occupation of offenders and their mothers.

Table 2.4

GIRLS APPEARING BEFORE JUVENILE AID PANELS

a. Father's Occupation

| Result of Appearance | High & Medium | % | Low | % | Total | % |
|--|---------------|------|-----|------|-------|------|
| Warning & Counselling | 103 | 88.0 | 216 | 76.3 | 319 | 79.7 |
| Undertaking - Child | 8 | 6.8 | 50 | 17.7 | 58 | 14.5 |
| Undertaking - Parent | 1 | 0.9 | 2 | 0.7 | 3 | 0.8 |
| Undertaking-Child-Parent | 3 | 2.6 | 8 | 2.8 | 11 | 2.7 |
| Undertaking-Child-Parent and Supervision | - | - | 1 | 0.4 | 1 | 0.3 |
| W & C - VYC | 2 | 1.7 | 6 | 2.1 | 8 | 2.0 |
| TOTAL | 117 | 100 | 283 | 100 | 400 | 100 |

15.6% of occupations unknown

Chi-square = 8.0 on 2 d.f.

Significant at .05% level

b. Mother's Occupation

| Result of Appearance | High & Medium | % | Low | % | household | % | Total | % |
|--|---------------|------|-----|------|-----------|------|-------|------|
| Warning & Counselling | 90 | 83.4 | 68 | 77.3 | 196 | 78.4 | 354 | 79.4 |
| Undertaking - Child | 9 | 8.3 | 14 | 15.9 | 39 | 15.6 | 62 | 13.9 |
| Undertaking - Parent | - | - | - | - | 3 | 1.2 | 3 | 0.7 |
| Undertaking-Child-Parent | 4 | 3.7 | 4 | 4.6 | 7 | 2.8 | 15 | 3.4 |
| Undertaking-Child-Parent and Supervision | 1 | 0.9 | - | - | 1 | 0.4 | 2 | 0.5 |
| W & C - VYC | 4 | 3.7 | 2 | 2.2 | 4 | 1.6 | 10 | 2.2 |
| TOTAL | 108 | 100 | 88 | 100 | 250 | 100 | 446 | 100 |

5.9% of occupations unknown

c. Offender's Occupation

| Result of Appearance | High & Medium | % | Low | % | Unemployed | % | Student | % | Total | % |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|------|-----|------|------------|------|---------|------|-------|------|
| Warning & Counselling | 11 | 84.6 | 6 | 60.0 | 10 | 71.5 | 343 | 78.5 | 370 | 78.1 |
| Undertaking-Child | 2 | 15.4 | 3 | 30.0 | 2 | 14.3 | 66 | 15.1 | 73 | 15.4 |
| Undertaking-Parent | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 0.9 | 4 | 0.8 |
| Undertaking-Child-Parent | - | - | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 7.1 | 13 | 3.0 | 15 | 3.2 |
| Undertaking-Child-Parent-Supervision | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 0.5 | 2 | 0.4 |
| W&C - VYC | - | - | - | - | 1 | 7.1 | 9 | 2.0 | 10 | 2.1 |
| TOTAL | 13 | 100 | 10 | 100 | 14 | 100 | 437 | 100 | 474 | 100 |

No unknown occupations

In summary, it appears that offenders from low socio-economic backgrounds receive harsher penalties than those from families higher up in the socio-economic scale. This does not necessarily imply that Juvenile Courts and Juvenile Aid Panels are discriminating between offenders since other factors could be responsible for the apparent difference. One possibility is the choice to invoke legal representation which might be reasonably argued to be a characteristic response of the upper end of the socio-economic scale. Another possibility is that the behaviour for which the offender is being charged varies in seriousness according to his background. In short, the low status offender may receive the harsher penalty because he has committed the more serious anti-social act and/or has declined legal representation. Neither of these possibilities have been investigated in this study and it is recommended that they form a part of the major study.

3. Mobility of Offenders

There is a significant degree of mobility among offenders as measured by the number of schools attended and the number of previous jobs. This is more marked in the Re-offending group.

(a) Number of Schools Attended :

76.7% of offenders have reached secondary school, and the majority of these would have attended at least 2 schools. However, 28.4% have attended 3 schools and 31.5% (almost a third) have attended 4 or more schools (see Table 3.1), indicating a significant degree of mobility among offenders. This is more marked among Re-offenders than First Offenders, since 6.8% more of the former have attended 3 or more schools.

Table 3.1

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ATTENDED

Number of schools attended was unknown for 96.7% of offenders appearing before Juvenile Aid Panels, thus this analysis was restricted to offenders appearing in Juvenile Courts.

| No. of Schools Attended | First Offenders | % | Re-Offenders | % | Total | % |
|-------------------------|-----------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| 1 | 34 | 4.1 | 18 | 2.5 | 52 | 3.3 |
| 2 | 278 | 33.5 | 203 | 27.8 | 481 | 30.8 |
| 3 | 222 | 26.8 | 221 | 30.3 | 443 | 28.4 |
| 4, 5 or 6 | 214 | 25.8 | 202 | 27.7 | 416 | 31.5 |
| 7+ | 35 | 4.2 | 41 | 5.6 | 76 | |
| Unknown | 47 | 5.6 | 45 | 6.1 | 92 | 6.0 |
| TOTAL | 830 | 100 | 730 | 100 | 1560 | 100 |

Chi-square = 10.9 on 4 d.f.

Significant at .05% level

(b) Number of Previous Jobs :

69.3% of all offenders are students. In the non-student group, 27.6% have had 2, 3 or 4 jobs and 14.2% have had 5 or more jobs (see Table 3.2). 32% of this non-student group are unemployed.

Table 3.2

NUMBER OF PREVIOUS JOBS

| | All Offenders | % |
|-----------|---------------|------|
| 0 | 285 | 26.5 |
| 1 | 195 | 18.2 |
| 2, 3 or 4 | 296 | 27.6 |
| 5 or more | 152 | 14.2 |
| Unknown | 146 | 13.5 |
| TOTAL | 1074 | 100 |
| Students | 2421 | 69.3 |
| TOTAL | 3495 | |

Within the non-student group, 344 (32%) are unemployed.

Chi-square = 63.2 on 3 d.f.

Significant at .01% level

4. Educational Level of Offenders

(a) Number of years at School :

The level of schooling reached by all offenders was a very significant factor. (F-ratio, using a two-way class Analysis of Variance, was 9.0, significant at .01% level). Approximately two-thirds (68.2%) reached lower secondary grades, viz., 1st, 2nd or 3rd years (see Table 4.1). The next largest group is upper primary (Grades 5, 6 or 7), (18.3%) followed by upper secondary (4th or 5th years), (8.5%).

There was no significant difference in the educational level reached by the 4 groups of offenders; boys appearing in Juvenile Courts, girls appearing in Juvenile Courts, boys appearing before Juvenile Aid Panels and girls appearing before Juvenile Aid Panels (F-ratio was 2.3, not significant at .05% level).

Table 4.1

| LEVEL OF EDUCATION | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|------|--------------------|------|---------------|------|
| Educational Level | Juvenile Court | | Juvenile Aid Panel | | All Offenders | % |
| | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | | |
| Special School | 4 | 35 | - | 14 | 53 | 1.5 |
| Lower Primary | 1 | 15 | 18 | 61 | 95 | 2.7 |
| Upper Primary | 24 | 127 | 77 | 412 | 640 | 18.3 |
| Lower Secondary | 209 | 888 | 359 | 928 | 2384 | 68.2 |
| Upper Secondary | 57 | 184 | 18 | 37 | 296 | 8.5 |
| Tertiary | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - |
| Unknown | 3 | 12 | 2 | 9 | 26 | 0.8 |
| TOTAL | 298 | 1262 | 474 | 1461 | 3495 | 100 |

(b) Degree of Truancy :

Truancy occurred frequently among student offenders, more so in the case of Re-offenders. 65.8% of Re-offenders truanted compared to 17.7% of First Offenders, a large difference of 48.1% (see Table 4.2). Truancy was also considerably more frequent among offenders appearing in Juvenile Courts than among those

appearing before Juvenile Aid Panels, particularly so for Re-offenders.

Table 4.2

TRUANCY

| Place of Appearance | Sex | First Offenders | | | Re-Offenders | | | Total | | |
|---------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|------|----------------|-----------------|------|----------------|-----------------|------|
| | | No. of Truants | No. of Students | % | No. of Truants | No. of Students | % | No. of Truants | No. of Students | % |
| Juvenile Court | Girls | 27 | 94 | 28.7 | 22 | 28 | 78.6 | 49 | 122 | 40.2 |
| | Boys | 94 | 304 | 30.9 | 156 | 191 | 81.7 | 250 | 495 | 50.5 |
| Juvenile Aid Panel | Girls | 73 | 429 | 17.0 | - | 8 | - | 73 | 437 | 16.7 |
| | Boys | 185 | 1313 | 14.1 | 7 | 54 | 11.9 | 192 | 1367 | 14.1 |
| TOTAL | | 379 | 2140 | 17.7 | 185 | 281 | 65.8 | 564 | 2421 | 23.3 |

5. Family Stability and Relation to Re-offending(a) Marital Status of Mother and Father :

77.6% of fathers and 78.1% of mothers of offenders are married (see Table 5.1). The percentage of separated fathers and mothers are 9.1% and 9.0% respectively. Only a small percentage are single, divorced, widowed, deceased or defacto. The marital status of the parents of First Offenders varies considerably from that of the parents of Re-offenders. A much smaller proportion of the latter are married (the difference is 16.3% in the case of fathers and 15.5% for mothers). However, Re-offenders are over-represented in all of the other categories, more noticeably in the cases of separated parents (by 4.8% for fathers and by 4.4% for mothers), deceased parents (by 2.5% for fathers and by 2.7% for mothers), and divorced parents (by 2.6% for fathers and by 2.4% for mothers).

Table 5.2
MARITAL STATUS OF PARENTS

a. Father

| | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % | Total | % |
|-------------------|--------------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| Single | 6 | 0.2 | 10 | 1.3 | 16 | 0.5 |
| Married | 2194 | 81.3 | 518 | 65.0 | 2712 | 77.6 |
| Married/Separated | 215 | 8.0 | 102 | 12.8 | 317 | 9.1 |
| Divorced | 90 | 3.3 | 47 | 5.9 | 137 | 3.9 |
| Widowed | 37 | 1.4 | 28 | 3.5 | 65 | 1.9 |
| Defacto | 14 | 0.5 | 25 | 3.1 | 39 | 1.1 |
| Deceased | 129 | 4.8 | 58 | 7.3 | 187 | 5.3 |
| Unknown | 13 | 0.5 | 9 | 1.1 | 22 | 0.6 |
| TOTAL | 2698 | 100 | 797 | 100 | 3495 | 100 |

Chi-square = 122.1 on 6 d.f.

Highly significant

b. Mother

| | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % | Total | % |
|-------------------|--------------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| Single | 6 | 0.2 | 2 | 0.3 | 8 | 0.2 |
| Married | 2201 | 81.6 | 527 | 66.1 | 2728 | 78.1 |
| Married/Separated | 217 | 8.0 | 99 | 12.4 | 316 | 9.0 |
| Divorced | 89 | 3.3 | 45 | 5.7 | 134 | 3.8 |
| Widowed | 117 | 4.3 | 53 | 6.6 | 170 | 4.9 |
| Defacto | 18 | 0.7 | 30 | 3.7 | 48 | 1.4 |
| Deceased | 42 | 1.6 | 34 | 4.3 | 76 | 2.2 |
| Unknown | 8 | 0.3 | 7 | 0.9 | 15 | 0.4 |
| TOTAL | 2698 | 100 | 797 | 100 | 3495 | 100 |

Chi-square = 111.6 on 6 d.f.

Highly significant

(b) Person with whom Child is Living :

66.6% of offenders live with both of their natural parents, (see Table 5.2), although 78% of parents are married, a difference of 11.4%. The next largest group live with a single parent (16.0%). 14.3% live with a parent and step-parent, parent and defacto, foster parents, relatives or independently. Highly significant differences exist between First Offenders and Re-offenders. 27.2% more of the former live with both natural parents, whereas the latter are over-

represented in all of the other categories, more noticeably in the one parent (by 6.5%), independent (by 8.0%), institution (by 5.6%) and relatives (by 3.1%) categories.

Table 5.2

PERSON WITH WHOM OFFENDER IS LIVING

| | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % | Total | % |
|----------------------|-----------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| Natural Parents | 1964 | 72.8 | 363 | 45.6 | 2327 | 66.6 |
| Parent & Step-parent | 83 | 3.1 | 29 | 3.6 | 112 | 3.2 |
| Parent & Defacto | 28 | 1.0 | 13 | 1.6 | 41 | 1.2 |
| One Parent | 392 | 14.5 | 167 | 21.0 | 559 | 16.0 |
| Foster Parents | 16 | 0.6 | 17 | 2.1 | 33 | 0.9 |
| Relatives | 72 | 2.7 | 46 | 5.8 | 118 | 3.4 |
| Independent | 103 | 3.8 | 94 | 11.8 | 197 | 5.6 |
| Institution | 11 | 0.4 | 48 | 6.0 | 59 | 1.7 |
| No Fixed Abode | 29 | 1.1 | 18 | 2.3 | 47 | 1.3 |
| Unknown | -- | -- | 2 | 0.2 | 2 | 0.1 |
| TOTAL | 2693 | 100 | 797 | 100 | 3495 | 100 |

Chi-square = 349.5 on 8 d.f.

Highly significant (.01% level)

(c) Position of Child in Family :

By far the largest group of offenders (51.2%) are middle children, that is, have both younger and older siblings (see Table 5.3) (of these, only 12.7% are the second of 3 children). A very small percentage are only children (2.1%) and approximately equal numbers are first or eldest children (22%). Without comparing these figures to those of the population, one cannot make valid predictions from the data. Re-offenders are more frequently middle children (difference of 10%) and less frequently first children (difference of 8.2%) than First Offenders.

Table 5.3

POSITION IN FAMILY

Position in family was unknown for 89.2% of offenders appearing before Juvenile Aid Panels, thus this analysis was restricted to offenders appearing in Juvenile Courts.

| | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % | Total | % |
|--------------|--------------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| Only child | 19 | 2.3 | 14 | 1.9 | 33 | 2.1 |
| 1st Child | 214 | 25.7 | 128 | 17.5 | 342 | 21.9 |
| Middle Child | 386 | 46.5 | 412 | 56.5 | 798 | 51.2 |
| Eldest Child | 193 | 23.3 | 156 | 21.4 | 349 | 22.4 |
| Unknown | 18 | 2.2 | 20 | 2.7 | 38 | 2.4 |
| TOTAL | 830 | 100 | 730 | 100 | 1560 | 100 |

Chi-square = 20.4 on 3 d.f.

Significant at .01% level

In summary, almost 80% of offenders' parents are married, however, the chances of this are lower in the case of the Re-offender who is more likely to have come from a home broken by separation, divorce or death. Two-thirds of all offenders live with their natural parents, however, this is much less likely in the case of the Re-offender. Most offenders have both older and younger siblings, yet Re-offenders are noticeably less likely to be first children. It would follow from our data that the chances of re-offending increase when a child comes from a broken home, lives away from home, comes from a large family or is not the first born.

6. (a) Ethnic origin :

52% of fathers and 54.8% of mothers of offenders are Australian (see Table 6.1). The next largest group comes from the United Kingdom (21.4% of fathers and 21.2% of mothers), followed by Europeans (16.3% of fathers and 14.6% of mothers). There are small numbers of parents of

Aboriginal, Asian or other origins. 78.7% of offenders are Australian-born (20% more than the corresponding figure for their parents), 14.6% are from the United Kingdom (6% less than for parents) and 5% are from Europe (10% less than for parents), (see Table 6.2). As expected, ethnic origins of the population resembles more closely that of offenders than of their parents. (see Table 6.3).

Table 6.1

ETHNIC ORIGIN OF PARENTS OF OFFENDERS

a. Father

| | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % | Total | % |
|----------------------|-----------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| Aboriginal | 92 | 3.4 | 78 | 9.8 | 170 | 4.9 |
| Other Australian | 1401 | 51.9 | 415 | 52.1 | 1816 | 52.0 |
| Continental European | 461 | 17.1 | 107 | 13.4 | 568 | 16.3 |
| United Kingdom | 597 | 22.1 | 152 | 19.1 | 749 | 21.4 |
| Asian | 8 | 0.3 | 1 | 0.1 | 9 | 0.2 |
| Other | 21 | 0.8 | 3 | 0.4 | 24 | 0.7 |
| Unknown | 118 | 4.4 | 41 | 5.1 | 159 | 4.5 |
| TOTAL | 2698 | 100 | 797 | 100 | 3495 | 100 |

Chi-square = 61.6 on 5 d.f.

Significant at .01% level

b. Mother

| | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % | Total | % |
|----------------------|-----------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| Aboriginal | 109 | 4.0 | 91 | 11.4 | 200 | 5.7 |
| Other Australian | 1491 | 55.3 | 424 | 53.2 | 1915 | 54.8 |
| Continental European | 410 | 15.2 | 100 | 12.5 | 510 | 14.6 |
| United Kingdom | 594 | 22.0 | 148 | 18.6 | 742 | 21.2 |
| Asian | 11 | 0.4 | 3 | 0.4 | 14 | 0.4 |
| Other | 20 | 0.7 | 3 | 0.4 | 23 | 0.7 |
| Unknown | 63 | 2.4 | 28 | 3.5 | 91 | 2.6 |
| TOTAL | 2698 | 100 | 797 | 100 | 3495 | 100 |

Chi-square = 67.0 on 5 d.f.

Significant at .01% level

Table 6.2

BIRTHPLACE OF OFFENDERS

| | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % | Total | % |
|----------------|--------------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| Australia | 2112 | 78.3 | 637 | 79.9 | 2749 | 78.7 |
| Europe | 138 | 5.1 | 37 | 4.7 | 175 | 5.0 |
| United Kingdom | 400 | 14.8 | 109 | 13.7 | 509 | 14.6 |
| Asia | 9 | 0.3 | 1 | 0.1 | 10 | 0.3 |
| Other | 21 | 0.8 | 5 | 0.6 | 26 | 0.7 |
| Unknown | 18 | 0.7 | 8 | 1.0 | 26 | 0.7 |
| TOTAL | 2698 | 100 | 797 | 100 | 3495 | 100 |

Chi-square = 2.2 on 4 d.f.

Not significant at .05% level

Table 6.3

1971 CENSUS DATA ON ETHNIC ORIGIN
(in percentages)

| | Males | Females | Total |
|----------------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Australian | 75.0 | 77.3 | 76.2 |
| Continental European | 10.5 | 8.8 | 9.6 |
| United Kingdom | 12.8 | 12.4 | 12.6 |
| Other | 1.7 | 1.5 | 1.6 |

The birthplace of First Offenders and Re-offenders is very similar, but it differs significantly for their parents. A larger number of the parents of Re-offenders are Aboriginal and a smaller number are from the United Kingdom or from Europe.

(b) Period of Residence in Australia :

77.3% of offenders born outside Australia have resided in Australia for 5 or more years before offending (see Table 6.4). Only 1.7% have been in Australia for one year or less and 11.1% have been in Australia for 2, 3 or 4 years. First Offenders and Re-offenders do not differ significantly in this respect.

Table 6.4

PERIOD OF RESIDENCE OF OFFENDERS IN AUSTRALIA
(if not Australian-born)

| Years | First Offenders | % | Re-offenders | % | Total | % |
|-----------|--------------------|------|--------------|------|-------|------|
| 1 or less | 12 | 2.1 | 1 | 0.6 | 13 | 1.7 |
| 2 | 30 | 5.1 | 3 | 1.9 | 33 | 11.1 |
| 3 or 4 | 40 | 6.8 | 10 | 6.3 | 50 | |
| 5 or more | 449 | 76.6 | 128 | 80.0 | 577 | 77.3 |
| Unknown | 55 | 9.4 | 18 | 11.2 | 73 | 9.9 |
| TOTAL | 586 | 100 | 160 | 100 | 746 | 100 |

Chi-square = 4.7 on 2 d.f.

Not significant at .05% level

CONCLUSIONS :

The major findings of this survey are summarised below :

1. Offenders and their parents are employed in low status jobs more frequently than is encountered in the population at large. Mothers of offenders tend to be in the workforce to a greater extent than do women generally. Just over two-thirds of offenders are studying and of the rest, one-third are unemployed.
2. Offenders come predominantly from large families. (49% belong to families of 2 - 4 children and 46% belong to families of 5 or more children).
3. Offenders from low socio-economic backgrounds received harsher penalties than those from families higher up in the socio-economic scale. Possible reasons suggested for this are that the low status offender may have committed the more serious anti-social act and/or he has declined legal representation.
4. There is a significant degree of mobility among offenders. Almost a third have attended 4 or more schools, and 42% of the working group have had 2 or more jobs.
5. Just over two-thirds of offenders have reached lower secondary grades and only 8.5% have reached upper secondary schooling.
6. Truancy is common among student offenders, in particular among those appearing in Juvenile Courts.
7. Almost 80% of offenders' parents are married, the rest being separated, divorced, widowed or deceased. Two-thirds of all offenders live with both natural parents, and the rest live with a single parent, parent and step-parent, relatives or independently.
8. Just over half of all offenders are middle children and only 2.1% are only children.

9. Population figures on ethnic origin compare more closely with those of offenders than of their parents. 78.7% of offenders are Australian, 14.6% come from the United Kingdom and 5% are European by birth.
10. The bulk of offenders born outside Australia have resided here for at least 5 years before offending.

The above conclusions are provided as statistical guidelines for further research in the field of juvenile delinquency. As discussed previously, the main limitation of this approach is the absence of a control group of non-offending juveniles. By comparing the characteristics of such a group with those of the offending group, one can assess with greater accuracy, whether offenders are more likely to be found in a low socio-economic environment than are non-offenders. The conclusion that offenders tend to come from a low socio-economic environment is too easily misinterpreted as meaning that low socio-economic environment is a causal factor in delinquency, whereas it may merely be a reflection of the socio-economic status of the population at large.

This survey did however, provide for a meaningful comparison of First Offenders and Re-offenders. The following differences were found to be significant :

- (1) Re-offenders are more frequently employed in low status jobs and less frequently employed in high status jobs than are First Offenders. This also applies to the parents of offenders. The mothers of Re-offenders tend to be in the workforce more frequently than those of First Offenders. In addition, First Offenders are more frequently students, less frequently unemployed and, when employed, earn higher wages than Re-offenders.

- (2) Re-offenders come more frequently from larger families (of 5 or more children) than do First Offenders.
- (3) Re-offenders are more mobile than First Offenders, with regard to number of schools attended.
- (4) Re-offenders truant much more frequently than First Offenders. 66% of the former truanted compared to 18% of the latter.
- (5) There is a larger degree of instability in the families of Re-offenders than in those of First Offenders. The parents of Re-offenders are more frequently divorced, separated or deceased than those of First Offenders.
- (6) Re-offenders live less frequently with both natural parents and are more independent than First Offenders.
- (7) The birthplace of First Offenders and Re-offenders is very similar. However, there is a larger number of Aboriginal parents and a smaller number of European or British parents among Re-offenders than among First Offenders.
- (8) The period of residence in Australia before offending, for juveniles born outside Australia is similar in the cases of Re-offenders and First Offenders.

Thus, lower socio-economic status, larger families, greater degree of mobility, more truancy and greater degree of family instability differentiate Re-offenders from First Offenders.

These results are very similar to those of other studies on Juvenile Delinquents in South Australia. Jamrozik (1971) studied the social and personal characteristics of a sample of 221 offenders under the care of the Department for Community Welfare as at 30th June, 1968. He observed the following :

- (1) The family breadwinner was employed in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations in a high proportion of cases, and unemployed or retired in 13.6% of cases. 39.4% of mothers were working, either full-time or part-time.
- (2) Almost half of the sample belonged to families of 5 or more children and only 5% were only children.
- (3) One-third of the families moved to a new address during the period of the child's supervision.
- (4) 68.4% of offenders had left school. In this non-student group, 47.7% were employed in unskilled jobs.
- (5) There was a history of severe family difficulties in 44.3% of cases, either through illness, marital disharmony, desertion, separation, divorce or death.
- (6) 70.6% of the sample were living at home, and 18.6% were living in a Departmental institution.
- (7) There was a lower percentage of Australian-born parents and a higher percentage of migrant-born parents among the sample than in the community.

Jamrozik (1973) then made a comparison of offenders during the period 1954 to 1971. Again he reported a high incidence of family malfunction, more frequent among offenders of the lower socio-economic structure than among those higher up, excessive geographic mobility in the family, and increasing numbers of students and unemployed among offenders. He also argued that offenders in the lower socio-economic brackets appearing in Juvenile Courts were likely to receive more severe penalties than those in the higher brackets, because they were less frequently represented by a lawyer.

Loftus (1973) wrote that "delinquency was only one outcome of a set of stresses leading to general social pathology". He gathered

data on 663 First Offenders during 1964, and recorded a re-offending rate of 35.6% within the next 4 years. He then compared Re-offenders with First Offenders and observed that Re-offenders had the following distinguishing characteristics :

- (1) Lower occupational status for head of household
- (2) Lower incomes
- (3) Larger families
- (4) Lower final level of schooling, and more educationally backward
- (5) Higher incidence of internal malfunction

These results were similar to Cohen's (1955), who found that Re-offenders tend to be working class, come from underprivileged, working-class homes, are grossly underachieving at school and are more likley to be truants.

In conclusion, it is strongly recommended that future research on the sociological background of juvenile offenders includes a comparison between the characteristics of the offending group of juveniles and those of a group of non-offenders. It must be pointed out however, that it would be difficult to obtain the required data from a group not having the statutory obligation to respond.

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITY WELFARE
SOCIAL BACKGROUND REPORT

| | |
|---------|--|
| NAME | |
| ADDRESS | |

PREVIOUS OFFENCES

| Date | Court | Appearance/Charge | Panel/Court Action |
|------|-------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | | | |

PERSONAL

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Date of birth | Place of birth |
| Religion | Age |
| Health | Sex |
| Disabilities | |
| Person with whom living at time of alleged offence (and relationship to child/youth) | |
| Other agencies involved | |

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| No. years at school | No. schools attended |
| School attending or last attended | |
| Truancy | |
| Highest level achieved | |
| Present occupation | Wage/Allowance |
| No. previous jobs | Occupation at time of alleged offence |

FAMILY

| | FATHER | MOTHER |
|--|--------|--------|
| Name | | |
| Address | | |
| Age | | |
| Occupation | | |
| Weekly Income | | |
| Regularity of employment | | |
| Marital status | | |
| Ethnic origin | | |
| Siblings—Names and ages | | |
| If migrant, date and place of arrival in Australia | | |
| Child's/Youth's legal guardian | | |
| Address | | |

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PAGE 1

It should be remembered that this is a **brief** summary of a juvenile's social background. Any necessary elaboration can be made in the following pages under the appropriate headings.

Previous Offences

All previous final court (and Panel) appearances must be listed (omit remands, adjournments, etc.).

Use one line for each appearance as far as possible, particularly when a juvenile has a long history of offences. Abbreviations of charges and results will be necessary.

Personal

Keep comments on Health and Disabilities to a concise description; any necessary elaboration can be made under Section 2 on the following pages.

Occupational Status

Truancy—if attending school and any truancy has occurred in the last six months, give the number of days missed per week or fortnight, as applicable.

Present occupation—state the nature of the job and length of time the juvenile has held that job, e.g., process worker—6 months; unless the juvenile is still at school, in which case, write "student".

Family

Give details of both father and mother if both are living, otherwise the prefix "step" may be added in appropriate cases. Details of complicated family situations, e.g., separations, defacto relationships, should be given in Section 4 on the following pages. Only basic essentials can be given here.

Weekly income—give gross income.

Ethnic origin—specify Aboriginal, Chinese, German, English, Dutch, etc., do not simply use European or Asian.

SOCIAL BACKGROUND REPORT-Continuation Sheet

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Page

| | |
|-----------|--------------------|
| Name..... | Date of Birth..... |
|-----------|--------------------|

ASPECTS TO BE INCLUDED IN SOCIAL BACKGROUND REPORT

Please confine remarks to these aspects unless other matters are directly relevant.

1. Previous Assistance and Response

Attitude of child/youth and of parents to this and previous offences, to the social worker's assistance in the past, etc.

2. Personal

Health, significant relationships, choice of companions, leisure patterns, general character description.

3. Child's/Youth's Education and Occupation

Attitude to and performance at school and work (including any further education).

Financial management.

Job changes.

4. Family

Structure, relationships, health (and their significance).

Child's/Youth's attitude to family.

How does family identify itself in the community?

5. Home Management

Ownership/rental; locality and adequacy, residential mobility, financial and home management.

6. Other Significant Aspects

Any change in child's place of residence—reasons and effects.

7. Evaluation and Future Plans

Future plans and goals for the child/youth should be outlined.

Mention persons interviewed and number of interviews.

APPENDIX 2

The following factors relating to the socio-economic background of the offender and the result of his appearance in Juvenile Court were coded to simplify the analysis and discussion of results :

Occupations :

Occupations were condensed into the following categories :

- High Status - Professional, Technical
 Administrative, Executive
- Medium Status - Clerical
 Sales Worker
 Service, Sport and Recreation Workers
 Member of Armed Forces
 Household Duties (this was considered as a
 separate category in the case of mother's
 occupation)
- Low Status - Farmer, Fisherman, Hunter & Other Outdoor
 Workers
 Miner, Quarryman or Heavy Plant Worker
 Transport and Communications
 Craftsman, Production or Process Workers
 Labourer
 Person not in Workforce e.g., Pensioner
 Domestic
 Apprentice
 Gaol or Institution
 Inmate of Mental Institution

Student

Unemployed or Inadequately described

Unknown or Deceased

This grouping is admittedly of an arbitrary nature.

Incomes :

The incomes of parents of offenders were grouped into the following categories :

- Below average - Less than \$100 per week
- Average - \$100 to \$120 per week
- Above average - more than \$120 per week
- Unknown

Level of Schooling :

The following categories were considered :

Special Class

Lower Primary - Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4

Upper Primary - Grades 5, 6 and 7

Lower Secondary - 1st, 2nd and 3rd years

Upper Secondary - 4th and 5th years

Tertiary

Unknown

Result of Appearance in Juvenile Court :

The various results of appearances in Juvenile Courts were collapsed into the following categories by the Local and District Criminal Courts Department :

Bond - Bond

Fine and Bond

Bond & Supervision - Bond and Supervision

Bond, Youth Project Centre and Supervision

Fine, Bond and Supervision

Fine, Bond, Youth Project Centre & Supervision

Care & Control - Care and Control (Control of Minister)

Care and Control and Youth Project Centre

Care & Control

& Ancilliary Committal

Dismissed - No further order

No conviction no penalty

Convicted without penalty

Fine

- Fine

Recognizance forfeited or estreatment

Other

- Committed to an Institution

Committed to Supreme Court

Licence restored

Recognizance varied

Recognizance discharged

Order reconsidered

Order unchanged

Application granted

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