PARENTING STYLE AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY: EXPLORING GENDERED RELATIONSHIPS

by

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ABSTRACT

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Parenting can be one of the most important, challenging tasks for adults who take on this role in their lives. Good parenting involves teaching, nurturing, monitoring, disciplining and generally insuring the welfare and healthy development of children. The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of parenting style on the child's involvement in juvenile delinquency. The current study makes use of the 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY97) to explore the effect that each of four parenting styles have on self-reported juvenile delinquency by youth. I include other correlates of parenting style and delinquency found in the literature to control for any potential confounding effects.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Parenting can be one of the most important, challenging roles in life. Good parenting involves teaching, nurturing, monitoring, disciplining and generally ensuring the welfare and healthy development of children. An important concept in research on parenting is the notion of parenting styles. Baumrind (1971) found two aspects involved in measuring parenting style: parental responsiveness (warmth and support) and parental demandingness (behavioral control) (Darling, 1999). These two concepts work together to create Baumrind's four distinct styles of parenting.

The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of parenting style on children's involvement in juvenile delinquency. While this relationship has been examined previously (e.g., Andrews 1998; Dishion, 1995), the current work revisits parent child relationships and their role in juvenile delinquency with alternate modeling and national level data. The main contribution of the work is to show how the relationship between parenting style and delinquency is conditioned by parent gender. The current study makes use of the 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY97) to explore the relationship between each of four parenting styles and self-reported juvenile delinquency among youth. Included in this study are other correlates of parenting style and delinquency reported in the literature to control for any potential confounding effects.

Theory

Psychological Reactance

One theory that helps to frame the current study is Psychological Reactance Theory (PRT), which is closely related to perceived threats of freedom. Individuals experience psychological reactance when they feel their personal freedom has been infringed upon, whether

with forceful language or threatening behaviors. This causes subjects to feel compelled to reestablish the freedom that was threatened or taken away from them. The behavioral response can include engaging in a forbidden behavior or even embracing the threatened attitude or emotion (Miller, Burgoon, Grandpre & Alvaro, 2006). Brehm and Brehm (1981) defined psychological reactance as a motivational force that compels an individual to regain or attempt to regain loss of threatened freedoms.

Psychological reactance has previously been divided in two ways: state reactance vs. trait reactance. Originally considered situational, it is important to identify state reactance as the motivational state felt after a perceived threat to freedom. Trait reactance, on the other hand, is the propensity of an individual to experience state reactance (Quick, B.L., Scott, A. M., & Ledbetter A.M., 2011). Much research suggests that psychological reactance is characteristic in nature as well as situational (Quick et al., 2011,; Woller, K.M., Buboltz, W.C., & Loveland, J.M., 2007). Dowd (1994) examined the relationship of psychological reactance to normal personality and sought to examine the personality profile of people who are psychologically reactant. Using two different measurements of reactance (the Therapeutic Reactance Scale [TRS] and the Questionnaire for Measurement of Psychological Reactance [QMPR]), Dowd found that, while he could not account for situational reactance, he could relate reactance to certain aspects of personality. He found that "Good Impression" was particularly important in that reactant individuals were much more interested in being themselves than making a good impression, even if problems arose (Dowd, Wallbrown, Sanders & Yesenosky, 1994). They were more concerned about personal control and were distrustful of others (Woller et al., 2007). Reactant individuals are less likely to follow norms and more likely to express strong emotions. They are more aggressive, dominant and seek to be autonomous. Some studies conclude that men typically

experience more reactance than women (Woller et al., 2007), while others have found no significant difference for gender. However, research does support the idea that psychological reactance serves women in achieving self-assurance and decisiveness—traits which are more often associated with men (Dowd et al., 1994)

Although previous research led to inconsistent results on gender, research on psychological reactance and age show a clear correlation--teenagers are highly reactant. Children have a tendency to overestimate their abilities in decision making processes and underestimate their abilities to deal with the consequences of those decisions as they progress into their teenage years. As a result, adolescents have increased chances to be reactant. This increased chance of reactance is also related to other emerging factors at that stage in life, such as simplified thinking and resistance to authority, which make teenagers more likely to be reactant. Furthermore, teenagers are more likely to question what adults tell them, as they compete to find their own beliefs (Miller et. al., 2006). Older people (55+ years) have also been found to have greater levels of reactance than middle aged people, but not significantly higher than younger people, creating a curvilinear relationship between age and reactance (Woller et al, 2007). Future research should address the curvilinear relationship and seek to answer what teenagers and older people have in common that make them reactant.

Control

A second theory that may be useful to the current study is Social Control Theory. This theory emphasizes the relationship between an individual and society as well as bonds to other individuals, like parents and guardians. It attempts to explain delinquency by suggesting that delinquency occurs when the bond between society and individual is weakened (McCluskey & Tovar, 2003). Control theories begin with the underlying assumption that humans are inherently

hedonistic and self-centered. Therefore, humans are all born with the potential to take whatever action that is needed to satisfy their desires. By this account, humans would all become delinquent if they were not somehow prevented from doing so by society's norms or other control mechanisms within the family or community. Thus, the family acts as a buffer against the negative influences of the world by providing children with commitment to social order (Rankin, & Kern, 1994). The criminal or delinquent is free from intimate relationships and/or attachments that normally bind people to remain within the limits of the law. Therefore, delinquent behavior results from the lack of caring about what others think or the lack of attachment to others in society, particularly parents (Hirschi, 1977).

According to this theory, since delinquency is inherent, it is necessary for all people in life to go through some training or guidance. Through education and imitation, a young person obtains habits and values that conform to that culture or society (Baumrind, 1978). Conformity is the formation of a social bond between an individual and society (Wiatrowski, Griswold & Roberts, 1981). This bond is formed through four major elements: Attachment (to family or peers), Commitment (to a continuation of school and progression in life), Involvement (an active participation in school work), and Belief (a positive attitude). A parent's job is to initiate and strengthen this bond. Not only do parents serve to supervise and punish unsuitable behavior, they also provide children a source of motivation to adapt to society as well as definitions of proper behavior (Rankin et al., 1994). Overall, a parent's first job is to socialize children and teach them the appropriate ways to conform to society. Without this guidance, children are more likely to become delinquent because they do not have the normal relationships binding them to the law.

Conceptual Framework

The key conceptual framework for the current study is related to Diana Baumrind's (1971) study of parenting styles, which was later expanded by the work of Maccoby and Martin (1983). Maccoby and Martin laid out two aspects in measuring parenting style: parental responsiveness (warmth, support, affection and acceptance) and parental demandingness (behavioral control, such as punishment, supervision and restrictiveness) (Hoeve, Blokland, Dubas, Loeber, Gerris & van der Laan, 2008). These two concepts work together to create Baumrind's four distinct styles of parenting: Authoritarian, Authoritative, Permissive, and Neglectful, each described in detail below.

Authoritarian parenting. Baumrind characterizes authoritarian parenting as having low responsiveness and high demandingness (Darling, 1999). Parents elicit rigid discipline and expect children to follow orders exactly. There is little to no flexibility. The rules of the house are firm and the environment is highly structured. Parents are highly controlling while unreceptive to their children's needs (Trinkner, Cohn, Rebellon, & Van Gundy, 2012). Authoritarian parenting limits child autonomy and has been found to be linked to several negative outcomes including insecurity and less socialization (Lee, Daniels, & Kissinger, 2006 & Hoeve et al., 2008).

Authoritative parenting. Baumrind describes authoritative parenting as being high in both responsiveness and demandingness. Authoritative parenting is congruent with low levels of behavior problems in children (Darling, 1999). In this style, parents offer considerable warmth and support, while instituting a constructive disciplinary arrangement, but with some flexibility. They are open to bidirectional communication and teach their children to be self-controlled

(Trinkner et al., 2012). This mix of positive attributes is said to be, "…a keystone of the psychosocial wellness of children and adolescents" (Lee et al., 2006).

Permissive parenting. Permissive parenting is described as being high in responsiveness but low in demandingness (Darling, 1999). Permissive parents are lenient and allow children to avoid much responsibility. Parents are approachable and give children attention but lack necessary discipline and do not place boundaries on their children. They may establish rules but rarely enforce them (Trinkner et al., 2012). This style is also known as indulgent parenting or non-directive parenting.

Neglectful parenting. The final parenting style is referred to as neglectful or uninvolved parenting. Neglectful parents are low in both responsiveness and demandingness and uninvolved in their children's lives (Darling, 1999). They detach themselves from their children and provide minimal response to children's needs or attitudes. Some simply do not care to earn the love of respect of their children (Hirschi, 1977). Parents are less involved in making decisions and being a part of decisions made about their child's needs (Lee et al., 2006). Hoeve et al. (2008) found that, along with authoritarian parenting, neglectful parenting is linked to persisting delinquency.

Demandingness		Responsiveness	
		High	Low
	High	Authoritative	Authoritarian
	Low	Permissive	Neglectful

Dependent Variable

Delinquency can be defined as crimes or acts defiant of the law (Hirschi, 1977). Merriam-Webster defines juvenile delinquency as "Conduct by a juvenile characterized by

antisocial behavior that is beyond parental control and therefore subject to legal action." Delinquency varies by the level of seriousness and the rate at which it occurs (Hoeve, 2008). Delinquency is known to peak during adolescence due to the yearning for autonomy. Diana Baumrind (1978) identified adolescence as a period of abundant physical and mental stress. Youth who are delinquent have a higher probability of experiencing problematic outcomes as young adults (Andrews 1998; Hoeve, 2008).

The objective of this thesis is to analyze the relationship between parenting style and delinquency with national level data. Specifically, I want to see how the relationship is conditioned by parent gender. In order to do this, I plan to examine the data of the different parenting styles and compare them against all others. Also, I plan to determine the difference between mothers's parenting style and father's.

Chapter Two: Background

Literature Review

The Role of Parenting in Delinquency

Parents play a crucial role in the socialization of their children. Collishaw, Gardner, Maughan, Scott, and Pickles (2012) identify two dimensions that are key to parenting. First, there is the dimension of parental control, which includes parental expectations about their child's behavior as well as rule setting and enforcement. They have shown that there has been a shift in the values of parenting over time-- from obedience by children toward more child autonomy. With parents now emphasizing more autonomy, parental legitimacy becomes an important factor to examine. Parents have low levels of control if their children do not perceive

them as an authentic authority. Adolescents who perceive their parents as legitimate figures of authority are less likely to become delinquent (Trinkner et al., 2012).

Some children see their parents as unworthy of respect, particularly if those parents that have low levels of resources to buy conformity by giving the child something in return for good behavior, do not live up to their child's expectations in appearance or conduct, or are easily manipulated (Hirschi, 1977). Parents may also be seen as less legitimate if they punish inconsistently. Deviant behavior may negatively impact parental disciplinary strategies, leading to inconsistent punishment, which, in turn, leads to parents become detached from their children. Failure by parents to monitor and control their children's behavior and to recognize and punish deviant behavior leads to a lack of self-control in the children, further increasing the risk of delinquency (Hoeve et al., 2008).

The second key dimension to parenting is parental involvement, including warmth and interest in the child's life. While research shows that there have been some changes in family structure in the past, the quality of parenting does not seem to have worsened over time (Collishaw, 2012). Parents set examples for children in showing them the proper (or improper) ways to react, behave, and experience almost every situation. Patterns of behavior that are formed in early childhood and influenced by the family are rapidly embedded and become progressively harder to change as the child gets older (Hoeve et al., 2008).

Attachment to Parents

Family processes, such as parental involvement, supervision and attachment, have all been found to be linked as elements to the Social Control Theory and inversely related to delinquency. Among these three elements, attachment to parents has been found to be the strongest indicator of delinquency (McCluskey & Tovar, 2003). Research suggests that every

person has a reference group or someone who has a significant value; thus, people behave in a way to maintain that favorable judgment in that person's or group's eyes (Hirschi, 1977). This attachment, referred to as the ties that anchor youth to others, may be with a parent or it may not. Positive parent-child attachments yield lower levels of delinquency (Rankin et al., 1994). If the attachment between child and parent is broken and the children no longer care about the reactions of their parents, they become more likely to commit delinquent acts because they have less to lose. This lack of attachment to their parents leads to a lack of respect toward teachers and other authority figures (Hirschi, 1977). There is some debate regarding the ways to define the aspects of parental attachment, but most definitions include love and affection, respect, and communication between parent and child. Some also extend to type and level of supervision and quantity or quality of interaction. Rankin and Kern (1994), however, state that the detailed aspects of attachment may not be as important as the number of strong attachments. Strong attachments to both parents are linked to lower levels of delinquency than a strong attachment to only one parent (Rankin et al., 1994).

Research shows that parents can play a valuable role in curbing or reducing socially improper behavior (Andrews, 1998). Children who are less attached to their parents become more delinquent because they have less to lose, indirectly stating the importance of parent-child relationships. Collishaw et al. (2011) indicate that there is significant evidence pointing to the ways of parenting and specific parent-child connections as better predictors of development and future delinquency than are other social indicators, like income or family type.

Most often, authoritarian parenting styles are considered the most likely to lead to negative outcomes in youth (Darling, 1999; Hoeve et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2006; Trinkner et al., 2012). Overtly strict parenting may inhibit personal growth and independence in children. As

children resist the controls on freedom, they become more likely to react or act out and could possibly become delinquent. However, with a recent shift in parenting values (as found by Collishaw et al., 2012), parental authority is now perhaps even more salient in determining child outcomes. If parents do not establish a level of authority, children will disregard the rules and see their parents as less legitimate. They may then become more autonomous and more susceptible to social pressure by deviant peers. Previously, some theorists initially supposed that, if left alone, children would learn on their own the socially approved models of behavior, and any attempt to redirect this learning interfered with the child's proper development (Baumrind, 1978). However, previous literature clearly illustrates the importance of socialization of children as well as of boundary setting and rule enforcement (Andrews 1998, Baumrind, 1978; Hirschi, 1977; Lee et al., 2006; Rankin et al., 1994). Clearly, parenting style is a critical domain in child development, which informs a series of hypotheses developed for the current study.

Chapter Three: Thesis Statement

Hypotheses

The first hypothesis to be tested in this study is a basic and intuitive prediction about the effect of one parenting style that is not gender-specific. A parent's level of authority impacts their children's behavior. If parents fail to create legitimate authority over their children, their child is more likely to disregard the rules (Hirschi, 1977). As stated above, previous literature emphasizes the importance of rule enforcement.

H1: For both parents, a permissive parenting style is associated with more delinquency than other parenting styles.

A considerable amount of previous research finds a difference in the effect of parenting styles with the gender of the child. Yet examinations of parenting style effects by *parent's*

gender (mother versus a father figure) are much rarer. Therefore, I will measure the effect of parenting styles separately by parent gender. Since fathers are more commonly known as the disciplinarian figure in a household and exert strong influence (Ashraf & Najam, 2011), their parenting style may have a greater impact on control.

H2: If the father has a permissive parenting style, children will report more delinquency than if the mother has a permissive style.

Meanwhile, mothers are more commonly seen as the nurturer, having a more open and responsive approach. They are the caretakers and provide children with a sense of security (Biblarz & Stacey, 2010). Mothers are known to speak softly to their children and place emphasis on thoughts and feelings (Ashraf, 2011). Thus, if a mother lacks warmth and supportiveness, this would have a more negative effect on her children than if a father lacks warmth.

H3: Mothers' authoritarian parenting styles will be more strongly related to children's delinquency than fathers' authoritarian style.

Chapter Four: Method and Approach

Data & Sample

The current study will make use of the National Longitudinal Study of Youth (1997). The NLSY97 is a representative sample of nearly 9000 youth born in the early 1980's (ages 12-16 at the beginning of the survey in 1997). These panel data contain a wide range of information collected on respondents each year, including the children's delinquency levels, arrests and other social indicators, including relationships with parents. All of the information used for the current

study was obtained through youth self-reports. The eligible sample for the current study entails all youth residing with a mother (n=8,511) and/or a father (6,366) figure in 1997.

Measurement

Delinquency In the current study, delinquency was measured using a self-report questionnaire completed by the youth and regarding engagement in illegal acts over the 12 months prior to the 1998 interview (Wave 2 of the NLSY). Respondents reported the number of times they committed delinquent acts ranging in severity from substance use/abuse and minor theft to assault with injury and carrying a gun (11 total items). These were added together to form a continuous delinquency index ranging from 0 to 65 ($\alpha = .70$).

Independent Variables

Parenting style was measured using a youth self-report measure containing questions concerning how participants perceived levels of parental supportiveness and permissiveness (i.e., how supportive is your mother…etc.). Supportiveness was measured on a three-point scale: very supportive, somewhat supportive, and not supportive. The latter two were re-coded by survey designers as 0 for 'unresponsive' while very supportive was recoded as 1 for 'responsive'. Permissiveness was measured on a two-point scale: permissive or strict. When youth answered 'strict,' it was coded as 1 and considered as 'demanding' by survey designers. If youth answered "permissive," it was coded as a 0 and considered 'non-demanding.' The two items were then merged to create Parenting Styles for each parent with four categories: Uninvolved (permissive & not very or somewhat supportive), Authoritarian (strict & not very or somewhat supportive), Permissive (permissive & very supportive), and Authoritative (strict & very supportive).

Control Items

Youth respondent's sex is a dichotomous variable (1 = male; 0 = female). Age is a continuous variable, ranging from 13 to 19 in 1998. The youth's criminal history controls for whether the youth was ever arrested prior to 1998. Prior delinquency is a dichotomous score reflecting whether the youth self-reported any delinquency in 1997, yes or no. Parental attachment is a single measure, tapped by asking the youth whether they enjoyed spending time with each parent. These values range from 0 = least attached to 4 = most attached. Because regression models are estimated for mothers and fathers separately, parent-specific measures are used for attachment.

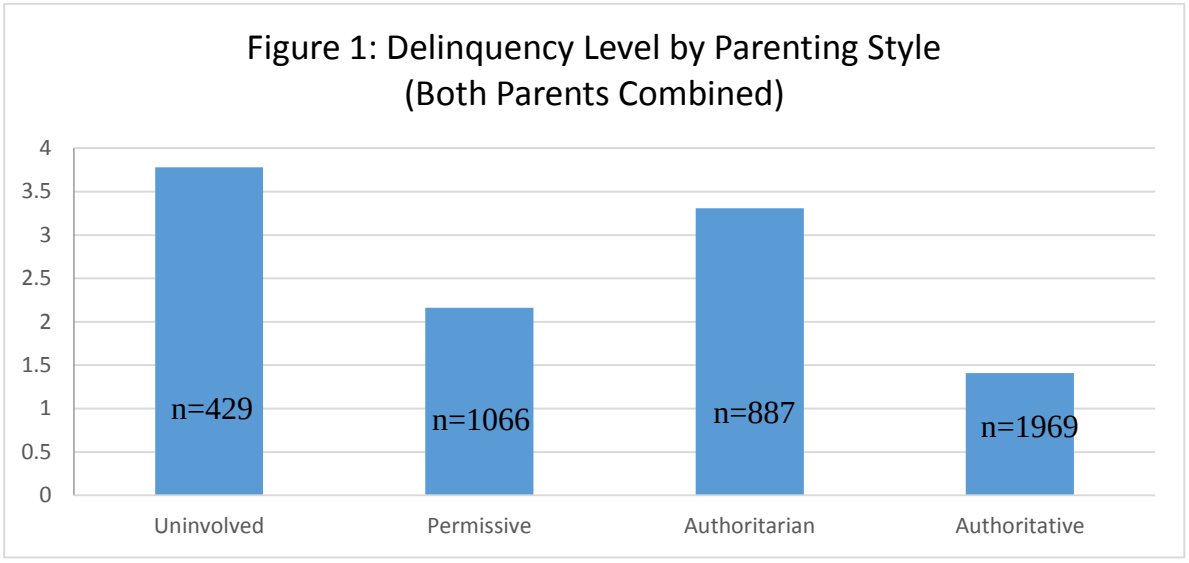
Method

I will first compare delinquency levels for each of the four parenting styles described above using a combined parenting measure. Cases included in this analysis were selected on the basis that each had a valid youth rating for both mom and dad. I will then split the sample by parent gender and re-examine delinquency levels for each parenting style. Finally, in the multivariate arena, I will control for youth gender, age, prior delinquency, prior arrests and parental attachment to examine the relationship between parenting style and the child's delinquency. I will estimate Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models for mothers and fathers separately and compare results.

Chapter Five: Findings

Figure 1 contains the mean delinquency level for youth in the NLSY97 in 1998 by the youth's reported parenting style for both parents. Figure 1 reflects a general parental measure, where each type contains cases for both parent genders (mothers and fathers) combined, regardless of custody or living arrangements. Recall that delinquency is a youth report of

engagement in illegal acts in the 12 months prior to the 1998 interview. Where 53.8% of the sample reported zero delinquent episodes (not shown), average delinquency scores are in the lower range, never higher than a score of 3.8 across parenting styles.

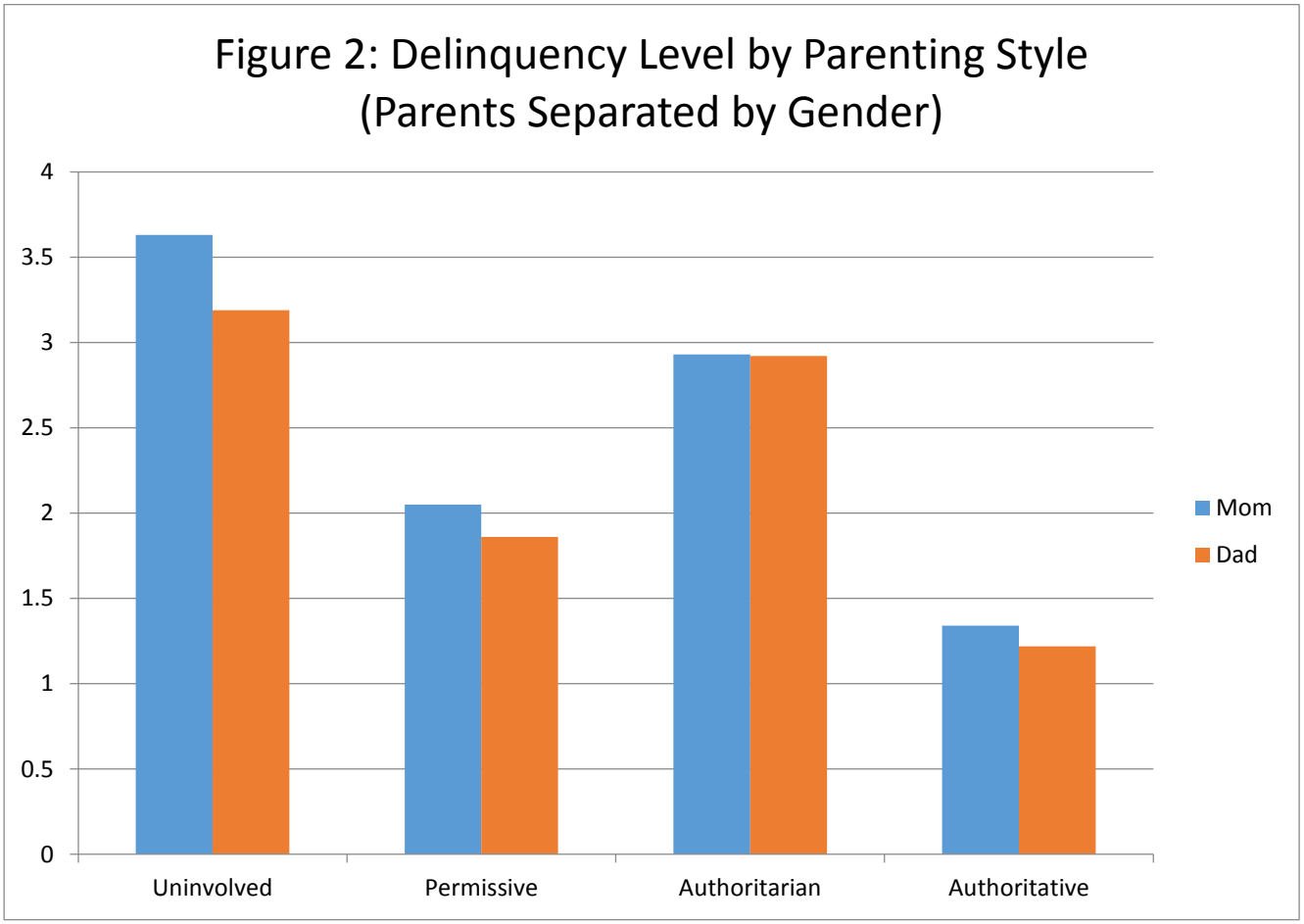


Hypothesis 1 predicted that a Permissive parenting style would be associated with the highest delinquency level. However, Figure 1 shows that it ranks third (M = 2.16) behind Uninvolved (M = 3.78) and Authoritarian (M = 3.31). To determine the significance of these results, t-tests in Table 1 examine whether the delinquency levels reported for each parenting style are significantly different from the remainder of the sample. These results show that delinquency among youth who reported Uninvolved parenting was significantly higher than that of the remaining sample. Those reporting Permissive and Authoritative parenting had significantly lower delinquency levels than that of the remaining sample. Finally, the delinquency level associated with Authoritarian parenting was slightly higher than that of the sample, although the difference was not significant.

Table 1: Delinquency Level by Parenting Style

	1998	
	Mean (sd)	t-value
Uninvolved	3.77 (6.87)	2.851*
All Others	2.91 (6.08)	
Permissive	2.16 (4.82)	-4.587*
All Others	3.09 (6.32)	
Authoritarian	3.31 (6.62)	1.826
All Others	2.91 (6.06)	
Authoritative	1.41 (3.77)	-13.204*
All Others	3.52 (6.70)	

Hypothesis 2 predicted that having a permissive father would be associated with more delinquency than having a permissive mother. Figure 2 therefore splits the results up by parent gender (mother and father). The overall data pattern of Figure 2 generally follows that of Figure 1 where Uninvolved and Authoritarian parenting is associated with more delinquency than the other parenting styles. However, small changes in delinquency levels for each parenting style occur by gender. Contrary to Hypothesis 2, these preliminary findings show that youth with permissive mothers engage in slightly more delinquency (M=2.05) than those with permissive fathers (M=1.86). The difference is not statistically significant, however (t=2.9). Separate regressions for each parent may illustrate whether this relationship is mediated by other variables.



Hypothesis 3 predicted that the mothers with Authoritarian parenting styles category would be associated with more delinquency than fathers with Authoritarian parenting styles. Here again, results show virtually no difference in parent gender for the Authoritarian style, and the slight difference is not statistically significant (t = 0.12).

While descriptive results are interesting and informative, they don't account for other possible confounding influences on the delinquency-parental style relationship. To account for these, I use ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple regression. This type of regression serves as a best estimate of true value when there is a number of unknown parameters. Since there are

several other variables that could impact delinquency, it is important to control for these potential confounds. OLS also accounts for observational errors, such as misreported information by youth. Since the dependent variable is measured on a continuous scale, OLS is a suitable regression method. Table 2 contains descriptive data for all variables in the regression analysis that the literature suggests could also impact the delinquency parenting style relationship. These items are, therefore, controlled for in the current study's regression models.

Table 2. Distribution of Variables Used in the Regression Analyses

Variable	Mean (SD)	%	Min	Max
Delinquency	2.96 (6.13)	--	0	65
Male	--	51.2	0	1
Female	--	48.8	0	1
Age in 1998	15.97 (1.44)	--	13	19
Prior Arrests in 1998	.05 (.23)	--	0	1
Prior Delinquency	.53 (.50)	--	0	1
Attachment to Mom 1998	3.08 (.96)	--	0	4
Attachment to Dad 1998	2.96 (1.05)	--	0	4

Youth gender is well-balanced in the sample, at 51.2 percent male and 48.8 percent female. The average age of the sample in 1998 was 15.97. Five percent of the sample had an arrest prior to 1998, and 53 percent reported engaging in some type of delinquency prior to 1998. The mean level of attachment to mom and dad are comparable with mean attachment to mom at 3.08 and mean attachment to dad at 2.96

Regression Analyses

Where hypotheses contain both general and gender-specific statements regarding the relationship of parenting style and delinquency, regression analyses are performed for mothers and fathers separately. The analyses proceed in steps to arrive at three separate models per each

parent gender. Model 1 enters all parental variables, to include parenting style and level of attachment. As the most favorable parenting style reflected in both the literature (Darling, 1999; Lee et al., 2006; Trinkner et al., 2012), and in bivariate examinations of delinquency level in Figures 1 and 2, the Authoritative parenting style is the omitted category in regression, against which coefficients for all other parenting styles are compared. Model 2 adds in the study's legal variables, and Model 3 adds youth demographic items.

Table 3: OLS Regression of Mom's Parenting Style and Controls on Delinquency

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	b (SE)	B	*B* (SE)	B	*b* (SE)	B
INTERCEPT	3.02*** (.30)		.97*** (.26)		-2.85** (1.09)	
Authoritarian	1.17*** (.23)	.09	.63*** (.19)	.05	.65*** (.19)	.05
Permissive	.67*** (.18)	.06	.31* (.15)	.03	.29 (.15)	.03
Uninvolved	1.94*** (.24)	.14	.90*** (.20)	.06	.91*** (.20)	.06
Parental Attachment	-.50*** (.08)	-.09	-.24*** (.07)	-.05	-.23*** (.07)	-.04
Prior Delinquency	--	--	2.16*** (.13)	.22	2.07*** (.13)	.21
Prior Arrests	--	--	11.35*** (.29)	.50	11.26*** (.29)	.50
Age	--	--	--	--	.24*** (.07)	.04
Male	--	--	--	--	.34** (.13)	-.03
Adjusted R^2	.004		.36		.36	
Number of Observations	3,960		3,920		3,920	

*p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .001 (two-tailed)

Model 1 shows that relative to the Authoritative parenting style, all other parenting styles are associated with statistically significant increases in youth delinquency levels. Among moms Authoritarian had beta score of .09 which shows it carries little weight in the model. Permissive mothers had a beta score of .06, apparently the least important of the parenting styles in the model. Uninvolved mothers have beta score of .14—by far the most important parenting style in the model on the beta scale. As might be expected, parental attachment had a negative relationship with delinquency.

Note that the value of R^2 jumped significantly with the addition of the legal variables block in Model 2. In this Model, Authoritarianism among moms remains positive and significant (*b*=.63), although the size of the *b* and beta coefficients was reduced by about half with the addition of the new variables. Permissive parenting remains positive and significant, although the coefficient sizes dropped and the strength of significance was reduced to $p < .05$. Uninvolved parenting remains positive and significant (*b*=.90), but the beta score dropped 133% and with the legal variables is reported as a .06—less important than in Model 1. Parental attachment level between youth and their mothers continues to have a negative and significant effect on delinquency (*b*=-.24). Prior Delinquency is positive and significant, with a high beta score of .22—by far the most important seen thus far. Prior arrests also show positive and significant relationship, with an even higher beta score of .50.

Finally, in Model 3, demographic variables are added. Authoritarian and uninvolved parenting styles and remain positive and significant with little difference from model 2. Similarly, parental attachment remained negative and significant as in Model 2. The Permissive category, however, loses its statistical significance. The legal variables also remain positive and significant with little difference from Model 2. Age is positive and significant but has a small beta of .04. Gender is also positive and significant, although not as strongly significant as age. Moving on, I examine the results of Father's parenting styles in order to compare how they affect delinquency to the mother's results (i.e., is the relationship conditioned by gender?).

Table 4: OLS Regression of Dad's Parenting Style and Controls on Delinquency

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	b (SE)	B	*b* (SE)	B	*B* (SE)	B
INTERCEPT	2.55*** (.34)		.63* (.29)		-2.33 (1.25)	
Authoritarian	1.22*** (.25)	.10	.70*** (.21)	.06	.70*** (.21)	.06
Permissive	.62** (.22)	.05	.26 (.18)	.02	.24 (.18)	.02
Uninvolved	1.57*** (.28)	.11	.71** (.23)	.05	.69** (.23)	.05
Parental Attachment	-.39 (.09)	-.08	-.14 (.07)	-.03	-.14 (.08)	-.03
Prior Delinquency	--	--	2.23*** (.15)	.23	2.17*** (.15)	.22
Prior Arrests	--	--	11.05*** (.34)	.48	11.01*** (.34)	.48
Age	--	--	--	--	.19* (.08)	.03
Male	--	--	--	--	.20 (.15)	.02
Adjusted R^2	.03		.34		.34	
Number of Observations	3,960		3,920		3,920	

*p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .001 (two-tailed)

Overall, the model fit was remarkably similar for mothers and fathers. Note that R2 is within a similar range for both genders and the sizeable jump in this statistic from Model 1 to Model 2 was present for both fathers and mothers. As with mothers, the R^2 remains the same with the addition of demographics in Model 3.

For Fathers, the reading on the Authoritarian coefficient is similar to that of mothers—positive and significant, with a beta level of .10. The Permissive category is also positive and significant but the effect size was weaker than it was among permissive mothers. Uninvolved is

positive and significant with a beta of .11. Parental attachment to fathers is negatively associated with youth delinquency, however, unlike that of mothers, it is not significant.

In Model 2, the Authoritarian category is positive and significant with a drop in both *b* and beta. Permissive is positive but is not found to be statistically significant. Uninvolved is again positive and significant, but also dropped greatly both in *b* and beta. These results are similar to that found in the mother's regression with drops in both *b* and beta. Parental attachment is negative and not significant. Again, the addition of the legal variables are of great importance (even if slightly less important than in the mother's regression). Prior delinquency is positive and significant with a strong beta of .23. Prior arrests are positive and significant with a beta of .48 (only slightly less than the .50 of the mothers).

In Model 3 Authoritarian remains unchanged from Model 2. Permissive, uninvolved, and parental attachment categories show some difference but are basically similar to the findings in Model 2. Prior Delinquency again remains positive and significant with a .22 beta and prior arrests are similar with the same beta. Age is found to be positive and slightly significant, much less significant than the age in the Mother's regression. As with mothers, gender is positive here but unlike mothers, it is not significant. Thus, for moms, youth gender appears to matter to delinquency level, but for dads, it does not.

The results suggest that overall, the regression models used in the current study "behave" rather similarly for both parent genders, but there are some key differences to highlight as well. First, results suggest that moms have a greater influence on delinquency (consistently stronger coefficients for individual items). More specifically, Parental Attachment is significant for mothers and not for fathers. Moreover, it is strongly significant (in reducing delinquency level) in each model for mothers.

Other important differences between results for moms and dads is that Age is more significant for mothers and youth gender is not significant for fathers but is for mothers.

Chapter Six: Discussion, Limitations, & Suggestions for Future Research

The current study sought to determine the relationship between parent and child relationships and delinquency levels. It was expected that permissive parenting to be associated with the most delinquency. While some research supports authoritarian parenting as leading to the most negative outcomes, other studies suggest that parental legitimacy is increasingly important. Therefore, I predicted that without legitimate authority, delinquency levels would rise. Specifically, I hypothesized that permissive fathers would lead to more delinquency because fathers are more often seen as authority figures, and without a strong rule setting father, children would be more likely to stray from following rules. The data showed that this is not the case. Authoritarian and Uninvolved parenting is associated with more delinquency than permissive. The descriptive data and regression both show this. When split between genders, the data shows the opposite of what I predicted—although not statistically significant. The regression data shows that permissive mothers are slightly more associated with delinquency than permissive fathers. I also predicted that authoritarian mothers would lead to more delinquency than authoritarian fathers because mothers are often seen as a nurturer--open and an emotional safe haven. If mothers are hard and stern, not allowing children to express themselves, I predicted that this would drive children into more rash, unpredictable behavior. Again, results, both descriptive and regression, show virtually no difference in authoritarian parenting between parent genders.

For more general issues in this area of research, the current study tends to reinforce past findings. My findings underscore that parental attachment is an important factor in youth

delinquency level, specifically attachment to mothers, as per McCluskey and Tovar (2003) who indicate of family factors, attachment is the most important. Rankin et. al. (1994), also support the important of attachment stating that positive attachments yield lower levels of delinquency. Parental attachment and youth gender for mothers is significant, however for fathers this is not that case. This could be due to the nurturing demeanor mothers often represent.

Some limitations present in the current study include the data source. All data is drawn from youth self-reports. As with any youth survey, there is the possibility of respondent bias, outright false information provided, or skewed/misremembered information. Another limitation includes the fact that delinquency is measured as a compilation of 11 different types of offenses. While these 11 cover a vast majority of delinquent activities, they don't encompass all possible delinquent acts, nor does such a delinquency measurement account for the seriousness of the offense.

Future research should further examine the interaction between gender and delinquency—specifically examining the interaction between parental style and youth's gender for each parent gender. Given that the dependent variable is a simple count of the number of delinquent acts reported per year, future research may look into a Poisson or negative binomial model as it may fit the data better. Poisson is used to model count data, like the dependent variable in the current research. Also given that the modal figure in the count of the dependent variable is 0, negative Binomial model might be appropriate because it also models count variables like the dependent variable, and also because it is used for over dispersion (i.e. where the variance on the dependent variable is more than twice as large as the mean).

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