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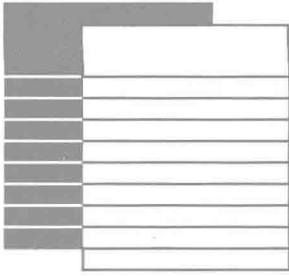
JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

A Sociological Approach



Jack E. Bynum William E. Thompson

Fifth Edition



Juvenile Delinquency

A Sociological Approach

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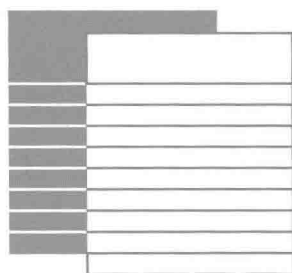
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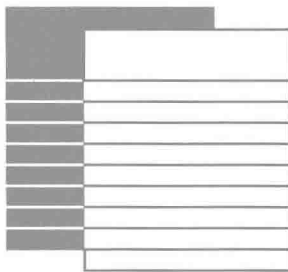
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*To the memory of our parents—Jack and Frances Bynum,
and Edwin and Flora Thompson—who through their precepts and examples
helped us become the authors of this book and not the subjects*



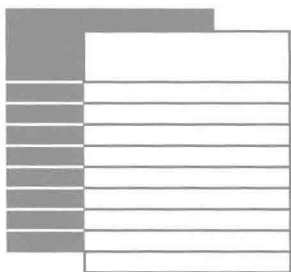
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PREFACE

Juvenile delinquency is one of the most complex, interesting, and challenging phenomena in the United States. Newspapers, television, and radio bombard us with accounts of juvenile misbehavior and crime that range from truancy to first degree murder. Consequently, youths who violate the law receive considerable attention from law enforcement officials, social agencies, criminologists, and social and behavioral scientists.

This book is guided by the basic premise that juvenile delinquency is inherently social in nature. It is a social concept, part and product of the society in which it occurs. Thus, any meaningful discussion of delinquency must be expressed in a sociological framework that views it in relation to the normative processes and societal responses that define it. More specifically, this book approaches delinquency as it relates to and emerges from the youth's family, neighborhood, school, peer group, social class, and overall cultural and social environment.

Rather than aligning this analysis to any particular theoretical perspective, we used an eclectic sociological approach that integrates elements from a wide spectrum of causal theories. Thus, we have attempted to present delinquency in its broadest sociological context. This approach should give the reader a growing awareness of and sensitivity to the social nature of human behavior, whether it be socially adjudged as conforming or nonconforming, normative or deviant, acceptable or unacceptable, good or bad, or some paradoxical mixture of these seemingly antithetical evaluations.

This sociological work has been enhanced by the inclusion of some important contributions of social workers, criminologists, psychologists, and other specialists who have sought to understand, explain, control, and prevent juvenile delinquency. The reader will note that each section of the book is carefully grounded in knowledge and research and unified by the sociological theme that delinquency must be viewed within its social context.

The book is organized in a format that guides the reader through an unfolding sequence of interrelated dimensions of the study of juvenile delinquency: conformity, causes, collective behavior, and social control. Each part begins with a brief introduction which includes basic sociological concepts and ideas related to the topical theme of that section. For example, Part I Conformity, Deviance, and Juvenile Delinquency, before addressing the problem of juvenile delinquency, incorporates a brief introduction to sociology and the sociological perspective. The normative system of society and the concepts of conformity and deviance are introduced and explained. In Part II Causes of Juvenile Delinquency, students are first

introduced to the nature of scientific theory and the theory building process. Then, they are presented with specific theories which attempt to explain the causes of delinquency. Part III Juvenile Delinquency in a Social Context begins by looking at the nature of social groups and their impact upon individuals. It then proceeds to explore the influence of family, schools, youth subculture, and gangs on juvenile behavior. The social control of juvenile behavior is presented in the last two sections of the text. Part IV Social Control: The Juvenile Justice System includes detailed coverage of those arenas of social confrontation encountered by recalcitrant youth: police contacts, juvenile courts, and community correctional agencies. Part V Strategies for Dealing with Juvenile Delinquency begins with a systematic evaluation of the major classic and contemporary programs developed for the prevention and treatment of delinquency in the United States. Part V concludes the book with a challenging call for innovative revisions in the social and legal status of young people and in our approach to the problem of juvenile delinquency.

Each of the five parts is divided into topically related chapters. Again, as in earlier editions of this book, each chapter begins with a list of Reading Objectives for that particular unit of content. These alert the readers in advance to the specific learning expectations for that chapter so that they may identify, extrapolate, and integrate major concepts while proceeding through the chapter. The learning objectives are reemphasized at the end of the chapter through the use of Questions and Topics for Study and Discussion that are designed to help prepare students for examinations and to stimulate class discussion. These teaching and learning aids are reinforced by a comprehensive glossary at the end of the book that includes definitions of key terms and concepts.

We have continued our use of three types of innovative and instructive boxes or sidebars entitled: *Concept Application*, *Cross-Cultural Focus*, and *Controversial Issue*. Each chapter contains one to three of these boxes, which have proved to be popular with students. The Concept Application boxes apply abstract theoretical concepts to concrete situations facing young people today. Cross-Cultural Focus boxes incorporate an international dimension providing examples of delinquency in other societies, cultures, and subcultures. Controversial Issue boxes address some of the critical juvenile delinquency questions facing society.

Several new and important changes and additions are included in this fifth edition. For example, all data on delinquents and delinquency derived from FBI Uniform Crime Reports and U.S. juvenile courts, plus corresponding statistical analyses, have been updated. Moreover, we have inserted a Department of Justice Internet Website where assiduous scholars may derive the most currently available crime/delinquency data. Also included in Chapter 3 is a "balanced perspective" section that focuses on the vast, underreported majority of youth who generally conform to behavioral expectations of society and do *not* become delinquents.

Since 1994, there has been a significant decline in the number of juvenile arrests for most crime categories. This trend as well as the recent series of violent school assaults committed by teenagers are closely examined in several relevant chapters of this edition. Extensive new material on the motivation, activities, and numbers of gangs and gang members have been incorporated into Chapter 12. Chapters 15 and 16 have been revised and augmented with expanded sections on juvenile probation and aftercare, as well as creative new treatment and prevention strategies for dealing with delinquents and their antisocial conduct.

Rather than compartmentalizing gender and racial involvement in delinquency in isolated chapters, we have chosen to integrate these important topics throughout the book. In

sum, this book provides a comprehensive examination of juvenile delinquency in a pedagogical style designed with our readers/students in mind.

While the authors assume final responsibility for the book, as with any other work of this magnitude, many people made significant contributions for which we are indebted. We would like to thank Mica Thompson and Lisa Busby for their “behind the scenes” work. Also, we appreciate the help, support, and encouragement from many friends and colleagues during our exciting fourteen-year journey through the five editions of this book.

Special thanks are extended to those who, through the years, have reviewed the entire manuscript and made helpful and constructive suggestions for revision: Professor John A. Arthur, University of Minnesota–Duluth; Professor Steven R. Cureton, University of North Carolina–Greensboro; Professor Kathleen Heide, University of South Florida; Professor Mark Mantyh, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; Professor Stephanie Amedco Marquez, Arizona State University; Professor Wilson R. Palacios, University of South Florida; Professor Jerome Rosonke, Northern State University; Professor Raghu Singh, Texas A&M University–Commerce; and Professor Craig C. White, Fairmont State College.

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J.E.B.
W.E.T.

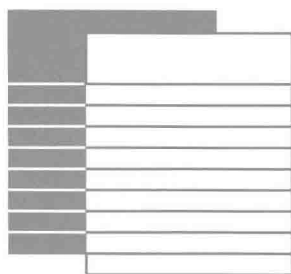
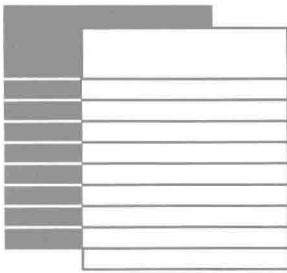


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