

AN EMPIRICAL EVALUATION OF EDWIN H. SUTHERLAND'S THEORY OF  
DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION

by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Deviant behavior is a special sub-type of that larger class of human behavior, i.e., social behavior, which is of interest for the sociologist. Behavior which is labeled as deviant is that which does not conform to the normative expectations a particular social group holds for the actions of its members. Crime, as a special form of deviance, is defined as behavior which is in violation of the formal and recorded rules governing conduct within a particular social group. More specifically, crime is defined as any act or omission prohibited by law and punishable by the state through the actions or proceedings of its judicial body (Leonard Savitz, 1967: 10-13). Anglo-Saxon law, according to Savitz, considers an action to be criminal when it satisfies five necessary theoretical conditions: (1) the act involves some conscious, external, and voluntary harm; (2) the act was prohibited by law at the time it was committed; (3) the individual committing the act does so with criminal intent (mens rea); (4) there is a causal relationship between the voluntary misconduct and the legally prohibited consequence; and (5) there exists some legally prescribed punishment for any person found guilty of committing the criminal act.

Where it occurs, crime and deviant behavior are indicative of the existence of social disorganization or differential social organization. More specifically, the existence of such conduct indicates that not all participants in the social group have equally accepted and internalized

the normative prohibitions or normative requirements which are definitive of acceptable or expected forms of behavior in the group. This situation also implies a lack of social consensus concerning group-shared values, beliefs, and goals.

Crime is indicative of social disorganization but it is not the cause of such disorganization. Rather social disorganization is an underlying cause of criminal behavior. Social disorganization can account for the existence of crime in a society but as an explanatory factor, it alone is insufficient to explain the reason one individual engages in criminal activity when another individual in the same situation does not. To explain this differential involvement in criminal (or delinquent) activity, the author favors the explanation provided by Edwin H. Sutherland's theory of differential association. This theory and a review of literature relevant to its development, critique, and applications will be presented and discussed in Chapter II. The remaining chapters of this thesis will be devoted to a limited test of its validity and applicability.

Social disorganization is characteristic of most, if not all, societies. It assumes especial presence in a modern and complex society such as our own. Social disorganization is an ubiquitous phenomenon and consequently crime has been widely distributed in time and space -- widely distributed throughout the history of human society. It has become, as Emile Durkheim (1938) said, "normal" to society.

In the first place crime is normal because a society exempt from it is utterly impossible. Crime, we have shown elsewhere consists of an act that offends certain very strong collective sentiments. In a society in which criminal acts are no longer committed, the sentiments they offend would have to be found without exception in all individual consciousnesses, and they must be found to exist with the same degree as



sentiments contrary to them. Assuming that this condition could actually be realized, crime would not thereby disappear; it would only change its form, for the very cause which would thus dry up the sources of criminality would immediately open up new ones. (1938:67)

Durkheim also saw crime as having its origin in social disorganization, but social disorganization in his opinion was not entirely dysfunctional to a society:

. . . it is no longer possible today to dispute the fact that law and morality vary from one social type to the next, nor that they change within the same type if the conditions of life are modified. But, in order that these transformations may be possible, the collective sentiments at the basis of morality must not be hostile to change, and consequently must have but moderate energy. If they were too strong, they would no longer be plastic. Every pattern is an obstacle to new patterns, to the extent that the first pattern is inflexible. The better a structure is articulated, the more it offers a healthy resistance to all modification; and this is equally true of functional, as of anatomical, organization. If there were no crimes, this condition could not have been fulfilled; for such a hypothesis presupposes that collective sentiments have arrived at a degree of intensity unexampled in history. Nothing is good indefinitely and to an unlimited extent. The authority which moral conscience enjoys must not be excessive; otherwise no one would dare criticize it, and it would too easily congeal into immutable form. To make progress, individual originality must be able to express itself. In order that the originality of the idealist whose dreams transcend his century may find expression, it is necessary that the originality of the criminal, who is below the level of his time shall also be possible. One does not occur without the other.

Nor is this all. Aside from this indirect utility, it happens that crime itself plays a useful role in this evolution. Crime implies not only that the way remains open to necessary changes but that in certain cases it directly prepares these changes. Where crime exists, collective sentiments are sufficiently flexible to take on a new form, and crime sometimes helps to determine the form they will take. How many times, indeed, it is only an anticipation of future morality -- a step toward what will be. (Durkheim, 1938:70-71)

If, as Durkheim suggests, crime may be considered as a phenomenon normal to human society, it then becomes a legitimate subject for sociological inquiry and study. Crime is present wherever the social structure

allows for a sufficient degree of flexibility, i.e., wherever there exists social disorganization. The high rates of crime characteristic of modern industrial societies are indicative of considerable states of social disorganization. The individual in such a society is constantly exposed to varying, often conflicting, definitions of correct, expected, or valued behavior. The definitions that he accepts, those which influence his actions, are learned in a process of interaction with other individuals. The degree to which these definitions and values are accepted and internalized depends upon the frequency, duration, priority, and intensity of the differential associations he has with particular sets of norm definers or particular patterns of behavior. Criminal behavior is learned in this manner. An individual has associations with both criminal and non-criminal patterns of behavior and criminal and non-criminal norm definers. He becomes criminal when his differential associations with criminal patterns are in excess of his associations with non-criminal patterns. This is the essence of differential association theory to be discussed more fully in the following chapters.

To evaluate this theory, the author will test a number of hypotheses that have been either directly or indirectly derived from Sutherland's propositional statement of differential association. These hypotheses will be concerned with the nature of the relationship existing between: (1) differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior and involvement in delinquent activity; (2) differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior and the

holding of attitudes favorable or unfavorable towards law violation; (3) the delinquent involvement of an individual and his perceptions of the delinquent involvement of his friends; and (4) the frequency, duration, priority, and intensity of differential associations, and delinquent favorable attitudes and delinquent involvement. The statistical testing of these hypotheses will provide an indication of the veracity and utility of differential association theory for the explanation of delinquent behavior in the population sampled.

## CHAPTER II

### A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violations of law. . . . When persons become criminals, they do so because of contacts with criminal behavior patterns and also because of isolation from anti-criminal patterns.

(Edwin H. Sutherland, 1947)

### A STATEMENT OF THE THEORY

The above is in essence the basic premise of Edwin H. Sutherland's theory of differential association. The following propositional formulation of this theory appeared in the eighth edition of Criminology (Sutherland and Cressey, 1970:75-77) and is essentially the same as the version that first appeared in the fourth (1947) edition of the same text.

1. Criminal behavior is learned. Negatively, this means that criminal behavior is not inherited as such. . . . the person who is not already trained in crime does not invent criminal behavior. . . .
2. Criminal behavior is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication. This communication is verbal in many respects but includes also the "communication of gestures."
3. The principle part of the learning of criminal behavior occurs within intimate personal groups. . . . impersonal agencies of communication, such as movies and newspapers, play a relatively unimportant part in the genesis of criminal behavior.
4. When criminal behavior is learned, the learning includes (a) techniques of committing the crime, which are sometimes very complicated, sometimes very simple; (b) the

specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes.

5. The specific direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of the legal code as favorable or unfavorable. In our American society these definitions are almost always mixed, with the consequence that we have culture conflict in relation to the legal code.
6. A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favorable towards violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of law. This is the principle of differential association. It refers to both criminal and anticriminal associations and has to do with counteracting forces. When persons become criminal they do so because of contacts with criminal patterns and isolation from anticriminal patterns . . . associations which are neutral so far as crime is concerned have little or no effect on the genesis of criminal behavior.
7. Differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority and intensity. This means that associations with criminal and anticriminal behavior also vary in those respects. "Frequency" and "duration" as modalities of associations are obvious and need no explanation. "Priority" is assumed to be important in the sense that lawful behavior developed early in childhood may persist throughout life. This tendency, however, has not been adequately demonstrated, and priority seems to be important principally through its selective influence. "Intensity" is not precisely defined but it has to do with such things as the prestige of the source of a criminal or anticriminal pattern and with emotional reactions related to associations.
8. The process of learning criminal behavior by association with criminal and anticriminal patterns involves all the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning. . . . the learning of criminal behavior is not restricted to the process of imitation. . .
9. While criminal behavior is an expression of general needs and values, it is not explained by these general needs and values since non-criminal behavior is explained by the same needs and values. The attempts by many scholars to explain criminal behavior by general drives and values, such as the happiness principle, striving for social status, the money motive, or frustration, have been and must continue to be futile as they explain lawful behavior as completely as they explain criminal behavior.

### Historical Antecedents

The very nature of societal living entails considerable problems of cooperation and integration. Relationships between individuals in recurrent interaction tend to assume a certain patterned order. Rules defining expectations for behavior develop and become institutionalized. Commonly referred to as "norms" or "mores", these rules, when formalized and recorded, constitute a system of laws: the legal code of the society. Violations of the legal code constitute what is commonly labeled "criminal activity" or "crime".

Phenomenologically, crime and society have long been associated. It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that as man first began to recognize and define crime as a distinct form of social behavior, he also began to speculate as to its nature and causes.

Sutherland and Cressey (1970:48-56) present a typology useful in summarizing the development of systematic thought and investigation concerning the phenomena of crime in society.

The earliest school of thought singled out for discussion was the classical school which originated in England during the last quarter of the 18th Century. The doctrines of this school gained wide acceptance in other European nations and reflected the belief that man was a rational being who was motivated towards social actions in accordance with hedonistic principles. Man was seen as being motivated to engage in those activities which brought him pleasure and was motivated to avoid those activities which brought him pain. In addition to his pleasure seeking motivation, man was also believed capable of judging rationally

the outcome of his various alternative courses of action, i.e., he was able to weigh the expected costs of his actions before they were initiated, balancing expected gains in pleasure against expected losses due to pain. An act was committed if this pleasure-pain balance was tipped in favor of pleasure and avoided if tipped in favor of pain. The works of Cesare Beccaria (1767) are well known among the writings of the classical school.

The dictates of the classical school were directed primarily towards the correction of inequalities that existed in criminal justice systems at that time. In addition to this, they sought also to provide a feasible plan of crime prevention. Crime would be prevented, it was believed, if the punishment for each specific offense was set at a level just sufficient to offset any pleasure received when the act was committed. If crimes brought more pain than pleasure, individuals would not engage in criminal activities. As it was believed that each specific form of criminal activity held the same ratio of pleasure-pain consequences for every individual, uniform punishment became the ideal. The thinking of this school was later modified by the neo-classical school of thought to exclude from punishment those individuals who were judged unable to appreciate the consequences of their actions, i.e., children and the insane.

The second important school of criminological thought, the statistical or cartographic school, developed during the early part of the 19th Century in France. The proponents of such an approach were concerned with the social and geographical distribution of criminal behavior as related to the distribution of other demographic variables.

The names of Quetelet, Guerry, and Mayhew are associated with this school, and Durkheim's well known treatment of suicide incorporates many of these techniques. Among the variables investigated with respect to criminal behavior were climate, the season of the year, the geographical and ecological characteristics of a nation or region of a nation, the density of population, rates of unemployment, fluctuations in the selling or buying prices of certain commodities, and poverty and economic depression. The earlier proponents of this school felt that crime was the result of legal codes that failed to take into account the values and behavioral norms of certain sectors of the population, notably the lower classes. Later proponents of this mode of thought merged with the then developing socialist school. However, rebirths of this type of analysis have not been uncommon, perhaps the most recent being that which occurred among the sociologists at the University of Chicago in the 1920's and 1930's.

With the writings of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and others, during the middle of the 19th Century, social thought began to direct attention towards the role played by economic factors in the determination of social behavior. The socialist school of criminology was oriented to the belief that economic exploitation and economic inequality resulted in whole classes of persons being immersed in conditions of desperate poverty. These impoverished sectors of the population became the breeding grounds of crime; crime was thought to provide perhaps the only means by which such individuals could rise above their desperate and marginal state of existence. As with the cartographic school, the methodology of this school was primarily statistical, these statistical



studies purporting to illustrate the validity of the general belief that there was a direct relationship between economic conditions and criminal behavior.

Three other perspectives concerned with the genesis of criminal behavior came into existence soon after the rise of the socialist school. These were identified by Sutherland and Cressey as the "typological schools". The first of the typological schools was the Lombrosian, founded on the belief that criminal behavior resulted primarily from certain defects or "anomalies" in the individual's psychic constitution. The criminal came to be considered a throwback, a return to an earlier and more savage state of man. He was possessed with atavistic and savage tendencies that may have been functional at an earlier point in the development of the human race but were out of place in a modern and complex society. Such anomalies occurred not only in the mind of the criminal but were also reflected in his physical appearance. Revisions to this theory made by Lombroso and others, notably Garofalo and Ferri, distinguished between several criminal types. Born criminals were what the name implies, and were characterized by anomalies in their physical appearances. Pseudo-criminals, occasional criminals, and criminals of passion, became such at a later stage in life due principally to pressures of opportunity, circumstance, disease or accident.

The second "typological school" was that of the mental testers. Criminality, according to these doctrines, was the result of individual "feeble-mindedness", a trait that could be transmitted through the forces of direct heredity. It was believed that such individuals engaged in criminal behavior because they were unable to appreciate or understand

the consequences of their antisocial actions.

The last of the "typological schools" has been labeled the psychiatric and took this approach to the nature of criminal genesis. Based in part on the works of Freud, the doctrines of this school reflected the belief that crime was the result of some defect or disturbance in the individual's personality or emotional make-up. Such defects were acquired primarily in the process of social interaction, especially during early childhood, and were not subject to forces of direct heredity. It was believed that the particular organizational characteristics of the personality that resulted in the manifestation of criminal behavior could be developed quite apart from any direct contact with the criminal culture. These defects, it was believed, would result in criminal behavior regardless of the specific nature of the social situation.

The most recent trend in criminological thought has been the development of the sociological school. This school incorporates the many and varied theoretical orientations that are in vogue today and which assume as a basic premise the belief that criminal behavior results from the same social processes which also result in other forms of social behavior. Included in this perspective are theories such as Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) work on delinquency and opportunity, Cohen's (1955) theory of delinquent subcultures, Kobrin's (1951) research into value conflict, Matza's (1964) delinquency and drift theory, and the concern of this thesis, Sutherland's (1939, 1970) theory of differential association.

Contemporary Perspectives on Differential Association Theory

Sutherland's first formal statement of differential association theory appeared in his 1939 edition of Principles of Criminology. At the point of its initial formalization the theory was stated in terms of seven propositions. These were later revised in the 1947 edition of that text and appear now in the format presented earlier in this chapter. Sutherland's first version of differential association theory was stated as follows: (1939:4-9)

1. The processes which result in systematic criminal behavior are fundamentally the same in form as processes which result in systematic lawful behavior.
2. Systematic criminal behavior is determined in a process of association with those who commit crimes, just as systematic lawful behavior is determined in a process of association with those who are law-abiding.
3. Differential association is the specific causal process in the development of systematic criminal behavior.
4. The chance that a person will participate in systematic criminal behavior is determined roughly by the frequency and consistency of his contacts with patterns of criminal behavior.
5. Individual differences among people in respect to personal characteristics or social situations cause crime only as they affect differential associations or frequency and consistency of contacts with criminal patterns.
6. Cultural conflict is the underlying cause of differential associations and therefore of systematic criminal behavior.
7. Social disorganization is the basic cause of systematic criminal behavior.

Sutherland summarizes these propositions with the following statement:

Systematic criminal behavior is due immediately to differential associations in a situation in which cultural conflicts exist, and ultimately to the social disorganization in that situation. A specific or incidental crime of a particular person is generally due to the same process, but it is not possible to include all cases because of the adventitious character of delinquency when regarded as specific or incidental acts. (1939:9)

Sutherland expressed the opinion that crime, both when considered as a societal phenomena and when considered as an individual act, was the result of differential associations arising out of a situation of multiple and/or conflicting cultural definitions, especially as such definitions have reference to the legal code.

The availability of associations with either criminal or anticriminal definers of the legal code are largely determined by the state of social disorganization that exists within a particular society or sector of that society at a given time. It is stressed that it is associations rather than social disorganization, which are the prime determinates of criminal behavior in the individual, and, consequently in society.

Sutherland's theory of differential association is in part a theory of differential socialization. Individual delinquency is the result of a learning experience, a process characterized by an overabundance of meaningful associations with criminal definers (and definitions) of the legal code and an underabundance of meaningful associations with anticriminal definers (or definitions) of the legal code. One, in short, learns or does not learn criminal behavior. The learning processes involved in the learning of crime are the same as those which are involved in the learning of any other form of social behavior.

Shortly after Sutherland first presented his theory of differential association, Arthur Leader (1941) published an article that criticized these theoretical propositions on five points: (1) Sutherland's failure to define the meaning of "systematic criminal behavior" and "consistency"; (2) his failure to take into account the qualitative aspects of the "meaning" such associations have for the individual; (3) his failure to explain the reason why criminals who associate with one another often commit different types of crimes and employ different techniques; (4) his failure to explain why individuals associate differentially; and (5) Sutherland's failure to explain the reason why some individuals, who are exposed to criminal patterns of behavior, fail to engage in subsequent criminal activity. Leader stated a belief that mere exposure to criminal contacts does not "automatically" lead to criminal activity. Explanations of such behavior, he said, could better be explored through the utilization of such concepts as "individual basic personality patterns" and "ways of satisfying needs" (1941:45). Differential association is not a direct "cause" of crime but rather a single variant factor in a causal chain.

Searching primarily for the psychological attributes of the individual that would lead him to seek the associations he makes, Leader suggested that individuals are born with differential capacities and certain basic needs or drives. One learns to satisfy his needs through the manifestation of certain behaviors. These behavioral patterns are in turn shaped by the particular cultural patterns of the individual's social stratum. Such cultural patterns differ from strata to strata, from time to time, and from place to place, depending upon the degree of

community solidarity, crystallization, and the complexity of the social order.

Individuals are different and their ways of satisfying their needs are different. For this reason they associate differentially. The exposition to criminal patterns of behavior promotes criminal activity only when noncriminal behavior is inaccessible or less satisfying and when criminal patterns assume some definite psychological meanings. The criminal patterns vary in their effect according to who presents them, the type of activity condoned, the previous attitudes towards such activity, and the present personality pattern. (Leader, 1941:50)

In a rejoinder published with this article, Sutherland (1941) explained and clarified his theoretical propositions. Abandoning the use of the term "systematic" for describing criminal behavior, he declared that it had been introduced only for the sake of convenience and as it appeared no longer to fulfill this requirement it should be discarded. "Consistency," he said, refers to the character of criminal or noncriminal associations. Association with one type of behavior exclusively would constitute a state of complete consistency. This is only an ideal construct and is not possible in actual associations, but all associations do fall somewhere between the extremes of complete consistency with criminal patterns and complete consistency with noncriminal patterns.

Sutherland also stated that he believed the two questions, how are associations determined and how do associations determine delinquency, to be separate and distinct inquiries. The first he maintained, has been the target of considerable criminological investigation in the past. Factors such as individual differences in temperament, physical strength, economic class, and intelligence are explanations for associations but not for delinquency. Differential associations are an

explanation for delinquency. Furthermore, mere exposure to criminal patterns of behavior does "automatically" determine delinquency, provided the individual is not subject to any physical or mental limitations that might otherwise restrict his criminal involvement.

The "meaning" of differential associations for the individual is considered by Sutherland to be a superfluous addition to the concept as he employs it. First, he said, the meaning of associations are largely determined by the frequency and consistency of delinquent behavior, and secondly, "meaning," as the term is employed by Leader, seems to find its definition in the context of the psychiatric theory of frustration-compensation. This theory is unsatisfactory because it is incapable of providing a valid basis for considering one act to be a substitute for another. Furthermore, it lacks the ability to explain why criminal behavior rather than some other form of legitimate behavior becomes the substitute act. Although "meaning" adds nothing to a sociological theory of criminal genesis, perhaps, admitted Sutherland, other variables must be added to those of frequency and consistency in order to provide a more adequate explanation for criminal activity (in the 1949 revision of differential association theory the variables of duration, priority, and intensity were added, consistency was deleted, and frequency was retained).

In his 1939 Presidential address to the members of the American Sociological Association, Sutherland discussed the application of differential association theory to the study of white collar crime (Sutherland, 1940). While the lower class criminal generally makes his delinquent associations early in life, the white collar criminal is usually

the product of later associations: associations which are made in the business world where the "rules of the game" are often in conflict with the official norms of better business bureaus, professional societies, governmental regulatory agencies, or the legal code. Social disorganization, leading to differential associations, is present in the business environment just as it is present in the lower class world. The white collar criminal is exposed at once to conventionally oriented policies, practices, and regulations while at the same time to unfair and dishonest practices of business partners and business competitors. Differential associations with these criminal patterns of behavior determine white collar crime just as exposure to lower class criminal practices determine more conventional forms of criminal behavior.

Two studies conducted by Marshall Clinard (1942, 1944) included among other things, an investigation of the relationship between differential association and the criminal involvement of urban and rural offenders. Clinard indicated in his study of crime and the process of urbanization (1942) that networks of criminal relationships vary directly with the degree of urbanization, being more extensive in highly urbanized areas and less extensive in rural areas. He also found that the age at which criminal associations were first made by offenders varied inversely with the degree of urbanization in their home communities. Offenders from the more urbanized areas had their first contacts with criminal patterns of behavior and criminal others at an earlier age than did offenders from more rural areas. The differential associations considered in this study were measured by membership in delinquent gangs, companionship in delinquency, and contact with persons having delinquent



or criminal records. Clinard concludes that differential association is a definite factor in the criminal behavior of offenders from urban areas, but influences to a much lesser degree the criminal behavior of offenders from rural areas.

In a study devoted primarily to rural offenders, Clinard (1944) further explored the relationship between differential association and criminal behavior. He found that the delinquent associations of rural offenders were characterized by associations with only one or two criminal others while the associations of urban offenders were typically in the form of participation in delinquent gangs.

Several researchers have proposed modifications to differential association theory either to aid in its empirical verification or else make it more amenable to practical application.

Daniel Glaser (1956) reconceptualized differential association theory in the language of role theory, substituting the concept of "differential identification" for Sutherland's concept of differential association. According to Glaser, a person engages in criminal activity to the extent that he is able to identify with real or imaginary persons from whose perspective criminal behavior seems acceptable. The theory of differential association, said Glaser, is supported by evidence that a major portion of criminality is learned through participation in criminal groups, but such evidence, imperfectly correlating associations with criminality, evokes a disconnected image of the relationship between these two factors. In order to demonstrate the existence of a connected process, one is forced to specify the variable that intervenes between association and crime. This variable is identification.

Glaser suggested that the selection of persons with whom we identify ourselves at any particular moment is dependent upon both our prior identifications and our present circumstances. Prior identifications that have proved to be satisfactory, tend to persist, but present circumstances delimit the associations that can be easily made at the moment in question, i.e., the circumstances of the moment tend to affect the desirability of accepting past identifications in any given situation. These factors, said Glaser, provide a more adequate explanation for "situational" and "incidental" crimes than does the theory of differential association alone.

In a later article, Glaser (1960) discussed the role of differential association in criminological prediction. Reviewing studies by the Gleucks (1950), Reiss (1951), Ohlin (1951), Mannheim and Wilkins (1955) and Glaser (1959), among others, he found that the frequency, duration, priority, and intensity of criminal contacts had all been employed as successful predictors of future criminal activity. Alienation from antiriminal associations (deducible from differential association theory) had also been found to be an accurate predictor, but two other predictors of criminal activity, the type of offense and the availability of noncriminal employment opportunities, could not be deduced from Sutherland's theory. To account for the effect of these last two variables, Glaser suggested that the concept of differential anticipation be adopted. Differential anticipation was defined as the actor's perception of the availability of the future opportunities for criminal or noncriminal activity. By employing the concept of differential anticipation to supplement that of differential association, one is better

able to explain the criminal involvement of those persons marginal in criminal identification. Such marginal individuals would frequently move between criminal and noncriminal involvement depending upon the availability of criminal and noncriminal opportunities.

Clarence Jeffery (1965) discussed the relation of differential association and modern principles of learning theory. He suggested that the concept of "differential reinforcement" was the key variable in an explanation of criminal behavior. An actor manifests criminal behavior because he has been rewarded for such behavior in the past while at the same time he has never experienced the adverse effects of such behavior to the extent that he would seek to modify his criminal behavior patterns.

Robert Burgess and Ronald Akers (1966) also turned to learning theory to propose a restatement of differential association theory. Criminal behavior, they said, is learned in accordance with the principles of operant conditioning, the principle part of such learning occurring in the context of those groups which provide the individual with his major source of reinforcement. The learning of the specific techniques, attitudes, and avoidance procedures is a function of both the available effective reinforcers and the existing reinforcement contingencies. Criminal behavior is a function of norms discriminative for such behavior and the learning of criminal behavior takes place when it is more highly reinforced than noncriminal behavior. The strength of criminal behavior is directly dependent upon the amount, frequency, and probability of its reinforcement.

Melvin DeFleur and Richard Quinney (1966) attempted to make differential association theory more readily accessible to empirical analysis by reformulating it in terms of the language of set theory. By arranging Sutherland's propositions in axiomatic form and stating them in terms of logical rather than verbal language, they were able to demonstrate that the theory of differential association appeared to have an internal and logical consistency. They then proceeded to present a strategy for the testing of this theory but admitted that such a task, although not beyond the realm of possibility, would prove to be an extremely difficult undertaking.

Two practical applications of differential association principles are the subject of articles by Donald Cressey (1955) and Henry McKay (1960).

Cressey (1955) suggested that criminal behavior might be modified through the application of the principles outlined in Sutherland's theory, the implications for diagnosis and treatment contained in this theory being consistent with the group relations principle of behavioral modification. Successful correctional work, he maintained, depends upon the modification of criminal behavior. If criminals are to become non-criminal, they must either assume membership in anticriminal groups and/or their present patterns of associations with procriminal groups must be terminated. Cressey presented six general principles to serve as a guide for correctional programs desiring to obtain this end.

McKay's (1960) article was concerned with delinquency prevention programs. He stated a belief that areas with high rates of delinquency differed from those areas with low rates of delinquency primarily in the

degree to which the institutions present in the environment symbolized conventional value systems as opposed to criminal value systems. High delinquency areas are less well integrated than are low delinquency areas and therefore the individual in the high rate area is more often confronted with conflicting values and criminal associations.

McKay felt that the conventional legal system often forces the youthful offender into associations with delinquent others. In the process of reforming offenders, such youths are often placed into institutions which serve to effectively isolate them from conventional associations and increase the frequency of their associations with delinquent patterns of behavior. McKay, like Cressey, feels that delinquency prevention should be thought of in terms of increasing the individual's associations with, or participation in, conventional groups and decreasing his participation in criminal groups.

James F. Short conducted two of the few empirical tests made of the differential association theory. The first was with a sample of youths from a state training school (1957) and the second (1960) utilized a sample of youth who were students in conventional public high schools. Employing different measures of differential association for each study, Short demonstrated the existence of a positive relationship between delinquent associations and individual delinquency. Such a relationship was found to be more significant among the males in each sample than among the females. The relationship of delinquent association and delinquent behavior was also more pronounced for inmates of the state training school than for "normal" high school students.

Short's two measures of differential association were employed in the test instrument used in this study, but only one measure (the one including scales of specific, general, and total differential association) was found to be suitable to this particular sample of sophomore college students.

To date, the theory of differential association has generated considerable comment and controversy. Although empirical investigations of its explanatory power have been quite limited, it remains as one of the most important theories dealing sociologically with the problem of criminal genesis.

## CHAPTER III

### THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Sutherland (1941) suggested that the theory of differential association was capable of explaining all criminal behavior. If such an assumption is correct, it should be possible to select any sample of individuals from a population which exhibits some form or degree of criminal behavior and use this sample to test the validity of the basic theory. Such a test would either lend support to the theory or else suggest possible limitations that should be placed on its generality, indicating that either a modification of the theoretical propositions is in order or the theory must be limited either to certain classes of criminal behavior or certain select populations of offenders. The investigation reported in this thesis was proposed as a limited test of differential association theory, utilizing a sample of college sophomores.

#### The Pretest

After the initial population to be sampled in this investigation had been defined, a second population was identified and sampled for the express purpose of pretesting the test instrument and methods of data collection. The pretest sample consisted of twenty freshman college students selected purposefully from those taking introductory sociology courses at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Seventeen of the twenty students selected reported for testing: five responded to the original letter requesting participation; eight reported

in response to a follow-up letter; and four to a second and final follow-up request by means of a telephone call. Overall pretest response rate was 85.0 percent.

Analysis of the pretest response patterns indicated that the test instrument would be suitable as designed for the purpose of investigating differential association among a college student population. The possible elimination of one scale referring to the delinquent or non-delinquent characteristics of best friends was deliberated but it was decided to allow this scale to remain in the test instrument.<sup>1</sup> The test instrument utilized in both the pretest and the main investigation is presented in its entirety in Appendix A.

#### The Sample

The main sample consisted of one-hundred twenty college sophomores selected randomly from the entire population of on-campus sophomores enrolled at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University at the beginning of the Fall Quarter, 1970. These 120 subjects were contacted by letter asking them to participate in the study by reporting to the investigator in his office on one of two dates.<sup>2</sup> Subjects who failed to

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<sup>1</sup>This scale, adapted from Short (1957), was found to have a low reliability and to be a poor indicator of differential associations when the data collected in the main test was subject to preliminary analysis. It was eliminated from consideration at that point.

<sup>2</sup>Current student life policies of this university prohibit the solicitation of students in their dormitories, thereby necessitating the reporting of subjects to the investigator at some other location. This is believed to have lowered the response rate below that which was initially anticipated.



respond to this first request were sent a follow-up letter and new test dates were arranged one week later. Those who failed to respond to this second letter were contacted by the investigator by means of a telephone call and again encouraged to participate. Of the original 120 students selected, 22 were eliminated from the sample for several reasons: (1) they had resigned from the university since the beginning of the Fall Quarter ( $n = 6$ ); (2) they were participating in the cooperative education program and were not available on-campus ( $n = 9$ ); (3) they had moved to residences off-campus ( $n = 5$ ); or (4) they were no longer residing at their dormitory addresses and their whereabouts could not be ascertained ( $n = 2$ ). Of the 98 students remaining in the sample population, 77 returned completed questionnaires for a response rate of 78.6 percent.

Selecting the sample from a population of on-campus sophomore students allowed the researcher to control for such factors as differences in age, marital status, and educational experience at an early point in the research design. Although it may be argued that the variables eliminated in a controlled sample selection process could have had some influence on the delinquent involvement and should therefore be taken into consideration, it is felt that the controlled variables are of but secondary importance to a study designed primarily to investigate characteristics of differential association. Elimination of extraneous variables makes possible the collapsing and simplification of the data matrix and thereby adds to the ease and clarity of data analysis and discussion. A homogeneous sample with regard to various demographic characteristics was deemed desirable and consequently incorporated into

the sample selection process.

In addition to intended controls, analysis of demographic data revealed that all subjects, with the exception of one female oriental, were caucasians. All but four of the respondents were from families where both the mother and father were alive and living together.<sup>3</sup>

Tables I, II, and III illustrate the distribution of respondents according to age, social class, and area of residence controlling for sex.

In conclusion, the sample consisted of 77 college sophomores, 56 males and 21 females. For the most part these subjects appeared to be typical of the white, middle-class, college students one would expect to find at this university.

#### The Test Instrument

The test instrument was a questionnaire administered to the respondents under controlled conditions in which the anonymity of the respondent was preserved. A copy of the questionnaire appears in Appendix A. The questionnaire was designed after considerable research into the nature of both sociological and criminological investigative methods and techniques. The scales measuring differential association characteristics were adapted from earlier studies conducted by James F. Short (1957, 1960). The scales measuring attitudes favorable or unfavorable towards involvement in specific delinquent acts were constructed to measure six dimensions of such attitudes that were abstracted

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<sup>3</sup>There was one case of divorce, two cases where the male parent was deceased, and one case where the mother was deceased.

TABLE I  
AGE OF RESPONDENTS BY SEX

Sex	18-19	20-21	22-23	Total
Male	41 (73%)	15 (27%)	0 (0%)	56 (100%)
Female	16 (76%)	2 (10%)	3 (14%)	21 (100%)
Total	57 (74%)	17 (22%)	3 (4%)	77 (100%)

TABLE II  
SOCIAL CLASS OF RESPONDENTS BY SEX

Sex	Upper Class	Middle Class	Lower Class	Total
Male	11 (20%)	25 (44%)	20 (36%)	56 (100%)
Female	12 (57%)	7 (34%)	2 ( 9%)	21 (100%)
Total	23 (30%)	32 (41%)	22 (29%)	77 (100%)

TABLE III  
 SIZE OF HOME COMMUNITY BY SEX

Sex	Under 10,000	10,000 to 50,000	Over 50,000	Total
Male	20 (36%)	20 (36%)	16 ( 28%)	56 (100%)
Female	6 (29%)	8 (38%)	7 (33%)	21 (100%)
Total	26 (34%)	28 (36%)	23 (30%)	77 (100%)

from the literature review and discussions with various faculty and graduate members of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Sociology Department. Most specific acts included in the delinquency index were those which were reported most frequently in response to an open ended questionnaire of delinquent involvement administered to 263 college students in the Spring of 1970. Other items were added to these (auto theft, major theft, assault, and use of drugs other than marijuana) to give a wider range of possible delinquent activities. Many items on the delinquency index are similar in nature to those included in other self-reported studies of juvenile delinquency.

Part I of the questionnaire (items referring to the characteristics of best friends) was eliminated in the preliminary data analysis. This was the scale adapted from Short (1960) and was discussed earlier. Low reliability and low correlations with other portions of the questionnaire resulted in this elimination.

Short's (1957) second scale of differential association appears in Part IV of the test instrument. This scale is composed of two sub-scales the first of which measures specific differential associations and corresponds to Sutherland's variables of the frequency, duration, priority, and intensity of differential associations. The second sub-scale refers to more general characteristics of differential associations and includes five items. This sub-scale is a measure of "general differential associations." When the scores on the two sub-scales are combined the result yields a measure of the respondent's total dif-

ferential association patterns. Reliability, computed by the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula, was .6752 for the specific differential association sub-scale when all of the items on this scale were taken into account (frequency, duration, priority, and intensity). Priority was found to have low correlations with the other variables in this scale and was eliminated as a scale item.<sup>4</sup> With priority deleted, the reliability of the specific differential association scale increased to .7936. It should be noted that any future references to specific association in this paper refer only to the frequency, duration, and intensity of differential associations unless otherwise indicated.

The general differential association sub-scale had a reliability computed to be .7145. When the two sub-scales were combined to form the total differential association scale the overall reliability was .8119 (when priority was included in the total scale the reliability coefficient decreased in value to .7925).

Parts II and III of the questionnaire measure the definitions or attitudes the respondent holds favorable or unfavorable to involvement in delinquent activity. Six dimensions of these attitudes were investigated with reference to each of the fifteen delinquent acts in the delinquency index: (1) the respondent's perception of his friend's reaction to the knowledge that he has engaged in the delinquent act;

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<sup>4</sup>Sutherland (1970:76) is uncertain as to the actual effects or importance of the priority variable. He believes it may be important primarily through the selective influence of patterns of behavior developed early in life. In this investigation it appears to have little importance.

(2) his definition of the act as being "normal or "abnormal" behavior for an individual like himself; (3) the respondent's perception of the risk of being caught and/or punished as the result of involvement in the activity; (4) his definition of the "seriousness" of the act with regard to the prohibitions of the legal, social, or moral normative systems; (5) the respondent's definition of the specific act as one which should be socially and legally regulated or as one which should be primarily the concern of individual conscience; and (6) his perceptions of the possible rewards and losses that might accrue as the result of involvement in the particular form of behavior.

The reliability of the fifteen definitional or attitudinal scales (each containing six items and pertaining to one of each of fifteen delinquent acts) was computed by the Spearman-Brown method and yielded coefficients that ranged from a low reliability of .6951 (breaking and entering to a high reliability of .9061 (possessing, buying, or using marijuana). Only two of the definitional scales had reliabilities computed at values less than .8000 indicating that in general these scales provided internally consistent measures of attitudes towards involvement in delinquent activity.

Scores on the fifteen individual scales were combined to yield a total definitional score for each individual. These total scores ranged in value from 200 (definitions favorable towards violation of the law or involvement in delinquent activity) to 354 (definitions unfavorable towards violation of the law or involvement in delinquent activity). The mean score was 278 and the standard deviation of the



scores was 33.4. Overall, the scores indicated that respondents held attitudes more unfavorable than favorable towards violation of law (the possible scores could have ranged from a delinquency favorable score of 90 to a delinquency unfavorable score of 360). The reliability coefficient of the fifteen scales when combined (yielding a total scale of 90 items) was .9501.

Part V of the questionnaire was designed to measure involvement in delinquent behavior as self-reported by the respondents. The distribution of delinquency among the respondents controlling for respondent sex is reported in Table IV.

These fifteen delinquent acts were assigned rank ordered weights by a panel of 30 judges selected from among the faculty and graduate students of the sociology department. The judgements for the weighted acts were made on the basis of the perceived "seriousness" of the act as defined by the judges. The most serious acts were assigned a final rank ordered weight of 1 and the least serious acts were assigned a weighting of 8. These weights were multiplied by the reported frequency of the respondent's involvement in the act to give a weighted score for each respondent on each act. These act-specific, weighted scores were then summed to obtain a total delinquency index score for each respondent. Scores ranged from 137 (high delinquency involvement) to 240 (low delinquency involvement). The mean score was 212 and the standard deviation was 20.8. The reliability of this delinquency index was computed at .7785 by the Spearman-Brown method.

TABLE IV

## RESPONDENT INVOLVEMENT IN SPECIFIC DELINQUENT ACTS BY SEX

Delinquent Act	Male (n=56)	Female (n=21)	Total (n=77)
Shoplifting	36 (64%)	7 (33%)	43 (56%)
Theft under \$5	37 (66%)	7 (33%)	44 (57%)
Breaking and entering	3 ( 5%)	0 ( 0%)	3 ( 4%)
Selling drugs	18 (32%)	4 (19%)	22 (29%)
Auto theft	1 ( 2%)	0 ( 0%)	1 ( 1%)
Using marijuana	30 (53%)	8 (38%)	38 (49%)
Cheating	50 (89%)	16 (76%)	66 (86%)
Fist fighting	49 (87%)	3 (14%)	52 (68%)
Making annoying or obscene phone calls	14 (25%)	11 (52%)	25 (32%)
Serious assault	5 ( 9%)	1 ( 5%)	6 ( 8%)
Sexual relations	35 (62%)	9 (43%)	44 (57%)
Theft \$5 - \$50	10 (18%)	1 ( 5%)	11 (14%)
Vandalism	28 (50%)	7 (33%)	35 (45%)
Theft over \$50	3 ( 5%)	0 ( 0%)	3 ( 4%)
Using drugs other than marijuana	14 (25%)	5 (24%)	19 (25%)

Part IV of the questionnaire was designed to collect demographic information from the respondents concerning their sex, family characteristics, age, community of residence, and social class. Social class was measured by the Hollingshead two-factor index (occupation and education of father). The two middle classes were combined and the two lower classes were combined to form a single middle class and a single lower class. The upper class remained unchanged. The distribution of the respondent's by sex and social class has already been reported in Table II.

The final section of the test instrument, Part VII, measures the respondent's perception of the delinquent behavior of his best friends and other friends. This is used as a second indicator of differential associations with delinquent and non-delinquent patterns of behavior and also used to test the assumption that the principle part of the learning of criminal behavior occurs within the context of intimate primary groups.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>The author assumes a symbolic interactionist perspective. The delinquent or non-delinquent behavior of friends, as used in this investigation, is that which was perceived and reported by the respondent, himself. It is believed that an individual can react to his environment only as he perceives it. That which the social actor perceives as real has real consequences for his behavior. Therefore, it is the respondent's perception of others (as being delinquent or non-delinquent), rather than their actual conduct, which has importance for his subsequent delinquent or non-delinquent involvement.

### The Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been derived either directly or indirectly from the nine propositions of differential association theory.

Hypothesis I. The major portion of the criminal learning experience occurs within the context of primary group relationships; the delinquent involvement of an individual is directly related to his perceptions of the delinquent involvement of his friends and especially to his perceptions of the delinquent involvement of his best friends.

When stating his theory of differential association, Sutherland proposed that criminal behavior is learned in a process of communication while interacting with other persons. The primary part of this learning occurs within the intimate primary group according to the statement of his third proposition. The author believes that the peer-oriented friendship group comprises one of the most important primary reference groups for the college student. Based upon Sutherland's proposition and this contention the first hypothesis was stated for testing.

Hypothesis II. The specific direction of attitudes, either favorable or unfavorable to violations of the law, is learned in a process of differential association with delinquent and non-delinquent patterns of behavior: the attitudes that an individual holds favorable or unfavorable towards violations of law vary directly with his differential associations with delinquent and non-delinquent patterns of behavior.

This hypothesis is derived indirectly from the fourth and fifth propositions of differential association theory. An individual is exposed to varying attitudes or definitions favorable or unfavorable towards violations of the law when he associates differentially with delinquent and non-delinquent patterns of behavior. The specific

direction of the individual's own attitudes and definitions is dependent upon the nature of his associations with the two types of behavior.

Hypothesis III-a. Involvement in delinquent behavior varies directly with the nature of the attitudes one holds favorable or unfavorable towards violations of the law: those individuals with attitudes more favorable to violations of the law will manifest correspondingly greater degrees of involvement in delinquent activity.

Hypothesis III-b. Involvement in delinquent behavior varies directly with the nature of differential associations with delinquent and non-delinquent patterns of behavior: individuals with higher degrees of differential association with delinquent patterns of behavior will manifest correspondingly greater involvement in delinquent activity.

These two hypotheses were derived from Sutherland's sixth proposition of differential association and are in essence the basic principle of that theory. Individuals who have greater association with delinquent patterns of behavior should also exhibit more favorable attitudes toward law violations and greater degrees of involvement in delinquent behavior as a result of the influences of the criminal learning process.

Hypothesis IV-a. Attitudes favorable towards violation of the law and involvement in delinquent behavior vary directly with the frequency of differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior.

Hypothesis IV-b. Attitudes favorable towards violation of the law and involvement in delinquent behavior vary directly with the duration of differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior.

Hypothesis IV-c. Attitudes favorable towards violation of the law and involvement in delinquent behavior vary directly with the priority of differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior.

Hypothesis IV-d. Attitudes favorable towards violation of the law and involvement in delinquent behavior vary directly with the intensity of differential associations with delinquent

patterns of behavior.

These last four hypotheses were derived directly from proposition seven of the basic differential association theory and refer to the variables of specific patterns of differential associations as measured by the specific differential association scale.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

In this chapter the data collected from the respondents will be analyzed and discussed with reference to the hypotheses stated in Chapter III.

#### The Influence of Demographic Variables on Differential Association and Delinquency

Previous studies of delinquency have investigated the incidence of delinquent behavior in various population groups with reference to such factors as family stability, intelligence, educational adjustment, masculine identity crisis, sex, social class, geographical and social mobility, and community size. As stated earlier in this thesis, such factors are adjudged to be of secondary importance to an empirical investigation of differential association theory. Consequently, many of these factors were controlled during the process of sample selection. Nevertheless, three demographic characteristics, social class, community size, and sex will be discussed briefly as these are often found to be correlated with delinquent behavior.

Table V illustrates the influence of social class on the respondent's attitudes favorable or unfavorable towards violations of the law. Results of a chi-square test performed on this distribution indicate that any difference between social class groups with regard to attitudes towards law violation are largely superfluous having more than an

80 percent probability of occurring by chance alone. Table VI reports the distribution of respondents by self-reported delinquent involvement again controlling for social class differences. Although this distribution has less of a probability of occurring due to chance factors, it is still judged to be of little significance statistically.

Table VII indicates the attitudes towards violations of the law when the size of the community in which the respondent spent the greatest portion of his adolescence is held constant. It appears that community size has little if any effect on the attitudes that one holds favorable or unfavorable towards law violative behavior. The chi-square value computed for this distribution (.4667) was among the lowest found in this investigation. The chi-square value for the distribution of respondents by community size and actual involvement in delinquent activity was also statistically insignificant (Table VIII). Community size is therefore considered to have very little effect on the results reported in this study.

Because these two factors are often found to be correlated with delinquent involvement in other studies, the indications of their insignificant influence here cannot be interpreted as evidence that they are unimportant in the processes which determine delinquent behavior. Rather than make this interpretation the author tends to conclude that adequate controls for social class and community differences are incorporated in the research design.



TABLE V  
ATTITUDES TOWARDS LAW VIOLATION BY SOCIAL CLASS

Social Class	Attitudes Towards Law Violation						Total
	Favorable		Neutral		Unfavorable		
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Lower	6	7.4	6	7.4	10	7.1	22
Middle	11	10.8	13	10.8	8	10.4	32
Upper	9	7.8	7	7.8	7	7.5	23
Total	26		26		25		77

$$\chi^2 = 2.9921 \quad \text{d.f.} = 4 \quad \text{p.} > .80 \quad \text{C} = .1934$$

TABLE VI  
 SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENT INVOLVEMENT BY SOCIAL CLASS

Social Class	Delinquent Involvement						Total
	High		Moderate		Low		
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Lower	5	5.4	5	7.4	12	9.1	22
Middle	10	7.9	13	10.8	9	13.3	32
Upper	4	5.7	8	7.7	11	9.6	23
Total	19		26		32		77

$$\chi^2 = 4.8355 \quad \text{d.f.} = 4 \quad \text{p.} < .40 \quad \text{c} = .2431$$

TABLE VII  
ATTITUDES TOWARDS LAW VIOLATION BY COMMUNITY SIZE

Community Size	Attitude towards Law Violation						Total
	Favorable to violation		Neutral		Unfavorable to violation		
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Under 10,000	9	7.8	7	7.7	7	7.5	23
10,000 to 50,000	9	9.4	10	9.4	9	9.1	28
Over 50,000	8	8.8	9	8.8	9	8.4	26
Total	26		26		25		77

$$X^2 = 0.4667$$

$$d.f. = 4$$

$$p. > .95$$

$$C = .0776$$

TABLE VIII  
 SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENT INVOLVEMENT BY COMMUNITY SIZE

Community Size	Delinquent Involvement						Total
	High		Moderate		Low		
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Under 10,000	6	5.7	8	7.8	9	9.6	23
10,000 - 50,000	8	6.9	10	9.4	10	11.6	28
Over 50,000	5	6.4	8	8.8	13	10.8	26
Total	19		26		32		77

$$\chi^2 = 1.3194$$

$$d.f. = 4$$

$$p. > .80$$

$$C = .1298$$

The respondent's sex, as reported in Table IX, seems to have some influence on the nature of his attitudes towards violations of the law. Generally males hold attitudes more favorable towards involvement in delinquent behavior than do females. Table X further supports this conclusion. Males are seen in this distribution to have significantly greater involvement in delinquent behavior than do females. The significance of these two results led the author to investigate the relationship between sex and differential association.

The relationship between sex and specific differential associations reported in Table XI was found to have a very low probability of occurring due to factors other than chance. This indicates that the frequency, duration, and intensity of associations with delinquent patterns of behavior and non-delinquent patterns of behavior differ very little between the sexes. This finding seems to be in conflict with that indicated in Table XII, the distribution of respondents by sex and general differential association. Sex appears in this case to have a significant effect upon general differential associations with delinquent and non-delinquent patterns of behavior. It appears that males have more differential associations with delinquent patterns in general but when one takes into account associations only with close friends, sex differentials tend to be of little importance. Total differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior are also seen to differ according to the sex of the respondent. It is believed that this is due primarily to differences in general differential association patterns, this scale being the

TABLE IX  
ATTITUDES TOWARDS LAW VIOLATION BY SEX

	Attitudes Towards Violation of Law						Total
	Favorable to Violation		Neutral		Unfavorable to Violation		
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Sex:							
Male	22	18.9	16	18.9	18	18.9	56
Female	4	7.1	10	7.1	7	6.8	21
Total	26		26		25		77

$\chi^2 = 3.5002$       d.f. = 2      p. < .30      C = .2085

TABLE X  
 SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENT INVOLVEMENT BY SEX

	Delinquent Involvement						Total
	High		Moderate		Low		
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Sex							
Male	17	13.8	20	18.9	19	23.3	56
Female	2	5.2	6	7.1	13	8.7	21
Total	19		26		32		77

$\chi^2 = 5.7935$       d.f. = 2      p. < .10      C = .2654

TABLE XI  
 SPECIFIC DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION BY SEX

Specific Differential Association							
	High		Moderate		Low		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Sex							
Male	23	22.5	19	18.9	14	14.5	56
Female	8	8.4	7	7.1	6	5.4	21
Total	31		26		20		77

$$\chi^2 = 0.1102$$

$$d.f. = 2$$

$$p > .90$$

$$C = .0378$$



TABLE XII  
GENERAL DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION BY SEX

General Differential Association							
	High		Moderate		Low		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Sex							
Male	21	17.4	20	20.4	15	18.2	56
Female	3	6.5	8	7.6	10	6.8	21
Total	24		28		25		77

$$\chi^2 = 4.7061$$

$$d.f. = 2$$

$$p. < .10$$

$$c = .2400$$

combination of the two previously discussed. Total differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior appear in Table VIII with appropriate controls for the sex of respondents.

A brief review of this section concludes with the belief that social class and community size are of little importance to the determination of either delinquent favorable attitudes or delinquent involvement for the population sampled in this study. This is not regarded as indicating the unimportance of these variables concerning delinquency in general; rather it is regarded as indicating adequate control for these factors exist within the research design. Sex is seen as being important in the determination of delinquent attitudes and delinquent behavior, males tending to have more favorable attitudes towards delinquency and engage in more delinquent behavior than females. Sex seems to have little influence upon the frequency, duration, and intensity of specific patterns of associations but it does exert influence upon more general patterns of differential associations.

#### Hypothesis I

Hypothesis I was derived from Sutherland's third proposition and concerns the belief that the primary group serves as the context within which the principle part of the learning of criminal behavior takes place. The testing of this hypothesis is based on the assumption that the peer-oriented friendship group serves as a primary reference group for college students. If the principle part of the learning of

TABLE XIII  
TOTAL DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATIONS BY SEX

	Total Associations With Criminal Patterns						Total
	High		Moderate		Low		
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Sex							
Male	35	32.0	21	23.3	0	0.7	56
Female	9	12.0	11	8.72	1	0.0	21
Total	44		32		1		77

$$\chi^2 = 4.51 \quad \text{d.f.} = 2 \quad \text{p.} < .20$$

criminal behavior does occur in intimate primary groups and if the friendship group is indeed a group of this type, the delinquent involvement of an individual should be correlated with that of his friends and most especially with that of his best friends. As mentioned previously, involvement of others is that which is perceived and reported by the respondents.

Table XIV reports the correlations that exist between self reported delinquent involvement and the respondents' perceptions of the involvement of best friends and other friends for each of the fifteen acts included in the delinquency index. Of the thirty correlations shown in this table, twenty-nine are in the expected positive direction indicating that the delinquent involvement of oneself varies directly with the perceived delinquent involvement of one's best friends and other friends.

When the fifteen correlations between self involvement and the perceived delinquent involvement of best friends are examined, it is revealed that all but one of these correlations appear significant (utilizing Fisher's "z" transformation) at at least the .05 level of statistical inference. Eleven of these fifteen correlations are also significant at the .01 level. There is a high correlation between self involvement and the perceived delinquent behavior of best friends for the delinquent acts of shoplifting, theft of less than \$5, breaking and entering, selling drugs, using marijuana, cheating, fist fighting, making annoying or obscene phone calls, engaging in sexual relations, vandalism, and the use of drugs other than marijuana.

Major thefts, including auto thefts, are less significantly correlated when self involvement and perceptions of best friends involvement is considered. The correlation for the act involving aggravated or serious assault appears insignificant.

Correlations between self involvement and the perceived involvement of other than best friends is lower than the previously discussed relationships in every case. Ten of these fifteen correlations are significant at the .05 level and eight are also significant at the .01 level. These last eight correlations were for the acts of selling drugs, using marijuana, cheating, fist fighting, making annoying or obscene phone calls, engaging in sexual relations, vandalism, and using drugs other than marijuana.

The results reported here support Hypothesis I. Eighty percent of the correlations in this table were both positive and significant at a .05 level of statistical inference. This is evidence that self involvement in delinquency varies directly with the perception of the delinquency patterns of one's friends and provides support for the hypothesis that the peer-oriented friendship group is important in the criminal learning process. The higher correlations that were found between self involvement in delinquency and the perceived delinquency of best friends is further indication that the intimate primary group is important to the process of learning criminal behavior. Support of this hypothesis leads to an inference supporting the third proposition in differential association theory.

TABLE XIV

CORRELATIONS<sup>1</sup> BETWEEN SELF-REPORTED INVOLVEMENT IN SPECIFIC DELINQUENT ACTS AND THE PERCEIVED INVOLVEMENT OF THE RESPONDENT'S BEST FRIENDS AND OTHER ACQUAINTANCES IN THE SAME DELINQUENT ACTIVITIES

Delinquent Act	Perceived Involvement of best friends correlated with self involvement	Perceived Involvement of others correlated with self involvement
Shoplifting	.4004 *	.2313
Theft under \$5	.4654 *	.3590 **
Breaking and entering	.4094 *	.3590 **
Selling drugs	.6231 *	.4618 *
Auto theft	.2332 **	.0517
Using marijuana	.7423 *	.5261 *
Cheating	.5747 *	.4703 *
Fist fighting	.6323 *	.5748 *
Making annoying or obscene phone calls	.6886 *	.3981 *
Serious assault	.1279	.0710
Sex relations	.5719 *	.4443 *
Theft \$5-\$50	.2857 **	.2106
Vandalism	.6354 *	.3510 *
Theft over \$50	.2591 **	-.0225
Using drugs other than marijuana	.5438 *	.3278 *

1 Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients

\* Fisher's "z" transformation p. < .01

\*\* Fisher's "z" transformation p. < .05

## Hypothesis II

Hypothesis II concerns the learning of attitudes favorable or unfavorable towards involvement in delinquent activity. Sutherland (propositions four and five of differential association theory) said that definitions or attitudes favorable or unfavorable towards violations of the law are learned in a process of differential associations with delinquent or non-delinquent patterns of behavior. The attitudes that one holds favorable or unfavorable towards violations of the legal code are hypothesized to vary directly with the nature of one's differential associations. Individuals with greater degrees of specific, general, and total differential association with delinquent patterns of behavior are expected to hold attitudes more favorable towards law violations.

Table XV is the upper triangle of the correlation matrix presenting the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between specific differential association, general differential association, total differential association, attitudes towards law violations, and self-reported involvement in delinquent behavior. The correlation between each of the three measures of differential association and that of delinquent attitudes was found to be in the expected positive direction. The two correlation coefficients that between specific differential association and delinquent attitudes and that between total differential association and delinquent attitudes were significant at the .05 level. The indications of these findings are that attitudes favorable towards violations of the law vary directly with

TABLE XV

CORRELATIONS<sup>1</sup> BETWEEN SPECIFIC DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION, GENERAL DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION, TOTAL DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION, ATTITUDES FAVORABLE TO LAW VIOLATION, AND DELINQUENT INVOLVEMENT

SDA	1.0000	.5151 *	.8277 *	.2341 **	.4563 *
GDA		1.0000	.9073 *	.2156	.4125 *
TDA			1.0000	.2559 **	.4938 *
ATT				1.0000	.5656 *
DEL					1.0000

1 Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients

\* Fisher's "z" transformation p. <.01

\*\* Fisher's "z" transformation p. <.05

SDA = Specific Differential Association

GDA = General Differential Association

TDA = Total Differential Association

ATT = Attitudes Favorable Towards Law Violation

DEL = Respondent Involvement in Delinquent Activity



the degree of differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior, and, specific patterns of associations with delinquent others is more important to delinquent attitude determination than is association with more general delinquent patterns of behavior.

Table XVI is the chi-square distribution of the respondents according to degree of specific association with delinquent patterns of behavior and attitudes towards violation of the law. With a probability of less than one percent of occurring due to chance factors, this distribution indicates that those with more frequent, durable, and intense associations with delinquent patterns of behavior also hold attitudes more favorable towards engaging in delinquent activity.

The results of the distribution in Table XVII indicate that individuals with high degrees of general differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior do not hold attitudes significantly more favorable to delinquent involvement than do those with lower degrees of differential associations.

The nature of general differential association seems to refer to the individual's generalized perceptions of the availability or presence of delinquency or delinquent opportunities existing within his environment. Specific differential association refers more to the nature of primary group patterns of delinquency. The greater importance of specific association over that of general association in the determination of attitudes favorable or unfavorable towards delinquency appears to be in support of the first hypothesis discussed.

TABLE XVI

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS LAW VIOLATION BY SPECIFIC DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION

Specific Differential Association	Attitudes Towards Law Violation						Total
	Favorable		Neutral		Unfavorable		
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
High	12	10.5	14	10.5	5	10.1	31
Moderate	11	8.8	8	8.8	7	8.4	26
Low	3	6.8	4	6.8	13	6.5	20
Total	26		26		25		77

$$\chi^2 = 14.5703$$

$$d.f. = 4$$

$$p. < .01$$

$$C = .3989$$

TABLE XVII

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS LAW VIOLATION BY GENERAL DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION

	Attitudes Towards Law Violation						Total
	Favorable		Neutral		Unfavorable		
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
General Differential Association							
High	11	8.1	7	8.1	6	8.1	24
Moderate	7	9.4	11	9.4	10	9.1	28
Low	8	8.4	8	8.4	9	8.1	25
Total	26		26		25		77

$$\chi^2 = 2.7206$$

$$d.f. = 4$$

$$p > .50$$

$$C = .1847$$

The attitudes towards violations of the law by total differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior is reported in Table XVIII. This table has a computed chi-square value significant at the .30 level. The pattern of this distribution is influenced primarily by the distribution of general differential association scores; the general differential association sub-scale supplying five of the eight items included in this total scale.

The findings discussed in this section indicate conditional support for Hypothesis II. Differential associations appear to be significantly related to delinquency favorable attitudes only in regard to specific patterns of associations, i.e., associations which are made in the context of primary group relations. General patterns of associations with delinquent patterns of behavior seem to have little influence upon the nature of attitudes favorable or unfavorable towards violations of law.

### Hypothesis III

This hypothesis is stated in two parts, the first refers to the relationship between delinquent attitudes and delinquent behavior and the second to the relationship between differential association and delinquent behavior.

The relationship between delinquent favorable attitudes and delinquent involvement is reported in Table XIX. Respondents who held attitudes favorable towards violations of the law were represented more frequently than expected in both the high and moderate categories of delinquent involvement. Those holding attitudes unfavorable towards

TABLE XVIII

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS LAW VIOLATION BY TOTAL DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION

	Attitudes Towards Law Violation						
	Favorable		Neutral		Unfavorable		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Total Differential Association							
High	13	10.1	10	10.1	7	9.7	30
Moderate	6	8.1	11	8.1	7	7.8	24
Low	7	7.7	5	7.7	11	7.5	23
Total	26		26		25		77

$$X^2 = 5.9794 \quad \text{d.f.} = 4 \quad \text{p.} < .30 \quad \text{C} = .2684$$

TABLE XIX

## DELINQUENT INVOLVEMENT BY ATTITUDES FAVORABLE TOWARDS LAW VIOLATION

	Delinquent Involvement						
	High		Moderate		Low		
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Attitudes favorable to law violation							
Favorable	14	6.4	10	8.8	2	10.8	26
Neutral	4	6.4	11	8.8	11	10.8	26
Unfavorable	1	6.2	5	8.4	19	10.4	25
Total	19		26		32		77

$$X^2 = 30.6560$$

d.f. =4

p. &gt; .001

C = .5336

violations of the law were represented less frequently than expected in these categories and more frequently than expected in the least delinquent category. The chi-square value for this distribution was significant at the .001 level of statistical inference. The correlation coefficient reported in Table XV for the relationship between delinquent attitudes and delinquent involvement was both positive and significant ( $p < .01$ ) thus lending further support to the hypothesis that delinquent involvement varies directly with the degree to which the individual holds attitudes favorable towards violations of the law.

Hypothesis III-b was concerned with the direct relationships between specific differential association, general differential association, total differential association, and delinquent involvement. It was expected that the degree to which an individual reported involvement in delinquent behavior would vary directly with the nature of his differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior. The correlation coefficients between specific differential association, general differential association, and total differential association, related to delinquent involvement were .4563, .4125, and .4938 respectively. All three correlations were significant at the .01 level (Table XV).

Table XX illustrates the distribution of respondents according to their specific differential associations and involvement in delinquent activity. Respondents with higher degrees of differential association also manifest greater involvement in delinquent behavior. This relationship is also true of patterns of general differential associations and patterns of total differential associations (Table XXI and

TABLE XX  
 SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENT INVOLVEMENT BY  
 SPECIFIC DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION

	Delinquent Involvement						Total
	High		Moderate		Low		
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Specific Differential Association							
High	11	7.6	12	10.5	8	12.9	31
Moderate	6	6.4	9	8.8	11	10.8	26
Low	2	4.9	5	6.8	13	8.3	20
Total	19		26		32		77

$\chi^2 = 8.4241$       d.f. = 4      p. < .05      C = .3140



Table XXII). Hypothesis III-b is supported by these findings. Delinquent behavior varies directly and significantly with the degree to which the individual has specific, general, or total patterns of association with delinquent patterns of behavior or delinquent others.

This section concludes with the statement that individuals holding attitudes favorable towards delinquent involvement will manifest more involvement in delinquency than will those holding unfavorable attitudes. It was also shown that involvement in delinquent behavior varied directly with the differential associations that one had with delinquent patterns of behavior or delinquent others. Both Hypothesis III-a and Hypothesis III-b are supported by these findings. This in turn indicates support for Sutherland's sixth proposition: an individual becomes delinquent because of an excess of associations with delinquent patterns of behavior over associations with non-delinquent patterns of behavior.

#### Hypothesis IV

Hypothesis IV is stated in four parts and is derived directly from the proposition that differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity.

The correlations between these four variables, delinquent favorable attitudes, and delinquent involvement are indicated in Table XXIII. The frequency, duration, and intensity of differential associations are positively correlated with the holding of attitudes favorable towards delinquent involvement. Intensity of associations is the only

TABLE XXI

## SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENT INVOLVEMENT BY GENERAL DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION

	Delinquent Involvement						Total
	High		Moderate		Low		
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
General Differential Association							
High	10	5.9	9	8.1	5	10.0	24
Moderate	5	6.9	9	9.5	14	11.6	28
Low	4	6.2	8	8.4	13	10.4	25
Total	19		26		32		77

$$\chi^2 = 7.8586 \quad \text{d.f.} = 4 \quad p. < .10 \quad c = .3043$$

TABLE XXII

## SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENT INVOLVEMENT BY TOTAL DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION

	Delinquent Involvement						Total
	High		Moderate		Low		
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Total Differential Association							
High	13	7.4	10	10.1	7	12.5	30
Moderate	2	5.9	9	8.1	13	10.0	24
Low	4	5.7	7	7.7	12	9.6	23
Total	19		26		32		77

$$X^2 = 11.4403$$

$$d.f. = 4$$

$$p. < .05$$

$$C = .3597$$

TABLE XXIII

CORRELATIONS<sup>1</sup> BETWEEN ATTITUDES FAVORABLE TO LAW VIOLATION, SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENT INVOLVEMENT, AND FREQUENCY, DURATION, PRIORITY, AND INTENSITY OF ASSOCIATIONS WITH DELINQUENT PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR

	Attitudes favorable to law violations	Delinquent Involvement
Frequency	.2193	.4113 *
Duration	.1246	.4081 *
Priority	-.0850	.1603
Intensity	.2383 **	.3370 *

1 Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients

\* Fisher's "z" transformation p. < .01

\*\* Fisher's "z" transformation p. < .05

variable that is significantly correlated in this relationship ( $p < .05$ ). The priority of associations has a small negative correlation with the holding of delinquent favorable attitudes.

Delinquent involvement is positively correlated with all four variables of associations as predicted in Sutherland's seventh proposition and in the four parts of Hypothesis IV. Correlations between delinquent involvement and frequency, duration, and intensity of associations are significant at the .01 level, but priority is not significantly correlated with delinquent behavior.

Hypothesis IV-a is supported by the correlations between frequency and the attitudinal and behavioral variables of delinquency. Hypothesis IV-b is supported by the correlation of duration with the same two variables. Hypothesis IV-c, the expected direct relationship between the priority of differential associations, and, delinquent attitudes and delinquent behavior is not supported by the data. This finding is consonant with findings reported earlier attesting to a lack of influence for the priority variable in relation to either delinquent involvement or delinquent attitudes. Hypothesis IV-d is supported by the correlation coefficients between intensity of associations, and, delinquent favorable attitudes and delinquent behavior.

Concluding this section, the author believes that the findings tend to support the fourth hypothesis concerning the influence of frequency, duration, and intensity of differential associations on delinquent attitudes and delinquent behavior. The portion of the fourth hypothesis (IV-c) concerning the expected effect of priority cannot be supported. It is suggested that further investigation into

the relative importance of these four variables should be undertaken. It appears in this preliminary investigation that Sutherland's seventh proposition might be modified to exclude the priority of differential association as a useful variable characteristic of delinquent and non-delinquent association patterns.

#### Other Relationships Investigated

Due to the findings indicated in the previous sections, further investigation of the influence of the four variables of association was made. Table XXIV presents correlations between each of the fifteen specific delinquent acts listed in the delinquency index and the frequency, duration, priority, and intensity of specific patterns of differential associations. Any inferences drawn as the result of these correlations must necessarily be limited by the size of the sample, especially when considering the small number of respondents that admitted to having committed the more serious acts on this index.

One statement that can be tentatively made is that frequency, duration, priority, and intensity seem to carry different weights when considering their effects on different types of delinquent behaviors.

Duration is the most highly correlated of these four variables with regard to the delinquent acts. It has the highest correlation of the four variables with regard to seven of the acts: shoplifting, breaking and entering, auto theft, cheating, theft of between \$5 and \$50, vandalism, and theft of more than \$50. Intensity has the highest correlations with four of the acts: selling drugs, fist fighting serious assaults, and engaging in sexual relations (this last correlation

TABLE XXIV

CORRELATIONS<sup>1</sup> BETWEEN SELF-REPORTED INVOLVEMENT IN SPECIFIC DELINQUENT ACTS AND THE FREQUENCY, DURATION, PRIORITY, AND INTENSITY OF ASSOCIATIONS WITH DELINQUENT PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR

Delinquent Act	Frequency	Duration	Priority	Intensity
Shoplifting	.2851 **	.3226 *	.1657	.2684 **
Theft under \$5	.2121	.1842	.1884	.0970
Breaking and Entering	.2293	.3186 *	.1612	.0045
Selling Drugs	.2316 ***	.2178	-.0058	.3033 **
Auto Theft	.1811	.2388 ***	.0918	.0523
Using marijuana	.3213 *	.2195	.0946	.1560
Cheating	.0436	.2561 ***	.0575	.0724
Fist Fighting	.2438 ***	.1606	.2486 ***	.2523 ***
Making annoying or obscene phone calls	.0105	.0656	-.1195	-.0285
Serious assault	.2273	.1020	.0930	.4332 *
Sex Relations	.0446	.0133	-.0029	.0486
Theft \$5-\$50	.3425 *	.3514 *	.1343	.1638
Vandalism	.2021	.3013 **	.0059	.2219
Theft over \$50	.1406	.2181	.0523	.0918
Using drugs other than marijuana	.1692	.0503	.0059	.0538

1 Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients

\* Fisher's "z" transformation p. < .01      \*\*\* Fisher's "z" transformation p. < .05  
 \*\* Fisher's "z" transformation p. < .02

is quite low and sex relations do not seem to be overly effected by any of these variables). Frequency of associations has the greatest influence upon thefts of less than five dollars, marijuana use, and the use of drugs other than marijuana. Priority is the variable most correlated with the making of annoying or obscene phone calls (the relationship is insignificant and in the negative direction).

Overall, six of the acts were significantly correlated with the duration of specific patterns of associations ( $p < .05$ ), five were significantly correlated with the frequency of associations, four were correlated significantly with intensity, and one had a significant correlation with priority. Acts correlated significantly with duration were: shoplifting, breaking and entering, auto theft, cheating, theft of between \$5 and \$50, and vandalism. Correlated at a significant level with frequency were: shoplifting, selling drugs, using marijuana, fist fighting, and theft of between \$5 and \$50. Intensity was significantly related to shoplifting, selling drugs, fist fighting, and serious assault. Fist fighting was also significantly correlated with priority.

It appears that duration might be a variable most associated with delinquent patterns of theft, or crimes against property. The intensity of associations may be related to expressive-aggressive delinquency patterns. These indications are quite tentative and should be the subject of further investigation.

Correlations between the items measuring general differential association, and, delinquent attitudes and delinquent behavior are shown in Table XXV. None of these items appears significantly related



TABLE XXV

CORRELATIONS<sup>1</sup> BETWEEN ATTITUDES FAVORABLE TO LAW VIOLATION, SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENT INVOLVEMENT, AND GENERAL DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION CHARACTERISTICS

	Attitudes favorable to law violations	Delinquent Involvement
Amount of crime or delinquency in home community	.0663	.1561
Proportion of friends who have ever been delinquent	.1780	.4187 *
Proportion of present friends who are delinquent	.1686	.3964 *
Number of adult criminals known delinquent	.1087	.2491 **
Degree of familiarity with adult criminals	.2053	.2671 **

1 Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients

\* Fisher's "z" transformation p. < .01

\*\* Fisher's "z" transformation p. < .05

to delinquent attitudes although the degree of familiarity with adult criminals seems to most effect this attribute. The lowest correlation is between the respondent's perception of the amount of crime and delinquency in his home community, and delinquent attitudes.

All the items on the general differential association scale, with the exception of this first item, were significantly related to delinquent behavior ( $p < .05$ ). It is further noted that the delinquent perception of friends is more significantly related to delinquent involvement than is the perception or familiarity with adult criminals. This tends to support the findings stated earlier concerning the role played by the primary group in the learning of criminal behavior.

### Conclusions

The analysis of the data collected in the investigation gave support to the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis I. The major portion of the criminal learning experience occurs within the context of primary group relationships: the delinquent involvement of an individual is directly related to that of his friends and especially to the delinquent involvement of his best friends.

Hypothesis II. The specific direction of attitudes favorable or unfavorable to violations of the law is learned in a process of differential association with delinquent and non-delinquent patterns of behavior: the attitudes that an individual holds favorable or unfavorable towards violations of law vary directly with his differential associations with delinquent and non-delinquent patterns of behavior.

Hypothesis III-a. Involvement in delinquent behavior varies directly with the nature of the attitudes one holds favorable or unfavorable towards violations of the law: those individuals with attitudes more favorable to violations of the law will manifest correspondingly greater

degrees of involvement in delinquent activity.

Hypothesis III-b. Involvement in delinquent behavior varies directly with the nature of differential associations with delinquent and non-delinquent patterns of behavior: individuals with higher degrees of differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior will manifest correspondingly greater involvement in delinquent behavior.

Hypothesis IV-a. Attitudes favorable towards violation of the law and involvement in delinquent behavior vary directly with the frequency of associations with delinquent patterns of behavior.

Hypothesis IV-b. Attitudes favorable towards violation of the law and involvement in delinquent activity vary directly with the duration of differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior.

Hypothesis IV-d. Attitudes favorable towards violation of the law and involvement in delinquent behavior vary directly with the intensity of differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior.

With reference to the second hypothesis it was found that general differential association patterns had little or no effect on attitudes favorable or unfavorable towards delinquent involvement. The nature of one's specific patterns of differential association did have a significant effect on these attitudes towards delinquent activity.

Hypothesis IV-c, the effect of priority on delinquent attitudes and delinquent behavior, was rejected in this investigation. Perhaps differential association theory should be modified in this respect. Further investigation of the relative importance of the frequency, duration, priority, and intensity of differential associations in determining specific patterns of delinquent behavior is recommended, and should prove worthwhile.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The theory of differential association was proposed by Edwin H. Sutherland (1947, 1970) as an explanation of the genesis of criminal behavior. This theory is stated in a propositional format and contends that criminal behavior is learned in a process of communication with other persons, the principle part of such learning occurring within the context of the intimate primary group. An individual is exposed to varying definitions and varying patterns of behavior due to the differential social disorganization of society. Some of these definitions or patterns of behavior are in support of the norms of the legal and social order while other definitions or patterns of behavior encourage violation of these norms. An individual becomes delinquent because of an excess of associations with delinquent patterns of behavior over associations with non-delinquent patterns of behavior. These differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity. The learning of criminal behavior includes not only the learning of techniques or methods of committing certain types of criminal acts but it also includes the learning of definitions, attitudes, motives, and rationalizations specific to these criminal acts.

This theory was evaluated utilizing a sample of seventy-seven college students selected randomly from the on-campus sophomore student body at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. For the most part, these students represented the type expected to be found in a white, middle-class sample of college students.

The analysis of the data collected from this sample yielded results that were compatible with the propositions of differential association theory. It was found that social class and community size had no significant effect on the delinquent involvement or delinquent attitudes of this sample. Sex was seen to be important in that males had higher degrees of differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior, held attitudes more favorable towards law violations, and had higher actual involvement in delinquency, than did females.

It was found that specific differential association patterns were significantly related to the holding of delinquent attitudes. Individuals with higher degrees of association held attitudes more favorable towards involvement in delinquency. These individuals also manifest more involvement in actual delinquent behavior. There was a direct relationship between delinquent attitudes and delinquent involvement. Individuals with attitudes more favorable towards law violation had greater involvement in delinquency than did those with less favorable attitudes.

The primary group emerged as having especial importance to the involvement of individuals in delinquent activity. This is supportive of Sutherland's proposition that the intimate group plays an important part in the learning of criminal behavior. Individuals who perceived their friends as being involved in delinquent forms of behavior also reported greater self involvement in delinquency than did those with friends perceived as being less involved in delinquency. The correlations between self involvement and the perceived involvement of best

friends were greater for every type of delinquent act than were the correlations between self involvement and the perceived involvement of friends other than best friends.

Investigation into the relationship between the four variables of differential association (frequency, duration, priority, and intensity) revealed that duration seems to have the most pronounced effect on delinquent attitudes and delinquent behavior while priority appears to be of little importance. It was suggested that future research efforts should be directed towards a more complete investigation of the effects of each of these variables on specific forms of delinquent or criminal behavior.

#### A Path Model of Differential Association Theory

Figure I is a path model indicating the relative effect of the various variables employed in this investigation. It is presented here both as a summary and a clarification of those relationships that were found to be of importance during the stage of data analysis. This model is a recursive path model; path coefficients were determined by computing the beta coefficients of the four standardized linear equations presented directly below the diagram in Figure I. Five variables were included in the model: (1) sex (a positive path indicates a positive effect of being male and a negative effect of being female); (2) specific differential association; (3) general differential association; (4) attitudes towards violations of law; and (5) involvement in delinquent behavior. Total differential association was not

included as a variable in this model as it is the combination of specific and general differential association.

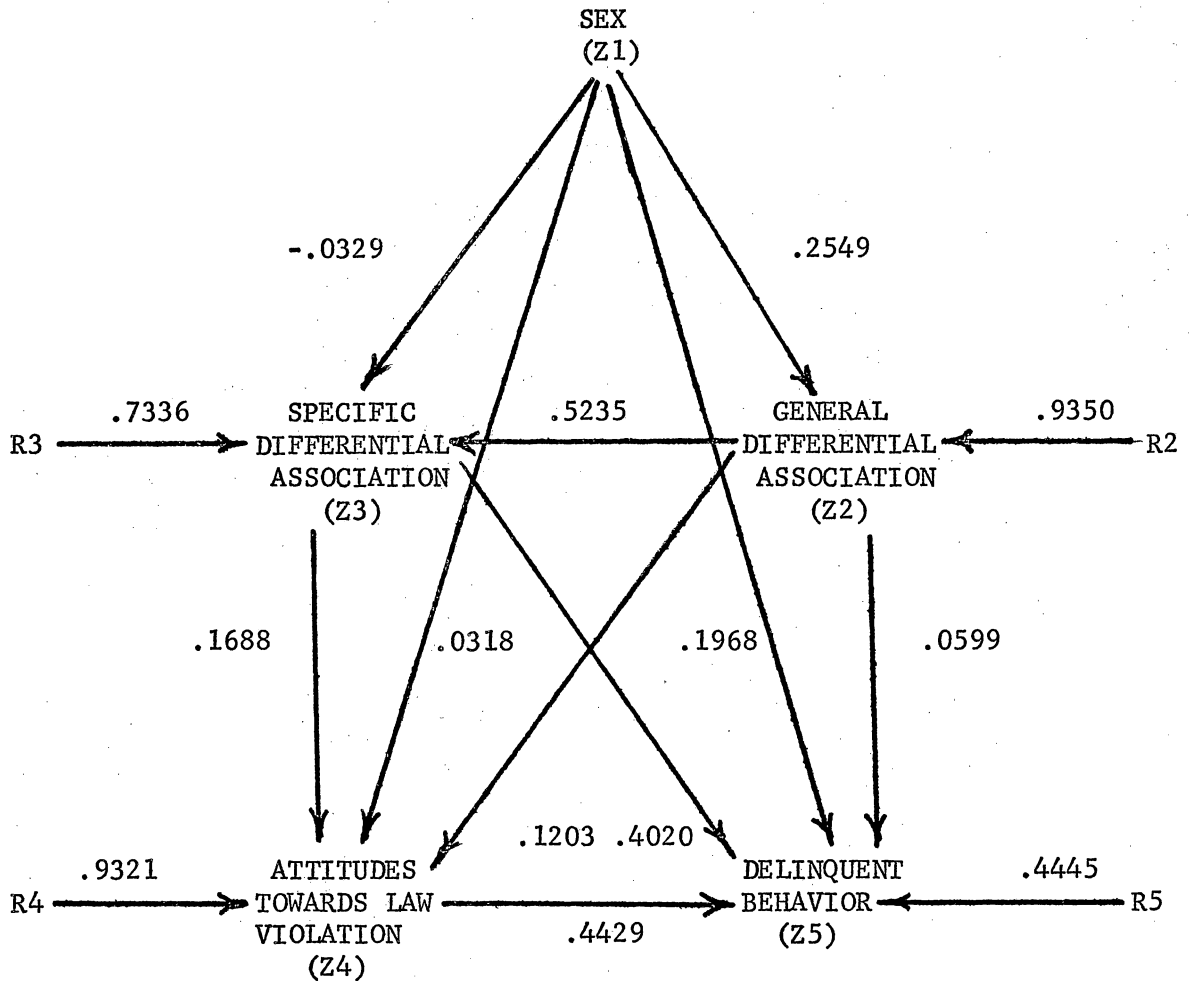
Directly, delinquent behavior is determined largely by the nature of the attitudes one holds favorable or unfavorable towards violations of the law, and, the nature of one's associations with specific patterns of delinquent behavior. It is also influenced to a lesser extent by general differential associations and sex. Individuals with more favorable attitudes towards violations of the law engage in greater delinquent involvement as do those with more frequent, lasting, or intense associations with delinquent patterns of behavior. Males and those with higher general patterns of associations with delinquent behavior also tend to have greater delinquency involvement.

Specific differential associations and general differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior work directly on the individual to increase the probability that he will hold attitudes more favorable towards law violations. Sex has little direct influence on the nature of delinquent attitudes.

Specific differential association patterns appear to be determined largely by the nature of general differential associations. This may indicate that the availability of opportunities for delinquent or non-delinquent associations, as perceived by the individual, have a delimiting effect on the nature of his more specific association patterns. Individuals who perceive their general social environment as being characterized primarily by the opportunity for delinquent associations will be more likely to develop intense,

FIGURE I

## A PATH MODEL OF DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION THEORY



$$Z2 = P21Z1 + R2$$

$$Z3 = P31Z1 + P32Z2 + R3$$

$$Z4 = P41Z1 + P42Z2 + P43Z3 + R4$$

$$Z5 = P51 Z1 + P52 Z2 + P53 Z3 + P54 Z4 + R5$$



frequent, and durable patterns of association with delinquent others. When the perception of the environment includes opportunities for association with both delinquent and non-delinquent others, the associations with delinquent patterns of behavior become less intense, frequent, and durable and associations with non-delinquent patterns increase in these respects.

It is also possible that the nature of one's specific patterns of association might influence his general perception of the social environment. This possibility was tested by computing the path coefficients for a second model in which the path between specific differential association and general differential association was in the reverse direction of that presented in Figure I. This alternative model proved to be less satisfactory in terms of accounting for variability than was the model (Figure I) which was accepted. This indicates that general differential associations are more important in the determination of specific patterns of association, than are specific associations in the determination of general patterns of association.

Finally, sex is seen to be an important variable only as it has an effect on general differential associations with delinquent others. Males tend to have higher degrees of general differential association than do females.

Like the results reported in the previous chapter, the path model presented here is compatible with a differential association explanation of delinquency causation among the particular population sampled.

### Conclusions

The following is a summary list of the conclusions arrived at as a result of the analysis of the data collected from the students in this sample. The generalizations that can be made as the result of this evaluation are limited due to the size and nature of the sample. They do indicate, however, that differential association theory provides an adequate explanation for the delinquent behavior of these respondents.

1. The principle part of the learning of criminal behavior occurs within the context of primary group relationships.
2. The learning of criminal behavior includes not only the learning of specific types of delinquent acts but also includes the learning of attitudes and definitions favorable towards involvement in these specific acts.
3. The specific direction of attitudes or definitions favorable or unfavorable towards involvement in delinquent behavior is learned in a process of differential associations with delinquent or non-delinquent patterns of behavior.
4. Involvement in delinquent behavior varies directly with differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior or delinquent norm definers.
5. Involvement in delinquent behavior varies directly with the attitudes favorable towards violations of the law.
6. Involvement in delinquent behavior varies directly with the frequency of differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior.
7. Involvement in delinquent behavior varies directly with the duration of differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior.
8. Involvement in delinquent behavior varies directly with the intensity of differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior.
9. The priority of differential associations has little

9. effect on involvement in delinquent behavior.

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APPENDIX A



INSTRUCTIONS: This questionnaire has been designed to measure the frequency of various types of behavior among populations of college students. Many of the forms of behavior itemized in this questionnaire are typical of persons like yourself. Please be as honest and as careful as possible when giving your responses and please be certain to answer each question. It is very important that you answer all questions; if you are in doubt about a particular item, please give the best possible response or make the best estimate that you can.

DO NOT SIGN YOUR NAME TO ANY PORTION OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. Responses will be used for statistical purposes only and no one will ever know your name. On the average this questionnaire takes approximately 40 minutes to complete. Do not spend too much time on any one question. We are interested in your first impressions.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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Thomas J. Ward

Dept. of Sociology

Part I. Instructions: From the following list, please indicate those characteristics that would best describe your present Best Friends. Check as many as you think would apply. Please read the entire list before making your selections.

1.  Leaders in our crowd.
2.  Out for a good time.
3.  Not so wild as I was or wanted to be.
4.  Just kids in our crowd, not leaders.
5.  Usually law abiding, but they didn't mind breaking the law if it were to their advantage.
6.  Usually law abiding, except if nobody would be hurt if they disobeyed the law.
7.  Always law abiding, no matter what the situation.
8.  Good citizens.
9.  "Wild".
10.  Ordinary nice guys (or girls) who got along with everybody.
11.  Wilder than I wanted to be.
12.  Good kids who stuck pretty much to our crowd.
13.  The kind who thought the world owed them a living.
14.  Good Christians.

Part II. Instructions: Following each of the 15 activities listed below you will find three scales. Please use these scales to express your feelings about that particular activity. Place an "X" at some point between the two end points on each scale. Use all three scales to rate each activity and consider each activity as a separate act. The closer your mark is placed to one of the end points, the stronger will be the opinion that you express in that direction. Think of the scales in this manner: (There are no right or wrong answers to these questions) Favorable - Unfavorable: Would your friends react favorably or unfavorably to the knowledge that you had engaged in this activity?

Normal - Abnormal: Is this type of behavior normal for a person like yourself?

Low Risk - High Risk: What is the risk of being caught and/or punished if one engages in this type of behavior.

1. "Shoplifting" from stores.

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

2. Stealing Objects or Money worth less than \$5.

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

3. Breaking into a locked store, house, or other building with the intent to steal something.

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

---

4. Selling drugs to another person (marijuana, L.S.D., speed, etc.).

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

---

5. Stealing or "borrowing" a car without the owner's permission.

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

---

6. Possessing, buying, or using marijuana.

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

---

7. Cheating or helping another to cheat on school work.

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

---

## 8. Engaging in fist fights with other persons.

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

---

## 9. Making obscene or annoying phone calls to another party.

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

---

## 10. Assaulting or attacking another person with a weapon (club, knife, gun, etc. or with the intent to do him serious injury.

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

---

## 11. Engaging in sexual relations with a member of the opposite sex to whom you are not married.

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

---

12. Stealing objects or money worth between \$5 and \$50.

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

---

13. Willfully destroying or damaging public or private property.

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

---

14. Stealing objects or money worth more than \$50.

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

---

15. Possessing, buying, or using drugs other than marijuana (L.S.D., speed, etc.).

Favorable	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfavorable
Normal	_____	_____	_____	_____	Abnormal
Low Risk	_____	_____	_____	_____	High Risk

---

Part III. Instructions: Following the same procedure as in the previous section, rate the activities along the following three dimensions:

Minor - Serious : Do you consider the activity to be a minor or a serious infraction of social, moral, or legal norms?

Individual - Society : Should this type of activity be a matter of individual conscience or should it be regulated by society?

High Reward - Low Reward : Considering both the possible rewards and the possible risks involved in this type of activity, does an individual stand a good chance or a poor chance of receiving personal satisfaction or profit from this type of behavior?

1. "Shoplifting" from stores.

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---

2. Stealing objects or money worth less than \$5.

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---

3. Breaking into a locked store, house, or other building with the intent to steal something.

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---

## 4. Selling drugs to another person (marijuana, L.S.D., speed, etc.).

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---

## 5. Stealing or "borrowing" a car without the owner's permission.

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---

## 6. Possessing, buying, or using marijuana.

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---

## 7. Cheating or helping another to cheat on school work.

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---

## 8. Engaging in fist fights with another person.

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---



## 9. Making obscene or annoying phone calls to another person.

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---

## 10. Assaulting or attacking another person with a weapon (club, knife, gun, etc.) or with the intent to do him serious injury.

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---

## 11. Engaging in sexual relations with a member of the opposite sex to whom you are not married.

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---

## 12. Stealing objects or money worth between \$5 and \$50.

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---

13. Willfully destroying or damaging public or private property.

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---

14. Stealing objects or money worth more than \$50.

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---

15. Possessing, buying, or using drugs other than marijuana (L.S.D., speed, etc.).

Minor	_____	_____	_____	_____	Serious
Individual	_____	_____	_____	_____	Society
High Reward	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low Reward

---

Part IV. Instructions: Answer each question as carefully as possible by putting a circle around the most correct response. Please be certain to answer all questions.

1. Think of the friends that you have been associated with most often.

Were (or are) any of them delinquent?

(most were)      (several were)      (very few were)      (none were)

2. Think of the friends that you have known for the longest time.

Were (or are) any of them delinquent?

(most were)      (several were)      (very few were)      (none were)

3. Think back to the first friends you can remember. Were any of them delinquent at the time you first knew them?
- (most were)      (several were)      (very few were)      (none were)
4. Have any of your best friends been delinquent while they were your best friends?
- (most were)      (several were)      (very few were)      (none were)
5. Was there much crime or delinquency committed by young people (in their teens or below) in the community in which you grew up?
- (quite a lot)      (some)      (very little)      (none at all)
6. Have any of your friends been "juvenile delinquents"?
- (most were)      (several were)      (very few were)      (none were)
7. Are any of your present friends "juvenile delinquents"?
- (most are)      (several are)      (very few are)      (none are)
8. Do you know any adult criminals?
- (quite a few)      (several)      (very few)      (none at all)
9. How well have you known criminals?
- (very well)      (fairly well)      (not very well)      (only knew their names)      (didn't even know their names)

Part V. Instructions: After each of the activities listed below, please indicate the number of times you have engaged in that form of behavior. Also please indicate the age at which you first remember having done this type of activity (if ever). If you have ever engaged in the particular form of behavior please indicate how often you still do this sort of activity. Remember all responses are strictly anonymous and your identity will never be known. Please be as honest and complete

as possible and please answer all questions.

---

1. "Shoplifted" from a store.

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more) (3-4) (1-2) (never)

What was your age the first time you did this?

(10 or under) (11-15) (16-18) (over 18)

How often do you still do this?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never)

---

2. Stole money or objects worth less than \$5.

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more) (3-4) (1-2) (never)

What was your age the first time you did this?

(10 or under) (11-15) (16-18) (over 18)

How often do you still do this?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never)

---

3. Broke into a locked store, house, or other building with the intent to steal something.

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more) (3-4) (1-2) (never)

What was your age the first time you did this?

(10 or under) (11-15) (16-18) (over 18)

How often do you still do this?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never)

---

4. Sold drugs to another person (marijuana, L.S.D., speed, etc.).

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more) (3-4) (1-2) (never)

What was your age the first time you did this?

(10 or under) (11-15) (16-18) (over 18)

How often do you still do this?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never)

---

5. Stole or "borrowed" a car without the owner's permission.

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more) (3-4) (1-2) (never)

What was your age the first time you did this?

(10 or under) (11-15) (16-18) (over 18)

How often do you still do this?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never)

---

6. Possessed, bought, or used marijuana.

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more) (3-4) (1-2) (never)

What was your age the first time you did this?

(10 or under) (11-15) (16-18) (over 18)

How often do you still do this?

(very often)      (occasionally)      (seldom)      (never)

---

7. Cheated or helped another to cheat on school work.

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more)      (3-4)      (1-2)      (never)

What was your age the first time you did this?

(10 or under)      (11-15)      (16-18)      (over 18)

How often do you still do this?

(very often)      (occasionally)      (seldom)      (never)

---

8. Engaged in fist fights with others.

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more)      (3-4)      (1-2)      (never)

What was your age the first time you did this?

(10 or under)      (11-15)      (16-18)      (over 18)

How often do you still do this?

(very often)      (occasionally)      (seldom)      (never)

---

9. Made obscene or annoying phone calls to another party.

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more)      (3-4)      (1-2)      (never)

What was your age the first time you did this?

(10 or under)      (11-15)      (16-18)      (over 18)

How often do you still do this?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never)

---

10. Assaulted or attacked another person with a weapon (club, knife, gun, etc.) or with the intent to do him serious injury.

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more) (3-4) (1-2) (never)

What was your age the first time you did this?

(10 or under) (11-15) (16-18) (over 18)

How often do you still do this?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never)

---

11. Engaged in sexual relations with a member of the opposite sex to whom you were not married.

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more) (3-4) (1-2) (never)

What was your age the first time you did this?

(10 or under) (11-15) (16-18) (over 18)

How often do you still do this?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never)

---

12. Stole money or objects worth between \$5 and \$50.

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more) (3-4) (1-2) (never)

What was your age the first time you did this?

(10 or under) (11-15) (16-18) (over 18)

How often do you still do this?

(very often)      (occasionally)      (seldom)      (never)

---

13. Willfully destroyed or damaged public or private property.

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more)      (3-4)      (1-2)      (never)

What was your age the first time you ever did this?

(10 or under)      (11-15)      (16-18)      (over 18)

How often do you still do this?

(very often)      (occasionally)      (seldom)      (never)

---

14. Stole objects or money worth more than \$50.

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more)      (3-4)      (1-2)      (never)

What was your age the first time you did this?

(10 or under)      (11-15)      (16-18)      (over 18)

How often do you still do this?

(very often)      (occasionally)      (seldom)      (never)

---

15. Possessed, bought, or used drugs other than marijuana (L.S.D., speed, etc.).

How many times have you ever done this?

(5 or more)      (3-4)      (1-2)      (never)

What was your age the first time you did this?

(10 or under)      (11-15)      (16-18)      (over 18)



How often do you still do this?

(very often)      (occasionally)      (seldom)      (never)

---

Part VI. Instructions: This portion of the questionnaire will be used to ascertain the background characteristics of the population. Please answer each question to the best of your ability.

1. What is your sex?      (male)      (female)
2. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_.
3. What is your class in school? \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Are your parents:
  - \_\_\_ Living together.
  - \_\_\_ Separated.
  - \_\_\_ Divorced.
  - \_\_\_ Mother not living.
  - \_\_\_ Father not living.
  - \_\_\_ Other: please specify \_\_\_\_\_.
5. How many children are in your family including yourself? \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Are you the:
  - \_\_\_ Oldest child.
  - \_\_\_ Youngest child.
  - \_\_\_ Neither oldest or youngest child.
  - \_\_\_ Only child.

7. Are you the:

\_\_\_ Oldest child of your sex.

\_\_\_ Youngest child of your sex.

\_\_\_ Neither oldest nor youngest of your sex.

\_\_\_ Only child of your sex.

8. Are you married? \_\_\_. If so, how long? \_\_\_\_\_. How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_.

9. What was the last year in school your parents completed?

Father? \_\_\_\_\_. Mother? \_\_\_\_\_.

10. Are you:

\_\_\_ Negro

\_\_\_ White

\_\_\_ Oriental

\_\_\_ Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Spanish-American \_\_\_\_\_.

11. In what type or size community did you spend the greatest portion of your life between the ages of six and twenty.

\_\_\_ Rural Farm

\_\_\_ 10,000 - 25,000 Population

\_\_\_ Rural Non-Farm

\_\_\_ 25,000 - 50,000 Population

\_\_\_ Less than 1,000 Population

\_\_\_ 50,000 - 100,000 Population

\_\_\_ 1,000 - 5,000 Population

\_\_\_ 100,000 - 250,000 Population

\_\_\_ 5,000 - 10,000 Population

\_\_\_ Over 250,000 Population

12. What is your father's occupation? Please be as specific as possible; give his job title (if any) or a description of the type of work he does. If your father is retired, disabled, or temporarily unemployed, please list his previous occupation. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

13. What is your mother's occupation? \_\_\_\_ Housewife. \_\_\_\_ Other;  
please specify \_\_\_\_\_.
14. What is your father's income per year? If not known, please estimate as closely as possible. If there is income from a source other than your father or if there is income in addition to father's, please give the total family income per year. \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
per year

Part VII. Please read each of the following activities and answer each of the three questions that follow the particular act: (1) Do your Best Friends ever engage (or have they ever engaged) in this type of activity? (2) Do other persons you know (or have known) engage in this form of behavior? (3) If you have ever done this particular act, did you do it alone or in the company of others? Remember all answers will remain anonymous. Please be as accurate and honest as possible, and please answer all questions.

---

1. Shoplifted from a store.

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

How many other persons you know have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

Are other persons with you when you engage in this sort of activity?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never) (I have  
never done this)

## 2. Stole objects or money worth less than \$5.

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

How many other persons you know have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

Are other persons with you when you engage in this sort of activity?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never) (I have  
never done this)

---

## 3. Broke into a locked store, house, or other building with the intent to steal something.

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

How many other persons you know have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

Are other persons with you when you engage in this sort of activity?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never) (I have  
never done this)

---

## 4. Sold drugs to another person (marijuana, L.S.D., speed, etc.).

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

How many other persons you know have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

Are other persons with you when you engage in this sort of activity?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never) (I have  
never done this)

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5. Stole or "borrowed" a car without the owner's permission.

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

How many other persons you know have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

Are other persons with you when you engage in this form of behavior?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never) (I have  
never done this)

---

6. Possessed, bought, or used marijuana.

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

How many others you know have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

Are other persons with you when you engage in this sort of activity?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never) (I have  
never done this)

## 7. Cheated or helped another to cheat on school work.

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

How many other persons you know have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

Are other persons with you when you engage in this sort of activity?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never) (I have  
never done this)

---

## 8. Engaged in fist fights with others?

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

How many other persons you know have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

Are other persons with you when you engage in this sort of activity?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never) (I have  
never done this)

---

## 9. Made obscene or annoying phone calls to another party.

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

How many other persons you know have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

Are other persons with you when you engage in this type of activity?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never) (I have  
never done this)

---

10. Assaulted or attacked another person with a weapon (club, knife, gun, etc.) or with the intent to do him serious injury.

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

How many other persons you know have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

Are other persons with you when you engage in this sort of behavior?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never) (I have  
never done this)

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11. Engaged in sexual relations with a member of the opposite sex to whom you were not married.

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

How many other persons you know have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

Are other persons with you when you engage in this sort of behavior?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never) (I have  
never done this)

12. Stole money or objects worth between \$5 and \$50.

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

How many other persons you know have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

Are other persons with you when you engage in this sort of activity?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never) (I have  
never done this)

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13. Willfully destroyed or damaged public or private property.

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

How many other persons you know have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

Are other persons with you when you engage in this sort of activity?

(very often) (occasionally) (seldom) (never) (I have  
never done this)

---

14. Stole objects worth more than \$50.

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)

How many other persons you know have done this?

(most) (several) (very few) (none)



Are other persons with you when you engage in this sort of activity?

(very often)      (occasionally)      (seldom)      (never)      (I have  
never done this)

---

15. Possessed, bought, or used drugs other than marijuana (L.S.D., speed, etc.).

How many of your Best Friends have done this?

(most)      (several)      (very few)      (none)

How many other persons you know have done this?

(most)      (several)      (very few)      (none)

Are other persons usually with you when you engage in this sort of activity?

(very often)      (occasionally)      (seldom)      (never)      (I have  
never done this)

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Thank you for the time and energy that you have expended in the completion of this questionnaire. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

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the scanned document**

AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF EDWIN H. SUTHERLAND'S THEORY OF  
DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION

Thomas J. Ward

Abstract

Edwin H. Sutherland first proposed his theory of differential association in 1939. Since that date it has been the subject of much discussion and criticism but tests of its validity or generality have been limited in nature. This thesis was designed to expand the range of empirical knowledge concerning this theory by investigating its validity and usefulness in explaining delinquent behavior among members of a selected population.

A sample of college sophomores was utilized for this purpose. These subjects appeared to be typical of white middle-class college students.

Relationships between differential association, involvement in delinquent behavior, and attitudes favorable or unfavorable towards law violations were subject to study. The author concluded from the analysis of data supplied by the respondents that:

1. The principle part of the criminal learning experience takes part in the context of primary group relations.
2. The learning of criminal behavior includes the learning of the techniques and methods of specific types of delinquency and also the learning of the attitudes and definitions appropriate to this delinquent involvement.
3. The specific direction of these attitudes is learned in a process of differential association with delinquent and non-delinquent patterns of behavior.

4. Involvement in delinquent behavior varies directly with differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior.
5. Involvement in delinquent behavior varies directly with attitudes favorable towards law violations.
6. Attitudes favorable towards law violations vary directly with differential associations with delinquent patterns of behavior.
7. Involvement in delinquent behavior varies directly with the frequency, duration and intensity of associations with delinquent patterns of behavior.

The overall conclusion of this study was favorable to the support of differential association theory. For the population sampled, this theory appeared to provide an adequate and valid explanation for the delinquent involvement of the respondents.