

# **The Impact of the Social and Cultural factors on School Students and Juvenile Delinquency in Kuwait (Time Period from 2001-2002)**

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## **Abstract**

In the last several decades, there has been a dramatic increased in the number of juvenile delinquents in Kuwait. The current study aims to determine the social and cultural factors of juvenile delinquency. The data was collected through survey forms from 2001 to 2002. Using the survey data which drawn from Kuwaiti youth, some of whom are incarcerated in the juvenile detention facility (social care house), and others who attend Kuwaiti public schools. Results from the multiple linear regression models revealed that there are several statistically significant predictors of property delinquency among both youth incarcerated in the social care house and students in the public schools.

Future research might examine the long-term impact of the factors analyzed by using a longitudinal research design. Appropriate care with special teams who have local community skills would be a possible starting point.

**Keywords:** Family-social control-juvenile-student-delinquency

## **Introduction**

Kuwait is located in the northwest corner of the Arabian Gulf. To the north and west, it shares a border of approximately one-hundred and fifty miles with Iraq. Kuwait, is approximately the size of New Jersey and has been an independent state since 1961, with a current population of 1,699,000 residents. Approximately 700,000 of these residents are Kuwaiti citizens and one million are immigrants that have migrated to the country for employment opportunities (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, 1999). Kuwait's economy is centered largely around the country's sizable oil revenue. The Kuwaiti government plays a major role in collecting and distributing the oil-generated wealth of the country. Because of social changes, the rising rate of juvenile delinquency does not occur in a vacuum. It is important to examine the surrounding social environment that gives rise to such changes, especially when a nation has experienced tremendous shifts that have occurred in Kuwait during the last fifty years. These are the result of the Kuwaiti's oil boom, the Gulf War and the recent rise of its most pressing social problem, juvenile delinquency.

A large number of foreign-born workers have immigrated to Kuwait to assist in the modernization of the country. In fact, immigrants now outnumber native-born Kuwaitis. Given this development, the government has recently imposed a more restrictive immigration policy on those wishing to enter the country. The total number of immigrants allowed into Kuwait in any given year has been cut significantly.

In addition to rapid social change and modernization, immigration has also produced significant challenges for Kuwaiti culture. Immigrant groups are faced with the clash between the values of their traditional culture and the norms of their new environment (Ghloum, Khalaf, and Aljasm, 1994). In

1983, many immigrants came to Kuwait from all over the world looking for jobs. They introduced cultural values into Kuwaiti society that were new and different (Al-Rashid, 1988). It is the parents of young couples who find these modern values more challenging (El-Islam, Malasi, and Abu-Daga, 1986).

### Objective of the Study

This study aims to determine the social and cultural factors of juvenile delinquency in Kuwait from 2001 to 2002. The last several decades have seen a dramatic increase in the number of juvenile delinquents in Kuwait.

### Statement of the Problems

What social and cultural factors tend to be linked with juvenile delinquency during the period of 2001 and 2002? The scholarly literature on this subject highlights several different predictors of juvenile delinquency: *Parent-child interaction* (i.e., family attachment, supervision, rejection, and child discipline)

### Hypotheses

- 1) Teens reporting weak parental attachment, high levels of parental rejection, and harsh child discipline will be more likely to be involved in juvenile delinquency.
- 2) Teens with lower levels of school attachment will be more inclined to commit delinquent acts.

### The Problem of Juvenile Delinquency in Kuwait

Table 1 provides a summary of social changes related to juvenile delinquency and population demographics in Kuwait from 1981-1997. Table 1 also reveals increases in Kuwait's juvenile delinquents cannot be explained solely by population growth. In addition, while non-Kuwaitis constituted the majority of juvenile offenders in the pre-war period, Kuwaiti youth have become an increasingly sizable proportion of the juvenile delinquent population since the Gulf War. Prior to the 1990 Gulf War, the number of juvenile offenders in Kuwait were increased significantly in 1982, and then again after 1985. During 1982 alone, the number of juvenile delinquents rose 87%. Two-thirds of those offenders (66%) were foreign immigrants.

**Table 1:** Number of Juvenile Offenders Aged 13-18 in Kuwait, 1981-1997

Year	Total Number of Offenders	Percent Change (vs. prior year)	Kuwaiti Offenders (%)	Non-Kuwaiti Offenders (%)	Total Population	Percent Change (vs. prior year)
1981	2766	--	47%	53%	896,683	--
1982	5183	+87%	34%	66%	994,837	+11%
1983	4911	-5%	34%	66%	1,357,952	+37%
1984	4354	-11%	42%	58%	1,695,128	+25%
1985	5142	+18%	42%	58%	1,790,513	+6%
1986	5514	+7%	41%	59%	1,872,564	+5%
1987	5842	+6%	42%	58%	1,958,477	+5%
1988	6237	+7%	43%	57%	1,252,033	-4%
1989	7117	+14%	43%	57%	2,148,422	+72%
1990	*	*	*	*	*	*
1991	*	*	*	*	*	*
1992	6382	-10%	62%	38%	1,319,000	-39%
1993	8459	+33%	60%	40%	1,450,354	+10%
1994	9015	+7%	51%	49%	1,512,123	+4%
1995	8498	-5.7%	50%	50%	1,575,983	+4%
1996	9967	+17%	52%	48%	1,654,644	+5%
1997	9631	-3%	53%	47%	1,669,000	+8%

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, Kuwait, 1999. These data apply only to male offenders because the government collects information for males only.

\* Data not available for these years.

After two years of a slight decline in the number of offenders (1983-1984), Kuwait's population of juvenile delinquents again increased from 1985-1989. Although Table 1 shows only incremental, year-to-year increases during this time, the calculations (not shown directly in Table 1) reveal that the number of juvenile delinquents in 1989 was 64% greater than that of 1984. This dramatic rise in delinquency occurred despite a population increase of only 27% during this same time period. Therefore, growth in Kuwait's delinquent population significantly outpaced the rise in population. During this pre-war period, the majority of juvenile offenders were foreign-born immigrants whose families entered Kuwait during the 1980s seeking jobs. The absence of well-trained Kuwaiti workers led the nation's government to open the door for skilled foreigners. Although these skilled workers are not involved in the political decision-making processes, they predominate in the fields of education, law, medicine, engineering, and industrial planning. As a result, skilled foreigners have enabled the Kuwaiti society to mobilize for rapid modernization.

The post-war picture in Kuwait is somewhat different. Beginning in 1993, the number of juvenile offenders in Kuwait again increased dramatically. Once again, my own calculations with data presented in table 1 revealed that Kuwait's juvenile offender population increased by 56% between 1992 and 1996. The increase in the offender population is over two times greater than the population increase (approximately 25%) during this same time period. Most notably, for most of the post-war period, Kuwaiti youth constituted either a majority of the delinquent population (up to 62%) or were about evenly split with non-Kuwaiti delinquents.

There may be various causes of juvenile delinquency in Kuwait. Descriptive statistics alone cannot determine the cause of social conditions such as juvenile delinquency. However, Table 1 reveals that the number of juvenile offenders in this Gulf state increased significantly from the early 1980's to the late 1990's. Notably, the rising numbers of juvenile delinquents in Kuwait outpaced the population growth of this country. Moreover, the Gulf War marks an important shift in the composition of Kuwait's population of juvenile offenders. Whereas foreign offenders predominated during the pre-war period, the post-war era is characterized by an increased number of Kuwaiti-born delinquents. These trends raise important questions about the effect of long-term social changes in Kuwait and the impact of the Gulf War on this country's youth.

## **Literature Review**

### **Parent-Child Interaction**

#### **Family Attachment**

Scholars define high levels of family attachment as close bonds between parents and children. Research indicates that high levels of family attachment significantly reduce the likelihood that youth will commit delinquent acts (e.g., Goetting, 1994; Zingraff, 1994; Briar and Piliavin, 1965; Hirschi, 1969; Nye, 1958; Reckless, 1967; Reiss, 1988). Studies in this area suggest that children who have strong attachments to their caregivers do not wish to violate norms and values held by their parents.

#### **Parental Rejection**

Ronner (1980) defined rejection as parental behavior characterized by the withdrawal or absence of affection and warmth toward the child. As a result, delinquency will often result from the youth feeling rejected by their parents. The child who faces rejection from his parents is more likely to become delinquent than the child who is loved by and attached to his parents, even in the absence of delinquent influences from outside the home (Jensen, 1976). Furthermore, Loeber and Tremblay (1989) argued that parental rejection, parent-child involvement, and lack of parental supervision are among the most powerful predictors of juvenile delinquency.

## **Child Discipline**

Many studies have shown that corporal punishment is harmful for children; and it predicts higher levels of aggression and antisocial behavior in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (e.g., Strassberg, Dodge, Pettit, and Bates, 1994; Straus, 1994; Straus, Sugarman, and Giles-Sims, 1997; Travillion and Snyder, 1993).

## **Socio Demographic Factors**

### **Age**

Research on the age-delinquency relationship suggests that delinquency increases through the teenage years, peaks at about age 17 or 18, and then declines thereafter (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983; Greenberg, 1985).

### **Academic Achievement**

Among school factors, academic achievement is inversely related to delinquency (Maguin and Loeber, 1996; Sampson and Laub, 1993b; Jensen, 1976; Loeber and Dishion, 1983; Hirschi, 1969). Children who have low expectations and aspirations about education are more likely to be delinquent (Empey, 1982; Hirschi, 1969; Rankin, 1983).

Children with a strong commitment to educational achievement are likely to engage in school activities that may facilitate their high achievement and reduce the possibility that they will display delinquent behavior. On the other hand, a weak attachment to parents and teachers and a weak commitment to educational goals are often followed by school failure and delinquency (Hirschi, 1969).

Children from single-parent families receive lower grades than their counterparts from intact families and are at greater risk for dropping out of school and displaying antisocial behavior (Astone and McLanahan, 1991). These children received less parental involvement with schoolwork, less parental time, and less supervision outside the home than those who lived with both natural parents (Astone & McLanahan, 1991).

## **Theoretical Approach**

### **Social Control Theory**

Hirschi (1969) has argued that social bonds attach individuals to basic values and expected behavior of society at large. There are four elements of the social bond that link the individual to conventional society and reduce the risk of individuals perpetrating juvenile delinquency.

First, attachment is the emotional dimension of the social bond, and promotes conformity through affective ties that link individuals to conventional groups such as their family, schoolteachers, and friends. In a positive sense, attachment promotes sensitivity to the needs of others, as well as a respect for fellow persons and the social norms that govern interaction. Attachment signifies the degree to which a person cares about other people, particularly those who conform to social norms. This way conventional attachment protect teens from perpetrating juvenile delinquency, because deviance is shunned by youth with strong attachments to positive role models such as parents and schoolteachers. Commitment is a second component of social bonds as discussed by Hirschi (1969). Commitment is defined as the individual's pursuit of idealized and conventional objectives. Commitment to conventional goals is also evidenced by a desire to establish a good reputation with others as defined by dominant social norms. In this way, commitment to conventional norms keeps individuals from engaging in immoral acts and serves as a buffer that protects people from developing relationships with deviant groups (e.g., a teen gang, drug users).

Third, involvement refers to the amount of time and effort that individuals invest in the pursuit of conventional goals. Social control theorists argue that persons who are heavily invested in the pursuit of legitimate goals such as maintaining family traditions and developing their intellectual skills through education are less likely to form deviant associations and perpetrate juvenile delinquency. In a

sense, involvement is the practical manifestation of commitment. Persons committed to conventional goals will invest a great deal of time and energy pursuing the means necessary to achieve those objectives. For example, youth committed to educational advancement (commitment) will attend class regularly (involvement) rather than skipping class. Involvement, therefore, is the behavioral manifestation of commitment

A careful review of empirical research on social control theory underscores the importance of social bonds for the perpetration of juvenile delinquency. Youngsters who lack attachment to their parents, spend less time with their family, and have little respect for rules at home and school are much more likely to become juvenile delinquents (e.g., Abrams, 1981; Agnew, 1985; Agnew and White, 1992; Duncan 1978; Hirschi 1969; Krohn and Massey 1980; Sampson and Laub, 1993b; Straus and Donnelly, 1993). The parent-child bond is particularly important in relation to juvenile delinquency. Youngsters who report having been mistreated by their parents (through physical abuse or verbal insults) are considerably more likely to commit delinquent acts (Goetting, 1994; Vissing, 1991). In this sense, the parent-child bond is the foundation upon which all other social bonds are formed (Sampson and Laub, 1993b; Zingraff, 1994).

## **Methodology**

### **Sample**

To undertake this study, the survey was initially administered to 731 male Kuwaiti youth, 398 of which were incarcerated in the social care house, and 333 of which were never-incarcerated teens in Kuwait City public schools. The response rate for both subsamples was 100%, meaning that every survey distributed was returned by the respondents. (This outcome is not unusual when surveying institutionalized populations on site—namely, in the social care house and public schools.) However, missing data were found in a total of 98 surveys—50 surveys from the social care house respondents, and 48 surveys from the public school sample. Therefore, to conduct my analyses, listwise deletion was used to dispose of missing data on variables in specific models (Baker, 1994). After performing listwise deletion, an overall sample of 633 respondents, 318 youth incarcerated in the social care house and 315 youth in the public schools, remained. These data were collected through survey forms from 2001 to 2002. The overall sample of teen males was composed of two subsamples a group of convicted delinquents currently living in Kuwait's juvenile detention facility (called a social care house) (n=318) and another group of teenage boys from two Kuwait City schools (n=315). The students had never been incarcerated. Given this key distinguishing factor and the central importance of juvenile delinquency to this study (it is the dependent variable here), the analysis is structured as a quasi-experimental design using survey data (Babbie, 1990). From within the social care house, data were collected from 318 delinquents through a stratified sampling technique. Approximately 2,850 youth currently reside in the Kuwaiti social care house, which is located in the country's capitol, Kuwait City (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, 1999). For the purposes of the analysis, delinquents are treated as an experimental group. Because these incarcerated youth are segregated in the social care house by age and type of offense, the sample was stratified by administering the survey in different classes within this detention facility. All data were collected anonymously from youth housed there. Data for the other subsample used in this study were drawn from teenage boys recruited through the public high school system in Kuwait City. According to the logic of quasi-experimental design, this subsample serves as a control group. Survey data were collected from male students within the study's target age range (13-18 years old) who attend Kuwaiti public schools. None of the youth in this subsample had never been incarcerated. Informed consent was used to collect these data was obtained from administrative authorities (Kuwait's Ministry of Social Affairs) for the social care house residents and from parents of male school children prior to surveying these youth.

## Measurement of Variables

The survey administered to incarcerated youth asked them to specify the delinquent acts they had committed in the year prior to their detention, whereas students in the school sample were asked what delinquent acts they had committed during the previous year.

### Dependent Variables: Property Delinquency

Adapting an instrument developed by Ageton and Elliot (1980), this study compares the perpetration of delinquency among social care house residents and Kuwaiti public school students along with the property delinquency. The full range of items used to operationalize property delinquency is listed in Table 2. Response categories enabled subjects to identify the number of times that they engaged in each behavior, such that: 0=did not engage in behavior; 1=engaged in behavior one to five times; 2=engaged in behavior six to ten times; 3=engaged in behavior eleven to twenty times; and 4=engaged in behavior more than twenty times. Theoretically, this index can range from 0 to 65 (though empirical ranges actually calculated from returned surveys are of greater importance). The alpha reliability score for the property delinquency index is .7213

**Table 2:** Property Delinquency Survey Items

Burglarized a house or building	Taken something not belonging to you worth over \$50
Gone onto someone's land without permission	Set fire to someone's property
Gone onto a house when you were not supposed to be there	Taken something not belonging to you worth less than \$5
Stole or taken some part of a car	Taken something from a store without paying for it
Taken a motor vehicle such as a car or motorcycle without the permission of the owner	Broken into a place to steal something
Damaged something that did not belong to you	

## Independent Variables

### Family Attachment, Parental Rejection, and Child Discipline

A *family attachment* index was composed of a multi-item composite, with Likert-scale response categories ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree for the following items: (1) I spend a lot of time interacting with my parents, (2) I spend a lot of time with my aunt(s) and uncle(s), (3) I spend a lot of time with my sisters and brothers, (4) My parents have a great deal of trust in me, (5) My family is important to me, (6) It is important for me to be like my father when I become an adult, and (7) I feel close to my father or mother. The alpha reliability for this index is .8571.

*Parental rejection* was operationalized as an index composed of the following measures: (1) My parents blame me for all their problems, (2) My parents find fault with me even when I don't deserve it, (3) My parents are unhappy with the things I do, and (4) My parents wish I were not their son. Subjects were again given a four-item Likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree. The alpha score for this index is .7981. *Child discipline* was measured by a two-item index: (1) My parents hit me for simple mistakes, and (2) My parents treat me bad when I do something wrong. Response categories were the same as those for parental rejection. The index has a reliability score of .7832.

### Social Class: Income and Education

To measure the effect of social class on delinquency, data were collected on family income and educational attainment of parents and the youth. The monthly *family income* for all wage-earners in these youngster's households was measured categorically as follows: (1) less than 500 KD (Kuwait Dinar), (2), 501 to 1,000 KD, (3) 1,000 to 2,000 KD, (4) 2,001 to 3,000 KD, (5) 3,001 to 5,000 KD, (6) 5,001 to 8,000 KD, and (7) more than 8,000 KD. *Education* was coded as an ordinal variable. It consisted of the years of education attained by respondents, and that of their parents.

### School Attachment

With the same four-point Likert-scale response categories used for family attachment, *school attachment* was measured by combining the following items: (1) Going to school has been an enjoyable experience for me, (2) Doing well in school is important for getting a good job, (3) I care about what my teachers think of me in school, and (4) The schoolwork assigned to me is meaningful and important. The index for school attachment has a reliability score of .8913.

### Age

Age is one of the socio demographic variables used in this study and was obtained by survey self-reports. Age was coded in number of years.

### Academic Achievement

*Academic achievement* is defined as high or low grades in academic performance.

Academic achievement is measured by a two-item index based on the following items: (1) Good grades are important to me, and (2) My parents limit privileges because of poor grades. The response for the academic achievement is based on response categories of 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability of this index is .8103.

## Data Analysis and Findings

**Table 3:** Descriptive Statistics for Property and Interpersonal Delinquency among Kuwaiti Youth

Category	Incarcerated Subsample				Student subsample			
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Property delinquency	28.9**	3.99	0	65	7.63**	3.46	0	48

P-Value of T-test\* p < .05; \*\* p < .01

As illustrated clearly in table 3, youth in the incarcerated subsample have a higher mean (28.9) for property delinquency than the student subsample (7.63 for property delinquency). Mean differences in the perpetration of delinquency are large, such that the scores on this index for the incarcerated subsample are about four to five times greater than those for the students. The p-values of the t-tests comparing means across the incarcerated and student subsamples are statistically significant at the .01 level.

**Table 4:** Descriptive Statistics for Key Independent Variables among Kuwaiti Youth

Independent Variable	Incarcerated Subsample				Student Subsample			
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Family attachment	13.45*	3.33	7	24	17.7*	5.45	7	28
Parental rejection	7.93	2.41	4	16	7.05	1.52	4	14
Child discipline	5.6*	1.6	2	8	5.1*	1.5	2	7
School attachment	7.24*	2.19	4	14	10.6*	3.57	4	16
Academic achievement	7.48**	.31	1	2	1.7*	.39	1	2

NOTE: SD=standard deviation, Min=minimum, Max=Maximum; P-Value of T-test: \* p < .05; \*\* p < .01.

Table 4 presents the means, standard deviations, minimums, and maximums for key independent variables used in this study. Among the most interesting mean differences that surface here are those pertaining to family attachment and school attachment. Mean scores for the first three of these items are all significantly lower among the incarcerated subsample. By contrast, incarcerated youth score considerably higher on parental rejection, child discipline than their student counterparts.

For these variables, the p-values of the t-tests across subsamples are statistically significant (at either the .05 or the .01 level).

**Table 5:** Descriptive Statistics for Socio demographic Variables among Kuwaiti Youth

Socio demographic Variable	Incarcerated Subsample				Student Subsample			
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Age of respondents	15.88	1.63	13	18	15.70	1.32	13	17
Respondent’s education	2.5	.49	1	5	2.95	.30	1	6
Father’s education	2.57	.50	1	5	2.83	.76	1	6
Mother’s education	2.1	.32	1	5	2.66	.92	1	6
Family income	1.39	.49	1	2	4.26	1.89	1	7
Marital status (Married=1)	.087**	.28	0	1	.87**	.32	0	1
Number of siblings	6.5	2.6	2	32	5.8	1.6	2	28
Polygamy	3.30	.47	1	4	2.2	.38	1	4

Table 5 displays the means, standard deviations, and ranges for socio demographic variables across the two subsamples in this study. Many of the means are similar, but some noteworthy differences surface. On average, incarcerated youth come from low-income families with less educated parents. Moreover, only 9% of the youth in the incarcerated subsample come from married households, compared with 87% of the youth in the student subsample. These same youth come from homes with a greater number of siblings and polygamous households when compared with youth in the school subsample.

## Results of Multiple Linear Regression

**Table 6:** Estimated Effects of Socio demographic Factors on Property Delinquency among Kuwaiti Youth

Sociodemographic Variables	Incarcerated Subsample	Student Subsample
Family Income	(-.604) -.074*	(.293) .030
Respondent’s Education	(-.212) -.026**	(.341) .012
Father’s Education	(-.401) -.113	(.216) .002
Mother’s Education	(-.146) -.094**	(.870) .009
Age	(.453) .186**	(.442) .068
Number of Siblings	(.674) .046*	(.817) .034
Polygamy	(.684) .117*	(.489) .143**
R <sup>2</sup>	.147	.119
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.141	.104
F	3.356**	1.346*
N	318	315

Note: unstandardized effects in parentheses, with standardized effects shown.

\* P-value = .05

\*\* P-value = .01

Dependent: Property Delinquency



For both the incarcerated ( $F = 3.356, p = .007$ ) and student ( $F = 1.346, p = .04$ ) subsamples in table 6, statistically significant effects are evident for several socio demographic variables. For the incarcerated subsample, seven of the nine socio demographic factors are statistically significant. Taken as a whole, these variables account for 14.7% of the variance in property delinquency (the R-squared statistic in the corresponding column). Family income, respondent’s education, and mother’s and father’s education are all inversely related to property delinquency among youth in the incarcerated subsample. For this same group of respondents, age, number of siblings, and polygamy are positively related to property delinquency. For the student subsample, socio demographic factors account for 11.9% of the variance in property delinquency. Only polygamy has a statistically significant effect on property delinquency among this group. In general, the direction of the coefficients across these subsamples is consistent with previous research on juvenile delinquency.

The models reported in table 7 estimate the effects of variables drawn from the social control perspective on property delinquency. For the incarcerated subsample, the R-squared statistic indicates that social control theory variables account for approximately 16.3% of the variance in property delinquency. The F-test ( $2.871, p = .015$ ) leads to a rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that the proportion of variance in property delinquency is explained by these independent variables.

For the incarcerated subsample, there is an inverse relationship between family attachment (Beta =  $-.029$ ) and property delinquency. Parental rejection (Beta =  $.037$ ) and harsh child discipline (Beta =  $.126$ ) are positive predictors of property delinquency among incarcerated youth. Taken together, these findings offer support for Hypothesis 1.

Consistent with relationships anticipated in Hypothesis 2, school attachment (Beta =  $-.080$ ), academic achievement (Beta =  $-.387$ ) are all inversely related to property delinquency. These coefficients are all statistically significant.

The incarcerated subsample. Incarcerated respondents raised in intact homes (those with married couples) (Beta =  $-.06$ ) have significantly lower rates of perpetrating property delinquency when compared with those raised in non married homes (i.e., those with divorced, separated, or deceased parents).

**Table: 7:** Estimated Effects of Social Control Variables on Property Delinquency among Kuwaiti Youth

<b>Independent Social Control Variables</b>	<b>Incarcerated Subsample</b>	<b>Student Subsample</b>
Family Attachment	(-.124) -.029**	(.478) .042**
Parental Rejection	(.609) .037**	(-.286) -.052*
Child Discipline	(.272) .126**	(-.199) -.050**
School Attachment	(-.525) -.080*	(.877) .362**
Academic Achievement	(-.683) -.387**	(-.394) -.198**
Married	(-.783) -.06**	(-.473) -.056**
<b>Socio demographic Variables</b>		
Family Income	(-.674) -.082*	(.699) .007**
Respondent’s Education	(-.190) -.024**	(.353) .012**
Father’s Education	(-.657) -.119**	(.834) .007**
Mother’s Education	(-.538) -.102**	(.290) .031**

Independent	Incarcerated Subsample	Student Subsample
Age of Respondent	(.443) .182**	(.404) .062*
Number of Siblings	(.722) .048*	(.505) .044*
Polygamy	(.643) .112**	(.513) .049*
R <sup>2</sup>	.163	.121
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.151	.119
F	2.871*	1.568**
N	318	315

Note: unstandardized effects in parentheses, with standardized effects shown.

\* P-value = .05

\*\* P-value = .01

Dummy variables

Dependent: Property Delinquency

The rightmost column in Table 7 estimates the effects of social control theory variables and socio demographic covariates on property delinquency for the student subsample. The R-squared statistic indicates that these independent variables account for approximately 12.1% of the variance in property delinquency among public school youth. The F-test ( $F = 1.568$ ,  $p = .01$ ) indicates that these independent variables have an effect on property delinquency in the population from which this sample was selected.

For the student subsample, there is no support for Hypothesis 1. Contrary to expectations, there is a direct relationship between family attachment ( $Beta = .042$ ) and property delinquency. This unexpected finding is complemented by inverse relationships between parental rejection ( $Beta = -.052$ ) and harsh child discipline ( $Beta = -.050$ ) on the one hand and property delinquency on the other.

Similarly, Hypothesis 2 is only modestly supported for the student subsample. Contrary to expectations, school attachment ( $Beta = .362$ ) is a positive predictor of property delinquency. More consistent with hypothesized expectations, academic achievement ( $Beta = -.198$ ) has an inverse relationships with property delinquency.

The results reported for the student subsample in Table 12a. Respondents with married parents ( $Beta = -.056$ ) have a lower likelihood of perpetrating property delinquency.

Turning briefly to the socio demographic variables in these models, many of them operate in the expected direction for the incarcerated subsample. Negative predictors of property delinquency among incarcerated youth include family income ( $Beta = -.084$ ), respondent's education ( $Beta = -.024$ ), father's education ( $Beta = -.119$ ), and mother's education ( $Beta = -.102$ ). As expected, property delinquency among incarcerated youth is positively predicted by the age of respondents ( $Beta = .182$ ), number of siblings ( $Beta = .048$ ), and polygamy ( $Beta = .112$ ). For the student subsample, all of the socio demographic variables—with the exceptions of respondent's education and father's education—operate in the expected direction.

## Discussion

This study examined the influence of family relationships and other cultural factors on delinquency in this Gulf nation. Using a quasi-experimental design, the study compared the causes of delinquency among teen boys aged thirteen to eighteen incarcerated in Kuwait's social care house (the experimental group) with those reported by a comparable sample of students from two public schools (the control group).

Multiple linear regression models revealed several statistically significant predictors of property delinquency among youth incarcerated in the social care house sample. Concerning property delinquency, independent variables associated with social control find strong support for incarcerated subsample. Specifically higher levels of property delinquency was reported by incarcerated youth from

polygamous families, unmarried households, as well as those with more siblings. As expected for incarcerated youth, there were inverse relationships between family attachment, school attachment and academic achievement on the property delinquency. These findings are broadly consistent with those reported in previous scholarship (McLanahan and Sanderfur, 1994; Sampson and Laub, 1994; Webster, Orbach, and House, 1995; Wells and Rankins, 1991), particularly those rooted in control theory (e.g., Abrams, 1981; Agnew, 1985, 1989; Agnew and White, 1992; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Morrow and Sorell, 1989; Sampson and Laub, 1993a; Straus and Donnelly, 1993; Vissing, 1991; Wiatrowski, 1981). Several prior studies have also detected a direct relationship between the number of siblings in a family and forms of juvenile delinquency (Thornton, Voigt, and Doerner, 1987; Yablonsky and Haskell, 1988; Hirschi, 1969). Findings from this research on Kuwaiti youth confirmed studies that have shown polygamy to have a direct effect on property delinquency (Al-jishi, 1986; Buzaboon, 1986).

Among the socio demographic variables in my analysis, respondent's education, parents' education, and family income and age produced consistent findings with their hypotheses for the incarcerated subsample. Age was a consistent predictor of property delinquency for the incarcerated subsample. Older youth in the sample of 13 to 18 year old report consistently higher levels of property delinquency in the social care house. This finding is consistent with previous research on age and delinquency (LaGrange and White, 1985). It is difficult to determine if this effect can be traced to these youngsters' actual age (that is, how many years old the respondents are) or to their status as a cohort (that is, their shared experience of a historical events such as the Iraqi occupation and the Gulf War or both).

The results modestly supported for social control theory. However, among the student subsample, there are several interesting findings. Those who come from unmarried households report high levels of property delinquency. Parental rejection and harsh child discipline were significant predictors of property delinquency in the student subsample. All of these relationships are expected given the propositions of social control theory and are consistent with previous literature on the subject (e.g., Maguin and Loeber, 1996; Sampson and Laub, 1993a; Hirschi, 1969). Moreover, a direct relationship was observed between family attachment, school attachment, and property delinquency for public school youth. These findings are not consistent with previous research studies (Cernkovich and Giordano, 1992; Flannery, 1996; Junger, 1992).

### **Implications, Limitations, and Directions for Future Research**

Future research might examine the long-term impact of the factors analyzed here by using a longitudinal research design. Appropriate care with special teams who have local community skills would be a possible starting point. They can be trained to administer simple screening tests to discover children's problems. Also, teams and parents need to recognize and handle their children's psychological problems. Where possible, parents and schools can build foundations for future peace by using methods of communicating with children to promote resilience in youngsters. Much of this work has already begun. After the liberation of Kuwait, different governmental and nongovernmental organizations oversaw the implementation of intervention and documentation programs for child victims of war. These are important steps, because social and community supports are known to be important factors in stimulating and sustaining resilience in children (Holaday and McPhearson, 1997). Given the sources of delinquency identified in this study, it will take a great deal more than talk of youth resiliency (e.g., public service announcements, and other propaganda) to assist Kuwaiti parents and youth with overcoming the negative consequences of the Gulf War.

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