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THE ECONOMIC FACTOR IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Ernest W. Burgess

The author is well known as Professor of Sociology in the University of Chicago. He has served several years as Editor of *The American Journal of Sociology*, as Director of the Behavior Research Fund in Chicago and in many other important capacities. He is active as a promoter of research relating to sources of delinquency and crime, and to treatment. The following article has been read by Professor Burgess before the Illinois Academy of Criminology.—EDITOR.

The relationship of low income to juvenile delinquency will be considered under three headings:

1. Who is a juvenile delinquent?
2. How is low income related to juvenile delinquency?
3. Would an adequate income for existing low income families reduce juvenile delinquency?

A boy or a girl is not a juvenile delinquent just because he commits a delinquent act. If so all boys and all, or practically all, girls would be delinquent. A delinquent is one who has been treated as such by society. He must be considered by the people in the community to be a delinquent. In other words, he must have an official record. The longer his record, other things being equal, the more delinquent is the child up to the point at which he reforms.

The great majority of children are not official delinquents because the family checks their unsocial conduct. Or it may intervene if the boy or girl has been caught in delinquency by a neighbor, or even by the police and accept full responsibility for his future conduct. These children are not stigmatized by the community as delinquent. They do not consider themselves as in that class. At most they think of themselves as "tough" and "wild."

Juvenile delinquents are then those children who have official records as delinquent. They have completed one or more stages of the process by which a child becomes delinquent. They have been arrested by the police. They have appeared in the juvenile court; have been detained in the juvenile detention home; placed on probation. They have been committed to an industrial school, and have been released on parole. Many have violated parole and have committed new delinquency and have been apprehended by the police and gone through the process of delinquency-making again.

Official records of delinquency including arrest, appearance in Juvenile Court, probation, commitment to institutions and later parole and recidivism characterize many children from low income families. These are seldom experienced by children from well-to-do homes. The pro-

verbial black sheep of good family is an exception and sooner or later generally obtains a delinquency record.

In *Brothers in Crime*¹ Shaw gives the official records and life history of five brothers of a family so poor that the mother as well as the father was compelled to work. In spite of all their effort the children became delinquent. The official record of each brother is long. The oldest, John, had twenty three items, culminating in being committed to a reformatory. The second brother, Edward, had sixty three, the last of which was being returned to a state reformatory as a parole violator. James, the third brother, had seventy entries, including several commitments to a boys school, a state industrial school, the house of correction and the state reformatory. Michael the fourth, had fifty-seven different items on his record and the youngest brother, Carl, had twenty-eight.

It is interesting to note that the first recorded delinquency of the oldest brother was when he was nine years old and, in association with six other boys all older than he, was picked up by the police and charged with petty stealing. His next younger brother was brought into court in company with his older brother on a petition alleging truancy from school, begging and petty stealing a year younger than his brother, or eight years old. The middle brother was arrested charged with truancy, begging and petty stealing when he was only seven years old. The next to the youngest brother was arrested on the same grounds at five years old. The youngest brother, charged with the same offenses, also, was arrested and brought to the Juvenile Detention Home when he was only three years and three months old.

The career of Carl as officially recorded is entered here in full to show the real difference between delinquents who have been officially stigmatized and have experienced police arrests, appearance in juvenile courts, supervision under probation and parole and various types of institutional experience from the so-called delinquents of good families in residential neighborhoods who have sporadically engaged in delinquent acts but have seldom been treated as delinquent. At most they have received warnings from the police or their parents have successfully interceded to prevent any official record of their behavior.

Carl's active career in delinquency continued over a period of approximately thirteen years, during which time he was picked up and arrested by the police on fourteen occasions, appeared in courts sixteen times, served six periods of confinement in institutions, and was placed under the supervision of probation and parole officers twelve times. The de-

1. *BROTHERS IN CRIME* by CLIFFORD R. SHAW, University of Chicago Press, 1938.

tailed record of his arrests, appearances in court, and commitments follows:²

1. Two years, ten months of age:

In company with Edward, age 11 years, 7 months, James, 6 years, 8 months, and Michael, 4 years, 8 months, Carl was picked up by the police wandering about the streets at 10 o'clock P.M. He was released to the parents. Dependency petitions were filed on all the children.

2. Two years, ten months:

He was brought to court with Edward, age 11 years, 7 months, James, 6 years, 8 months, and Michael, 4 years, 8 months, on petitions alleging dependency. Carl was placed under the supervision of a probation officer of the Juvenile Court.

3. Three years, three months:

While in the company of his brothers, Edward, age 11 years, 11 months, James, 7 years, Michael, 5 years, Carl was brought to the Detention Home, charged with truancy from home, begging, and stealing. Released to the parents under supervision of an officer.

4. Three years, seven months:

He was brought to court with Edward, age 12 years, 3 months, James, 7 years, 4 months, and Michael, 5 years, 4 months, on dependency petitions. The petition was continued and all the children except Edward were released and placed under the supervision of a probation officer of the Juvenile Court.

5. Four years, five months:

He was reported begging with James, age 8 years, 3 months and Michael, 6 years, 2 months. The complaint was filed with a family-case work agency by a resident of a near-by community.

6. Five years, eight months:

Carl, in company with Michael, age 7 years, 5 months, was arrested and brought to the Juvenile Court charged with begging and petty stealing. He was released to his parents under supervision of a probation officer of the court.

7. Five years, ten months:

Carl was ordered brought to court on a dependency petition. When Carl was brought to court he was released to the parents under the supervision of a probation officer.

8. Six years, five months:

He was brought to court with James, age 10 years, 3 months, and Michael, 8 years, 3 months, on petitions alleging dependency. Carl was committed to the home for dependent children.

9. Seven years:

Carl's father visited the home for dependent children and took Carl home without the consent of the authorities.

10. Seven years, four months:

He was picked up by the police in a railway station and returned to his parents. The incident was reported in the metropolitan press:

With 60 cents he had accumulated for the occasion, 7-year-old Carl Martin, 44... B..... St., started out yesterday to "see Chicago first." He boarded an elevated train and apparently rode all over the city. His "roll" was exhausted late in the evening, so he walked to the Polk St. railway station, where he was picked up by the police. It was a tired, but educated Carl who was turned over to his parents.

2. *Ibid*, pp. 42-47.

11. Ten years, nine months:

While in company with Michael, age 12 years, 7 months, Carl was arrested and brought to court on a delinquency petition alleging burglary. He was released to his mother under the supervision of a court officer.

12. Eleven years:

The mother was ordered to bring Carl to court on a petition alleging truancy from school, begging, and petty stealing. The court record reads:

Officer reports that the mother started with the boy who jumped off the street car at corner and ran away. Officer states he (Carl) has done fairly well. The probation officer was ordered to continue supervision of Carl.

13. Eleven years, four months:

He was brought to court on a petition alleging truancy from school. The court record reads:

Officer Howard reports boy is under supervision; has been guilty of serious truancy; that he understands the school authorities have instituted truancy proceedings but does not know the date of same.

He was released to his mother under supervision of the court officer.

14. Eleven years, five months:

He was brought to court on a petition alleging truancy from school. Carl was committed to the Chicago Parental School.

15. Eleven years, eight months:

He was paroled from the Chicago Parental School.

16. Eleven years, ten months:

While in company with Michael, age 13 years, 9 months, and Joseph Herman, 14 years, 7 months, Carl was arrested and brought to court charged with burglary. Michael was returned to the St. Charles School for boys. The hearing was continued in order that an investigation could be made in the case of Carl and Joseph Herman. Carl was released to his mother pending the investigation.

17. Twelve years:

Returned to the Chicago Parental School for violation of parole.

18. Twelve years, six months:

Paroled from the Chicago Parental School.

19. Thirteen years, two months:

Arrested and brought to court on a delinquency petition alleging the theft of an automobile. The court record reads:

At 9:30 PM Monday this boy stole a Studebaker automobile from the ground of a suburban country club—touring car valued at \$950.00—the property of Frank Johnson. Two days later he was caught in possession of the aforesaid car in the vicinity of E. and H. streets by officers P. and G. of the Police District. Auto recovered although the tools and an auto robe had disappeared. Carl was committed to the Chicago and Cook County School for Boys.

20. Thirteen years, three months:

He escaped from the Chicago and Cook County School for Boys.

21. Thirteen years, four months:

He was arrested and returned to Chicago and Cook County School for Boys.

22. Thirteen years, five months:

He escaped from the Chicago and Cook County School for Boys but was returned two days later.

23. Thirteen years, five months:

Paroled from the Chicago and Cook County School for Boys.

24. Thirteen years, nine months:

In the company of Joseph Herman, age 16 years, 6 months, Walter Kohler, age 14 years, Adam Krancer, age 22 years, John Olson, 24 years, and Homer Luda, Carl was arrested and brought to court charged with larceny of two automobiles. In presenting the case to the court the probation officer charged:

On July 9th, 19. . . , at 1:00 AM the above named boy and Joseph Herman, 16 years, Walter Kohler, 14 years, did steal and drive away a Chevrolet touring car from the curb in front of 13. . North H. Ave., the property of Greta Lohner. The above named boys were arrested at E. and M. avenues while riding in the aforesaid automobile. Carl and a boy known as Ralph Palmer (never identified) did steal and drive away a Chevrolet sedan from the curb in front of 12. . North O. St., and drove it to an alley on B. Street, where it was stripped of tires by Adam Krancer, 22 years, John Olson, 21 years old, and Homer Luda, 21 years old. The car was the property of I. Greenberg, 40. . North L. . . . Avenue.

Adam Krancer was committed to the House of Correction for a period of sixty days, John Olson was committed to the House of Correction for a period of four months, Homer Luda was fined \$100 and costs, Joseph Herman was committed to the Chicago and Cook County Schools for Boys and Walter Kohler was placed on probation. Carl was committed to the St. Charles School for Boys.

25. Fifteen years, two months:

Carl was paroled from the St. Charles School for Boys.

26. Seventeen years, eight months:

He was arrested on suspicion and charged with disorderly conduct but was discharged the same day.

27. Twenty-one years, five months:

Carl was arrested on a charge of disorderly conduct and discharged.

28. Twenty-two years, five months:

He was arrested on suspicion and charged with disorderly conduct but was discharged.

In summary, a juvenile delinquent is a boy or girl who has an official record. He is stigmatized by the community as being "delinquent." He tends to consider himself a "delinquent" and a "criminal." A delinquent in the full sense of the term is one who has engaged in a series of delinquent acts and is directing his ambitions and goals to a criminal career.

From the practical standpoint those children that require official attention and supervision are the ones that are of interest to us in the study of effect of low income upon juvenile delinquency. We do not need to concern ourselves with the delinquent acts of children from families in which parents have the financial resources and the ability to supervise and guide the behavior of their children without the intervention of the juvenile court.

Therefore criminologists who state that delinquent acts occur among children of families at all economic levels are beclouding the real point.

Gabriel Tarde, the great French sociologist and jurist stated long ago that the delinquent and criminal are created not alone by their acts but by the ways in which society treats those acts.

Accordingly, it is my considered judgment that official records of juvenile delinquency and crime supply us with the best available evidence of who is a juvenile delinquent and a criminal.

LOW INCOME AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Certain facts concerning the relation of juvenile delinquency to low family income emerge from various studies. Among these are the following:

1. Official juvenile delinquents are concentrated in certain areas of every city. These have been called delinquency areas. They are thinly scattered in the better residential districts.

Shaw and McKay³ in collaboration with six sociologists in other American cities, studied twenty cities in the United States covering tens of thousands of official delinquents. In all of these communities they found that juvenile delinquency was concentrated in certain areas which they called "delinquency areas."

Delinquency areas are the slums of our large cities. They are drab districts with bad housing. They are often areas of overcrowding and are deficient in recreational facilities. Often they are around the central business district of the city. Frequently they are jammed up against industrial plants like steel mills, oil refineries or stockyards. Almost always these are residentially undesirable. They are inhabited by a succession of immigrants. At present newcomers like the Mexican and Negro are crowding out the Italian and Poles who earlier displaced the German and Irish.

Some people dislike the word "slum." It is highly descriptive of housing and neighborhood conditions which are unfavorable for the wholesome development of the child. These too often are areas where children have to play in the streets because there is no space in backyards and no playgrounds are accessible.

2. Juvenile delinquency areas are highly correlated with poverty and with low income.

The following correlations with various indices of poverty are reported in Shaw and McKay in their volume *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas* (unless otherwise indicated).

3. JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND URBAN AREAS, Chicago, University of Chicago, 1942.

<u>Conditions Correlated with Delinquency</u>	<u>Pearsonian Correlation</u>
Chicago, families on relief, 1934	.89 ± .01
Cleveland, families on relief	.93 ± .02
Columbus, dependency, 1919	.83 ± .05
Richmond, dependents	.78 ± .06
Chicago, non-support, 1929-35 ⁴	.87
Boston, unemployed males	.85 ± .03
Columbus, Ohio, Median rentals, 1930	.84 ± .04

4. ERNEST R. MOWRER, *DISORGANIZATION, PERSONAL AND SOCIAL*, Philadelphia, J. P. Lippincott, 1942.

The evidence of the close association of areas of high rates of low income and of juvenile delinquency is overwhelming.

3. Areas with high juvenile delinquency rates, have high rates of other problems also, as shown below:

<u>Rates for juvenile delinquency correlated with certain conditions</u>	<u>Pearsonian Correlation</u>
Adult males arrested, Cincinnati	.93 ± .02
Truancy rates (Chicago) 1927-33	.90 ± .01
Boys Court rates (Chicago) 1924-26	.90 ± .01
Tuberculosis rate (Chicago) 1931-37	.93 ± .01
Mental disorder (Chicago) 1927-33	.72 ± .01
Infant mortality (Chicago)	.64 ± .01

This evidence suggests that low income is associated not only with truancy, youthful and adult crime but also with other social problems such as tuberculosis, mental disorders, and infant mortality.

4. Poverty, accordingly, is only one of a number of factors associated with juvenile delinquency. This conclusion is corroborated not only by statistics but by life histories of juvenile delinquents. Among these other factors are bad housing, broken homes, mothers working, parental negligence, over severity, over leniency, rejection, boy and girl gangs, delinquent and criminal traditions, and other neighborhood conditions contributing to the delinquency of the child.

5. A generalized pattern of the process of becoming delinquent in a low income and delinquency area may be traced, both for the boy and girl delinquent.

For the boy, the life histories by Clifford R. Shaw in the *Jackroller*, in *Brothers in Crime* and the *Natural History of a Delinquent Career* present in concrete detail how the boy in an area of low incomes and of immigrant families becomes delinquent.

The family lives in poverty. The mother may have to work to supplement the family income. The parents do their best to prevent the boy.

from becoming delinquent. They are, however, with little or no education, ignorant of much of the American way of life.

They may, like the father and mother in *Brothers in Crime*, resort to extreme methods, such as severe beating, to break the boy of delinquent behavior. The boy, however, has already become a member of the gang on the street which teaches him the ways and techniques of crime. The influence of the family, the school and the church may be counteracted by the fellowship and adventure in crime of the boys gang.

Just as in the case of the five Martin brothers, the boys go through the delinquency making process; arrest by police, appearance in Juvenile Court, probation, new offenses, commitment to the Parental School, release, more delinquencies, commitment to an industrial training school for boys, perhaps escape and return, or release on parole, breaking of parole and return, release, further crimes but of a more serious nature, such as auto theft, robbery with a gun and high jacking, followed by recommitment to the industrial training school or more likely to the state reformatory. This process of institutional treatment does not reform the majority of boys. They return to their family in low income and delinquency areas. Their associates are members of gangs and often graduates of the same institutions. Studies of those with industrial school training in Illinois and Massachusetts show that over 80 percent continue in delinquency and crime.

There is a good deal of truth in the assertion that our so-called institutions of reformation are really training schools in delinquency and crime. The Parental School corresponds to the grades, the state industrial school to high school, the reformatory to college and the penitentiary to university graduate work in the methods and techniques of crime.

What else can be expected if the graduates of these institutions return to slum areas with the same conditions of low income, gang life and unfavorable neighborhood conditions?

The pattern of becoming a girl delinquent is more specific and uniform than that of the boy. First of all the great majority of girl delinquents are sexually promiscuous. Second, the girls are almost invariably from low income families.

Low income, however, is not the decisive factor but rather one that underlies many of the other factors. Low income is rather directly related to meager conditions of family life and insufficient provision in the home for wholesome recreation. In addition, there are almost always unfavorable interpersonal relations in the families. The home often is

broken by death, desertion or divorce. Step parents often accentuate the problem. Discipline in the family tends to go either to the extreme of great leniency or of great severity.

The girl seeks companionship outside the family; generally she attaches herself to a girl who is already wayward and who introduces her to other girls already engaged in illicit sexual behavior with a number of youths from a group unsupervised by parents or character building institutions.

The girl introduced into this group at first declines to engage in drinking and sex relations. The group soon gives her to understand that she must conform and join in these activities or leave the group. She may decide to join in for the sake of fun and a good time. Sex relations are not begun because of sexual desire in the majority of cases but due to group pressure and because of the insistence and pleading of one of the young men. The next step is for the girl to become promiscuous. Finally, she may learn that she can receive presents and obtain money for sexual intercourse. Sooner or later she is apprehended, brought into court and committed to the state training school for girls.

It is evident from this outline of patterns in becoming a boy or girl delinquent that low income is not the only factor but it is a basic underlying condition that is an essential element in the precipitating factors.

ADEQUATE INCOME AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

Low income is not, as we have seen, often a single direct cause of juvenile delinquency. It is a complex of factors associated with low income: bad housing, slum neighborhood, prevalence of gangs and lack of community organization.

Rise in income permits families to move from delinquency to non-delinquency areas of the city. In Chicago and other cities, when they move, their children generally cease to have official delinquency records. Rise in income changes the complex of factors which result in delinquency.

But we should also think in terms of the possibilities of raising the level of community life by adequate minimum income and abolition of slums.

An adequate and complete program of juvenile delinquency prevention should combine the following factors:

1. Assured family income to provide for a minimum American standard of living. This is a basic condition.
2. The abolition of slum housing in American cities.

3. The development of neighborhood housing projects in place of the slums in such a way as to be most favorable for community organization.

This should include the following:

- a. An area of sufficient size for a population necessary to maintain an elementary school—typically, an area of one-quarter square mile.
- b. Traffic streets routed around, not through the area, so as to safeguard its residential character.
- c. Business located not within the neighborhood but restricted to points on the through-streets around it.
- d. A small park or playground at the center of the neighborhood around which are located the institutions of the neighborhood—school, church, community center, etc.

4. Neighborhood organization to provide for the welfare of the children including their health, education, recreation and character building. This neighborhood organization should be democracy in action, of the people, for the people and by the people in the neighborhood.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the evidence indicates the following conclusions.

1. Official juvenile delinquency which is far more serious than delinquent acts that do not result in court action, is largely concentrated in low income areas.

2. Studies have universally shown that juvenile delinquency is highly correlated with all the indexes of low income and with other social problems resulting from poverty.

3. While low income is seldom a direct cause of juvenile delinquency it is an underlying and basic condition. Therefore, an adequate minimum and stable family income is probably a most significant factor in the prevention of serious cases of delinquency which now are appearing in our juvenile courts and are committed to industrial schools and reformatories. Stable and adequate income, together with its consequences in the improvement of family life and neighborhood conditions, would be a powerful preventive influence in reducing juvenile delinquency.

DISCUSSION BY EDWARD H. STULLKEN

Principal of Montefiore Special School, Chicago

Dr. Burgess defined the Juvenile delinquent as a child who has official records as a delinquent. The definition is correct from the legal point of view and from the standpoint of Dr. Burgess' paper. However, from the standpoint of the educator the definition is too narrow because the school must deal with many children whose problems are little different from those of the official delinquent. Children,

who steal, whether they have an official record or only an unofficial one, need pretty much the same educational care and training even though the family may check the delinquency before it is made an official record. The school, in fact, always attempts to get family and community to check delinquencies before it must appeal to the officials of the law and the courts to handle the matter.

To the educator Dr. Burgess' record of the life history of five delinquent brothers is not only interesting because of the extreme youth of the children when they began their delinquent careers but also because succeeding brothers got official records at progressively younger ages. Educationally it indicates that in a family of delinquents the younger members are inducted into the delinquent pattern at an earlier age than the first delinquent.

Dr. Burgess' report indicates also that delinquency itself is a slow educational process. It takes several years to make a child delinquent. Certainly the school and other agencies and their workers need as much and more time to correct delinquencies. People who advocate panaceas, cure all's and short cuts to the problem of delinquency are not only doomed to disappointment but also often mislead the public into thinking that juvenile delinquency can be easily and speedily corrected. Certainly, the experience of those working in the Montefiore School bears out the findings of Dr. Burgess' studies. Workers with delinquents cannot cure the problems of delinquency by one interview with a psychiatrist, by one visit to a child guidance clinic or by a semester spent in a special school. It requires as long or longer to correct delinquencies as it does to produce them.

The second part of Dr. Burgess' paper attempted to answer the question of how low income is related to delinquency. To this discussant, delinquency and delinquent acts, whether official or not, are only symptom pictures of underlying conditions, the roots of which will be found in the family life and neighborhood background of the child or rarely in some peculiar psychological or physiological aspect of his personality. In other words, delinquency should be viewed as a symptom and not as a disease. It is analogous to a "fever" in a physically ill patient. To try to find the relationship of low income to delinquency, therefore, is similar to relating low income and "fevers." Dr. Burgess points out that low income is associated with physical problems like tuberculosis, infant mortality, and others. No doubt many symptoms of physical illness are more prevalent in high delinquency areas than in healthier neighborhoods. But may not the low incomes also be other symptoms, like delinquencies, of more fundamental causes in the life of delinquents? It is a question worth considering. Delinquency, low income etc. are parts of a total picture. The child must be viewed from all sides of his life, all influences which impinge upon him must be considered. His total personality must be studied before one can understand the child's delinquencies.

Dr. Burgess notes that the pattern of becoming a girl delinquent is more specific and uniform than that of a boy. This, too, has been found to be true in the work with problem boys and problem girls in the Montefiore School for boys and its Washington Branch for girls. From the standpoint of the school some of the differences in becoming delinquents as far as school adjustment is concerned may be due to the fact that most schools today fit girls better than boys. Most boys are naturally active, aggressive and non-conforming for the most part; girls on the other hand are more passive, non-aggressive, receptive and conforming. Schools which expect a receptive, conforming, non-aggressive obedient child naturally have more success with girls than with boys. Hence there are four or five times as many problem boys as problem girls in schools.

Dr. Burgess' third point dealt with remedies. The experience of all schools dealing with problem cases would support the suggestions made by Dr. Burgess. Certainly to (1) provide an income to maintain minimum standards of living,

(2) to abolish slum housing, (3) to develop neighborhood housing projects, and (4) to organize neighborhoods for improving conditions of children, would go a long way in helping reduce delinquency. The experience of the Montefiore School indicates that unofficial delinquency is concentrated in the same areas in which delinquency rates are high, and that delinquency is correlated with other social problems. Problem boys and girls in special schools have more health problems than children in regular schools, they are known to more social agencies, and they come from families with more court records.

Dr. Burgess' concluding statement, "low income is seldom a direct cause of delinquency" is one with which most educators would agree. Neither are bad health, poor family background, poor home conditions or lack of suitable recreation direct causes of juvenile delinquency. All these factors are part of the same general picture in the breakdown of the life of the child which may lead to the beginning of a career of juvenile delinquency.

DISCUSSION BY DR. GEORGE MOHR

Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis

Dr. Burgess has chosen to utilize a legalistic definition of "juvenile delinquency." The juvenile delinquent is a young delinquent who has an official record according to this definition. Dr. Burgess adds that "we do not need to concern ourselves with the delinquent acts of children from families in which parents have the financial resources and the ability to supervise . . . their children without the intervention of the juvenile court." He adds "criminologists who state that delinquent acts occur among children of families of all economic levels are beclouding the *real point*" (italics the discussant's). This delimitation of the problem by Dr. Burgess impoverishes the possibility of saying very much that is meaningful about juvenile delinquency. It permits one merely to recognize the high correlation of juvenile delinquency with low income of families involved as revealed in official court records. Mr. Stullken in his discussion emphasizes that low income is merely one of a constellation of factors contributing to social pathology and family disorganization.

Dr. Burgess states that the "official records of juvenile crime and delinquency supply us with the best available evidence of who is a juvenile delinquent and a criminal." This follows from his definition. Actually, students of Criminology are much more impressed with the unreliability and inadequacy of official criminal records and criminal statistics derived from them.

Returning to Dr. Burgess' limiting definition of juvenile delinquency, one is impressed with the fact that officially becoming a juvenile delinquent does have serious consequences as revealed in the case histories cited. Of most significance perhaps is the awareness impressed upon one that seemingly becoming officially qualified as a juvenile delinquent tends to insure the likelihood of a continuing delinquent career. The approaches to the problem then would be along lines of better basic understanding of the considerable number of factors, sociological, psychological, psychopathological, contributing to the creation of delinquent careers. On such a basis the outlook for the juvenile delinquent may be improved and a more constructive process set in motion than that presently operating in the treatment of the "official" juvenile delinquent.

DISCUSSION BY SARAH B. SCHAAR

Supervisor, Jewish Family and Community Service

Dr. Burgess has, as usual, made a contribution to our experience in reviewing

social disorganization, as conditioned by poverty. This cannot be explored too often, since many nations of the world are looking toward wider distribution of goods and services as a means of supporting personal liberty, which is always threatened when people are socially depressed. The threat today is over a widening area, and the position of our own country in demonstrating the social efficiency of democracy is under severe scrutiny.

There is indeed a relationship between low income and delinquency insofar as delinquency is measured in terms of apprehension and court disposition. Depressed areas are most suspect in social disorganization, and police vigilance is or should be more intensified in these areas.

A recent statement of the intake at the Chicago House of Correction indicates over half to be colored. When we remember that there is about an 11 percent Negro population in our city this fact would emphasize the relation of low income and depressed area to apprehended delinquents.

Now, any student of social phenomena can understandably define the area of research in which he wishes to engage, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and a job thoughtfully done may serve as one facet of a complex subject.

However, I should like to proceed in a different manner to exploration of delinquency, because the incidence of apprehended delinquency represent a very small fraction of the population in the age group to which reference is usually made when this subject is discussed. I should like to have us think of delinquency generally as a type of conduct, socially unacceptable and personally destructive. The society of which the delinquent person is a part, pays with him a price because of his failure as an integrated member on an acceptable level. I should like to explore, insofar as such conduct reflects constitutional, psychological and social factors, how we can early find such persons for purpose of understanding (diagnosis) and treatment. I should like to have us also find and understand the unhappy withdrawn or other maladjusted children who do not act out their disturbances in delinquent acts, but who may be even more of a menace to our culture than the child who is delinquent, is apprehended and given even the meager treatment now available.

The children whose neurotic needs are expressed in less volatile manner may continue to grow up into unhappy and hating adults, and may be found not only among the malfunctioning dependent group, but may be found in our leadership population—may become our public officials, teachers of our children, editors of great newspapers, and the like.

Discussing delinquency in terms of the extremely small fraction of our population which is apprehended, delays the kind of exploration which is extremely important in a free society.

It is much more important to understand the disturbed and unhappy children who by their very passivity may present acceptable behavior until they are no longer accessible to treatment.

There is no question about the contribution of social disorganization to personal disorganization, and in discussing the drawbacks of Dr. Burgess' measure of delinquency, I do not want to be understood as minimizing social influences in the development of character structure. However, any such study has the responsibility of defining its limitations—of establishing an equally carefully studied control group, etc.

It would seem that a social study should be purposive—(I know there is not complete agreement on this) and above all should avoid any blocking of essential social knowledge.

It is important that we address ourselves to an understanding of behavior which for brevity we have come to call delinquent, in terms other than that of accidental

discovery, such as through court action. A great deal has transpired in our understanding of personality development in the past several decades. We have come to understand considerably more about interpersonal relationships, especially within the family, etc.

Early development within the family—from infancy onward—are tremendously significant determinants in personality development.

We must organize our community around the possibility of early discovery of conduct which reflects the kind of inadequacy, hostility, fear, aggressions, etc. which may be expected, without treatment, to lead to disorganized personality, or if you will to delinquency. Our case finding methods must take into account much more than financial income or physical environment if we are going to arrive at any possibility of the kind of diagnosis needed for constructive treatment. Income obviously would be only one factor. The significance of that factor varies considerably from child to child, and takes its position in relation to constitutional, psychological factors, and the like. We know that high income is no guarantee of integrated personality.

This is not meant to be a discussion of the treatment of adolescents of variant behavior. However, some of these questions have been pointed up because I think we shall know little about delinquents and how to treat them if we establish an arbitrary, accidental setting of discovery, as the measure of this problem among us.