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JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN GHANA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DELINQUENTS AND NON-DELINQUENTS

S. KIRSON WEINBERG*

Juvenile delinquency is a transcultural phenomenon which has both variable and uniform manifestations in diverse cultures. Its variabilities emerge from the distinctive institutional features of the particular society, while its uniformities derive from the common social processes. The hypotheses that have been formulated about juvenile delinquency pertain mainly to Western societies.¹ The extent to which these hypotheses are culture-bound by Western institutions cannot be determined until juvenile delinquency has been investigated in societies with some non-Western institutional features.² From this generic perspective our purpose is to determine the effects of certain facets of the family, the school, and the peer group upon selected groups of delinquents and non-delinquents in Accra, Ghana of West Africa. Although influenced markedly by the United Kingdom, this nation has retained traditional tribal institutions.

THE SAMPLE

We analyzed the records of 107 male delinquents

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The author is grateful to Messrs. Peter Barnes and David Acquah of the Department of Welfare of Ghana for their splendid cooperation in the data gathering phase of this project.

¹ See SUTHERLAND & CRESSEY, *PRINCIPLES OF CRIMINOLOGY* (6th ed. 1960); RECKLESS, *THE CRIME PROBLEM* (3rd ed. 1960); Weinberg, *Theories of Criminality and Problems of Prediction*, 45 *J. CRIM. L., C. & P.S.* 412 (1954); COHEN, *DELINQUENT BOYS: CULTURE OF THE GANG* (1955).

² See Robison, *Juvenile Delinquency in Foreign Countries*, in *JUVENILE DELINQUENCY*, ch. 5 (1960); Tappan, *North America*, U.N. DEP'T. OF ECON. AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, *COMPARATIVE SURVEY OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY*, Part I (1958); Struthers, *Juvenile Delinquency in Scotland*, 10 *AM. SOC. REV.* 658 (1946); Hayner, *Criminogenic Zones in Mexico City*, 11 *AM. SOC. REV.* 428 (1947); BUSIA, *REPORT ON A SOCIAL SURVEY OF SEKONDI-TAKORADI* (1950); Gustav, *Social Background of a West African Student Population*, 5 *BRIT. J. DELINQUENCY* 255 (1950), 6 *id.* 71 (1951); Theodorson, *Acceptance of Industrialization and its Attendant Consequences for the Social Patterns of Non-Western Societies*, 18 *AM. SOC. REV.* 477 (1953).

from the Boys' Remand and Probation Home and the records of 67 female delinquents from the Girls' Industrial School in Accra. We compared this group with a group of 95 male and 74 female non-delinquents whom we selected from the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in one primary school and from the first through the fourth grades in two middle schools in and about Accra. Both delinquents and non-delinquents were between the ages of 10 and 18, the predominant number being under age 16, and the mean ages were 14.1 and 13.8 for delinquents and non-delinquents, respectively.

Selection of the delinquent subjects was made with the object of achieving comparability to delinquents in other societies. Hence we limited the male offenders to those arrested for larceny, burglary, or "pickpocketing," and the female offenders to those arrested for larceny, burglary, and prostitution. Since the offenders were institutionalized, they were defined both legally and socially as delinquents. This selective process also eliminated the dependents and vagrants who were institutionalized because they were "exposed to physical and moral danger." Since sexual promiscuity is not illegal in Ghana, the delinquents comprised those girls who were arrested for soliciting. In this respect, they differ from female sex delinquents in the United States, who may be committed for sexual promiscuity.

The data for the delinquents were gathered from interviews as well as from the records in the files. Since the Boys' school had only 60 resident inmates at any given time, we analyzed the records of discharged delinquents for the years 1957, 1959, and 1960; we omitted the year 1958 because the records for that year did not provide uniform information. The data for the non-delinquents were gathered by guided interviews, but the questions were both structured and open-ended. Although most interviews with non-delinquents were conducted in English, the interviews with most of the Moslem non-delinquents were conducted with the aid of interpreters. Interviews with delinquents were conducted mainly with the aid of interpreters,

because the subjects spoke Ga, Twi, Ewe, or Hausa, according to their tribal identity.

INFLUENCE OF THE FAMILY SITUATION UPON DELINQUENCY

The Family in Ghana

The role of the family organization and the effect of discordant parent-child relations upon the child's predisposition to delinquent behavior has been studied by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, Healy and Bonner in the United States, by Aichorn in Austria and by Mannheim in England.³ Since family structure in the United States and in other Western countries varies from that of Ghana, we had to find indicators of family instability which deviate from the normative family organization within Ghanaian society. Some family norms have to be characterized explicitly in order to determine the deviations.

First, the Western norm of conjugal marriage in which man and wife reside together is not practiced by the Gas, the aboriginal tribe in and around Accra. The mates live separately. The wife who rears the children cooks for the husband and visits him on designated evenings. This family arrangement, which would appear as a broken home in Western societies, represents a normal arrangement among the Gas with the added factor of the presence of the maternal uncle as a guardian. But in other tribes, such as the Ashanti, Fanti, Ewes and Hausas, the mates live together.⁴

Second, polygyny is legal. Couples who marry by tribal rituals can be polygynous, but couples who marry by Christian ceremonies supposedly must conform to monogamy. The illiterate, lower class Africans tend to be polygynous, but the edu-

cated, middle and upper class Africans tend to be monogamous. Except for Gas, plural wives tend to live together with their husband, although some migrants from Togoland and Nigeria have one or more wives in their native land and a wife in Ghana. Since the children reside with the mother, she is the prime socializing agent. Despite the legality of polygyny, urban economic pressures are restricting men to monogamy because of the difficulty of supporting more than one wife. These economic pressures also have contributed to the loosening of marital bonds with consequent desertion and divorce, and to the confirmed necessity for married women to engage in petty trade in an effort at self-support.⁵

Third, the child in Ghana and in other West African countries may be shifted to relatives or even to non-relatives for rearing, for enrollment in a nearby school, for training in a craft, or in extreme cases for purposes of servitude. The practice of sending a child to a close relative is in accordance with the traditional practice of collective rearing of children by the extended family; it is based upon the belief that the child will emerge as a product of the whole family and that the male will become more responsive to adult discipline and the female a more competent housekeeper. In this parent-centered family, the child's duty is to obey his parents, so he is not consulted about these shifts. The parents retain legal control over the shifted child and can retrieve him when they wish; hence the new guardians have only temporary custody of the child.⁶

Fourth, although the delinquent subjects have been limited to inmates of an institution in Accra, they have emigrated from several parts of Ghana. With the advent of World War II and the increase of paved roads and the use of the lorry as an inter-city public conveyance, the rate of mobility from farm to city and from city to city has greatly increased. In the process, the importance of education has been increasingly recognized.⁷ Before national independence in 1959, because of the few schools, the children were often shifted to relatives who lived near accessible schools. (School shortages

³ S. & E. GLUECK, UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY (1950); HEALY & BRONNER, NEW LIGHT ON DELINQUENCY AND ITS TREATMENT (1936); CAVAN, CRIMINOLOGY 106-24 (2d ed. 1955); AICHORN, WAYWARD CHILDREN (1935); MANNHEIM, JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN AN ENGLISH MIDDLETOWN (1948).

⁴ FIELD, RELIGION AND MEDICINE OF THE GA PEOPLE (1937); FIELD, SEARCH FOR SECURITY (1960); MANOUKIAN, AKAN AND GA-ADANGME PEOPLE OF THE GOLD COAST (1950); MANOUKIAN, THE EWE SPEAKING PEOPLE OF TOGOLAND AND THE GOLD COAST (1952); SURVEY OF AFRICAN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE (Phillips ed. 1953); LYSTAD, THE ASHANTI: A PROUD PEOPLE (1958); LYSTAD, *Marriage and Kinship Among the Ashanti and Agni: A Study of Differential Acculturations*, in CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AFRICAN CULTURES 187-205 (Bascom & Herskovitz eds. 1959); WRIGHT, BLACK POWER (1954); Drake, *Traditional Authority and Social Action in British West Africa*, 11 HUMAN ORGANIZATION 150 (1960).

⁵ ACQUAH, ACCRA SURVEY (1960); Faiwahoo, *Urbanization and Religion in Eastern Ghana*, 7 SOCIOLOGICAL REV. 83 (1959).

⁶ BUSIA, *Ashanti of the Gold Coast*, in AFRICAN WORLDS 190-209 (Forde ed. 1955).

⁷ BUSIA, REPORT ON A SOCIAL SURVEY OF SEKONDI-TAKORADI (1950). SEE APTER, THE GOLD COAST IN TRANSITION 162-69 (1955).

remain although many schools are being built.) At the time of this study, this type of family shift prevailed among many students and must be considered as a positive reason for shifting children. It differs from a negative type of family shift, such as that necessitated by discipline. Since the child had no recourse in this shifting process, except to try to persuade his parents not to shift him, his only and rather desperate alternative in a disagreeable family situation was to run away.

Comparison of Family Situations of Delinquents and Non-Delinquents

In comparing the influence of the family upon the delinquent and non-delinquent subjects, we differentiated between the concepts of "family shift" and "family disruption," both of which represent family changes.

The concept of family shift is defined as the transfer of a subject to custodians other than the parents. These custodians may be close relatives, distant relatives, non-relatives, or even oneself—as occurs in truancy. We did not consider the movement to a boarding school, however, as a family shift.

The concept of "family disruption" is defined as

TABLE I

RESIDENT ARRANGEMENTS OF DELINQUENTS AND NON-DELINQUENTS: BY PERCENTAGES

Resident Arrangements	Delinquents (N = 174)	Non-Delinquents (N = 169)
With Both Parents	8.0	38.5
With One Parent	35.0	32.0
Father Only	12.6	16.0
Mother Only	22.4	16.0
With Close Relative	28.2	27.7
Aunt or Uncle	14.3	13.6
Sibling	5.2	7.0
Grandparent	8.7	7.1
With Distant Relative, Non-Relative or Alone	28.8	1.8
Distant Relative or Non-Relative	13.4	1.8
Alone	15.4	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 71.7187 \quad df = 3 \quad P < .001.$$

TABLE II
TYPE OF FAMILY CHANGES EXPERIENCED BY DELINQUENTS AND NON-DELINQUENTS: BY PERCENTAGES

Type of Family Change	Delinquents (N = 174)	Non-Delinquents (N = 169)
No Family Changes	5.9	34.3
One or More Family Shifts	78.1	48.5
One or More Family Disruptions	16.0	17.2
Total	100.0	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 47.223 \quad df = 2 \quad P < .001.$$

the movement of the child from one parent to another.

On the basis of these and other aspects of family behavior, we formulated the following general question concerning the family's influence upon delinquent behavior: Were the family situations of the delinquents more stressful than those of the non-delinquents, as indicated by (1) living arrangements with parent-figures or guardians farther removed than their parents or close kin, (2) more frequent family shifts, (3) unfavorable reasons for being shifted, (4) first family change before age five, (5) truanancies from the family, and (6) broken homes? In this question, the crucial intra-cultural phenomenon is the sanctioned practice of shifting children to other families; the crucial generic cross-cultural phenomenon is the degree of stress experienced by the subjects in their family situations.

(1) *Living arrangements.* Those subjects who lived away from their parents were not necessarily involved in a stressful family situation. In fact, some subjects claimed that they had more affection for their guardians than for their parents. But the child who was shifted to distant relatives or to non-kin for such negative reasons as discipline or servitude initially suspected this new and strange family situation. Later, he resented this family arrangement, which so frequently led to his neglect, exploitation, or abuse. Thus 57 per cent of the delinquents, as compared with 29 per cent of the non-delinquents, lived away from their parents. About 29 per cent of the delinquents, as contrasted with only about 2 per cent of the non-delinquents, lived with distant kin, with non-kin, or alone. (See Table I.) Many delinquents who lived alone had fled from their parents or guardians and struggled

TABLE III
FAMILY SHIFTS AMONG DELINQUENTS AND NON-DELINQUENTS: BY PERCENTAGES

No. of Family Shifts	Delinquents (N ₁ = 268)	Non-Delinquents (N ₂ = 127)
One.....	49.25	67.72
Two.....	29.10	29.13
* Three.....	14.56	3.15
* Four.....	7.09	.00
Total.....	100.00	100.00

N₁ = 268N₂ = 127M₁ = 2.37M₂ = 1.86σ₁ = 1.06σ₂ = .652

C.R. = 6.0

P < .001

* For differences of two groups for combined rows of 4 and 5, C.R. = 4.72 P < .001

TABLE IV
FAMILY DISRUPTIONS AMONG DELINQUENTS AND NON-DELINQUENTS: BY PERCENTAGES

No. of Family Disruptions	Delinquents (N ₁ = 49)	Non-Delinquents (N ₂ = 41)
One.....	55.10	75.61
Two.....	34.70	19.51
Three.....	10.20	4.88
Total.....	100.00	100.00

N₁ = 49N₂ = 41M₁ = 1.55M₂ = 1.27σ₁ = .67σ₂ = .554

C.R. = 2.18

P < .05

for subsistence, preferring the difficulties of self-support to an intolerable family situation.

(2) *Frequency of family shifts.* The subjects' departures to other families meant readaptations to different situations. On this level of stress, 94 per cent of the delinquents and 66 per cent of the non-delinquents experienced a family change either as a family shift or as a family disruption. The stress of readaptation seemingly intensified with frequency of change. Since the normative pattern consisted of the child going to a close relative then returning to his parents, the third and additional shifts represented deviations or excesses from the norma-

tive pattern. The mean number of shifts did not differ significantly between delinquents and non-delinquents ($P < .17$), but the delinquents had significantly more shifts of three and above than did the non-delinquents ($P < .0001$). The respective percentages for this frequency were about 22 and 3. (See Tables II, III, and IV.)

Another crucial difference between the two groups of subjects involved the shifting of the subjects as a result of the broken home. When, because of death, separation, or divorce, one parent was removed from the home, delinquents were shifted significantly more frequently to guardians than were non-delinquents, while non-delinquents were retained by the remaining parent significantly more frequently than were the delinquents. It thus appears that, generally, the remaining parents of the non-delinquents were attached to their children and wanted to keep them. When the child was sent to a guardian following the removal of one of his parents from the home, a two-fold readaptative process was compelled: the first was to the loss of the parent, the second to the new guardian. About 63 per cent of the delinquents as contrasted with 29 per cent of the non-delinquents experienced the absence of one parent from the family. Of the 102 delinquents who experienced broken homes, 32 per cent were shifted to guardians, but of the 49 non-delinquents, only 14 per cent were shifted to guardians. Conversely, 85 per cent of the non-delinquents as compared with 67 per cent of the delinquents were retained by the remaining parent. (See Table V.)

(3) *Reasons for family shifts.* The reasons for the shifts varied for the two groups of subjects. De-

TABLE V
INTACT AND BROKEN HOMES AMONG DELINQUENTS AND NON-DELINQUENTS: BY PERCENTAGES

Type of Home Arrangement	Delinquents (N = 164)*	Non-Delinquents (N = 169)
Broken Home.....	62.81	28.99
By: Death of One or Both Parents.....	21.96	8.28
By: Separation or Divorce	40.85	20.71
Intact Home.....	37.19	71.01
Total.....	100.00	100.00

* Ten cases were unknown.

$\chi^2 = 38.49$ df = 1 P < .001

TABLE VI

TYPE OF FAMILY SHIFTS AMONG DELINQUENTS AND NON-DELINQUENTS BY NUMBER OF FAMILY SHIFTS

Type of Shift	Number of Shifts										
	Delinquents					Non-Delinquents					
	I	II	III	IV	Total No.	Per Cent	I	II	III	Total No.	Per Cent
Favorable Shift											
1. To relatives or guardians for schooling.....	20	3	4	1	28	10.5	26	6	0	32	25.2
2. To learn trade or help in household.....	27	5	4	1	37	13.8	13	3	0	16	12.6
3. Relatives wanted subject for rearing or for company.....	9	8	1	1	19	7.1	23	6	0	29	22.8
4. Parents or relatives departed.....	7	1	1	0	9	3.3	10	1	0	11	8.7
5. Returned to parents who wanted subject...	0	10	2	1	13	4.8	0	17	4	21	16.5
Total.....	63	27	12	4	106	39.5	72	33	4	109	85.8
Unfavorable Shift											
1. Parents died or ill.....	19	2	1	0	22	8.2	5	0	0	5	3.9
2. Parents separated or divorced.....	11	0	0	0	11	4.1	2	0	0	2	1.6
3. Parents or guardians expelled subject.....	2	6	4	2	14	5.2	0	0	0	0	0.0
4. Parents or guardians abused or neglected subject.....	0	2	2	0	4	1.5	2	2	0	4	3.2
5. Parents or guardians for discipline.....	8	13	4	4	29	10.9	5	1	0	6	4.7
6. Subject truant from family, including broken home.....	29	28	16	9	82	30.6	0	1	0	1	.8
Total.....	69	51	27	15	162	60.5	14	4	0	18	14.2
Grand Total.....	132	78	39	19	268	100.0	86	37	4	127	100.0

TABLE VII

UNFAVORABLE AND FAVORABLE FAMILY SHIFTS OF DELINQUENTS AND NON-DELINQUENTS: BY PERCENTAGES

Type of Shift	Delinquents (N = 268)	Non-Delinquents (N = 127)
Favorable.....	39.55	85.82
Unfavorable.....	60.45	14.18
Total.....	100.00	100.00

$\chi^2 = 74.35$ $df = 1$ $P < .001$

linquents were shifted more frequently than non-delinquents for negative reasons, such as guardian-child conflict, parental separation or divorce, parental abuse or neglect, or running away from the family. The percentages of delinquents and

non-delinquents who were shifted for negative reasons were 60 and 14, respectively. (See Tables VI and VII.)

On the other hand, non-delinquents were shifted more frequently than delinquents for positive reasons, such as to attend school or to reside with relatives who wanted them.

Female delinquents were shifted for unfavorable reasons more frequently than any other category of subjects, while female non-delinquents had the lowest percentage of unfavorable shifts.

(4) *Age of child at first shift.* Delinquents experienced significantly earlier shifts to other families or endured disruptions in their families at an earlier age than did non-delinquents. On the average delinquents were 6.7 years old and the non-delinquents 8.5 years old when they first experienced a family change. Thirty per cent of the delinquents and 22 per cent of the non-delinquents

TABLE VIII
AGE OF FIRST FAMILY CHANGES AMONG DELINQUENTS
AND NON-DELINQUENTS: BY PERCENTAGES

Age of First Family Change	Delinquents (N ₁ = 163*)	Non-Delinquents (N ₂ = 169)
1— 2.9	14.1	11.9
3— 4.9	25.2	10.1
5— 6.9	19.6	18.4
7— 8.9	16.0	12.8
9—10.9	9.8	16.5
11—12.9	8.0	13.7
13—14.9	6.1	12.9
15—16.9	1.2	3.7
Total	100.0	100.0

* One case was unknown.

$M_1 = 6.74$ $M_2 = 8.46$

$\sigma_1 = 3.58$ $\sigma_2 = 3.94$

C.R. = 3.7

P < .001

experienced family changes before the age of five. (See Table VIII.) The important consideration in this difference is that for the non-delinquent, family shifting generally occurred after age five when the individual had out-grown the toddler role and had achieved some measure of autonomous identity.

(5) *Truancies from the family.* The stress of conflicting parent-child (or guardian-child) relations may result in truancy from the family. Among delinquents 22 per cent of the first family shifts were truancies; 36 per cent of the second family shifts were truancies; 41 per cent of the third family shifts were truancies; and 47 per cent of four or more family shifts were truancies. This correlative increase of both family shifts and truancies indicates that, as family shifts increased, the family situation became correspondingly less tolerable for the delinquents, who in desperation fled from it. Female delinquents had a significantly higher percentage of truancies than did male delinquents, 35 to 26 respectively.

Less than one per cent of the non-delinquents admitted truancies. Perhaps many non-delinquents did not admit their truancies, but our inquiries of their teachers also indicated that the non-delinquents' truancies from the family were few.

(6) *Broken homes.* The influence of the broken home upon delinquency has been a subject of controversy. The influence of the broken home upon

delinquency in Ghana is qualified. The broken home in Ghana has to be differentiated from the parental separation which is customary among the matrilineal Gas. Hence, we did not consider this separation a broken home. That this customary separation does not produce the type of stress generally associated with the broken home is indicated by our finding that the Gas comprised a higher percentage in the non-delinquent sample than in the delinquent group.⁸ But the delinquents had a very significantly higher percentage of broken homes than did the non-delinquents.

The influence of the broken home upon the subjects depended upon their living arrangements at the time of their offence, since the subjects might not have been living with their parents at the time one became absent. In the United States, where children are less frequently shifted, it has been demonstrated that delinquents emerge from a significantly higher percentage of divorced homes than do non-delinquents.⁹ But in our sample, only 8 per cent of the delinquents and 38 per cent of the non-delinquents resided with both parents in an intact family.

The broken home represented one important reason for shifting the child to other families. It caused significantly more shifts among delinquents than non-delinquents. Thus 33 per cent of the delinquents and 14 per cent of the non-delinquents were shifted after the death, separation, or divorce of parents. Consistent with findings of the effects of the broken home upon delinquency in the United States,¹⁰ we found that fewer female than male delinquents experienced the intact home. Only three per cent of the female delinquents, as compared with 11 per cent of the male delinquents, resided in intact families with both parents. But the percentages of delinquents and non-delinquents who resided with one parent were not markedly different; the respective percentages were 35 and 32.

In comparing the influence of the mother and father upon the delinquents, however, we found that the mother's presence was less controlling than

⁸ For a description of the Ga family organization, see FIELD, *RELIGION AND MEDICINE OF THE GA PEOPLE* (1937). In our study, the Gas comprised 65 per cent of the non-delinquent group as compared to 37 per cent of the delinquent group. But it must be pointed out that among many of the middle-class Gas, the mates lived together.

⁹ See CAVAN, *CRIMINOLOGY* 115-20 (2d ed. 1955).

¹⁰ Weeks, *Male and Female Broken Home Rates by Types of Delinquency*, 5 AM. SOC. REV. 603 (1940).

that of the father upon the delinquents. Thus 22 per cent of the delinquents and 16 per cent of the non-delinquents lived with the mother only. By contrast 13 per cent of the delinquents and 16 per cent of the non-delinquents resided with the father only. Thus, the father's absence may have had a more predisposing effect than the mother's absence upon delinquency. Generally when the mother was absent from the home, another person or woman was accessible to take charge of the home. When the father was absent, the mother had to devote all her time outside the home and frequently had to neglect her children—although the older siblings did care for younger ones.

As indicated from our case studies, it appeared that mothers of delinquents tended to be permissive or neglectful and indifferent persons who were unable to control the activities and routines of their delinquent children. In contrast, mothers of non-delinquents seemed to have firmer control of their children, delegated tasks to them after school, and aroused more rapport and identification with them.

The foster families of the delinquents were as intact as the foster families of the non-delinquents. When surrogate parents or guardians died, the subjects were shifted to other relatives or when feasible were returned to the parents. In brief, the absence of one surrogate parent in the shifted families, as distinct from the absence of one original parent, did not significantly affect either category of subjects.

In the United States the mother's presence in the home is generally considered important in the law-abiding behavior of her children, and the mother's employment has been regarded as a factor which may contribute to delinquent behavior.¹¹ Hence we hypothesized that the percentage of employed mothers of delinquents differs significantly from the percentage of employed mothers of non-delinquents.

But in Ghana the percentage of mothers who were gainfully employed did not differ significantly for the two groups. On the one hand, 80 per cent of the mothers of non-delinquents were employed, predominately as petty traders. Since this group of non-delinquents included families who were prototypes of the middle classes in American society, this high percentage of employed mothers was surpris-

ing. On the other hand, at least 77 per cent of the mothers of delinquents were employed in addition to some mothers who were too ill to work.

But other dynamic facets of parent-child relations appear to have affected the subject's predisposition to delinquent behavior. As evidenced from our interviews with the subjects, the mothers of the delinquents seemed to antagonize and alienate them, while the mothers of the non-delinquents seemed able to cultivate more positive relationships with their children and were able to control them more effectively. Many non-delinquents spent considerable time after school helping about the home by drawing water from the well for the father's bath or helping clean the house or wash the dishes. Although the children were free to play, the parents frequently knew their whereabouts and their associates. Thus the mother's relationship with her child was a more important indicator of her capacity to control her child than her mere presence in the home.

The difference in parent-child relations between the delinquents and non-delinquents may have been influenced by their diverse class positions. Most of the delinquents were in the lower class, while most of the non-delinquents approximated the middle class. Such a class difference, however, is recognized as an important factor influencing both delinquent behavior and the definition of delinquent behavior; delinquency is not simply law-violating behavior, but such behavior that has met with detection and official desposition.¹² This approach to delinquency as a socio-legal process is not limited to Ghana, but is a cross-societal phenomenon that applies to many countries including the United States, Sweden, Great Britain, Mexico, Japan and Israel.

INFLUENCE OF THE SCHOOL UPON DELINQUENCY

The school is an essential component in the purposeful routine of the child in Accra, Ghana, because the child and adolescent have limited opportunities for employment and for aiding their employed parents. The child not only is afforded constructive pursuits by the school, but he also sustains his conformistic relationships there. Despite the recent government edict for universal education, at the time of this study many commu-

¹¹ E. GLUECK, *Working Mothers and Delinquency*, THE SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME AND DELINQUENCY 239 (Wolfgang, Savitz & Johnston eds. 1962).

¹² For a comparable class distinction in the United States, see DAVIS & HAVIGHURST, *FATHER OF THE MAN* (1947).

ities lacked enough school facilities for the number of applicants, so that many children were shifted to relatives and even non-relatives who resided in communities or in other towns where schools were accessible. This type of family shifting in itself, as we have pointed out, did not cause delinquent behavior, but it may have interfered with the student's optimum adaptation to the school situation. Thus in an analysis of 51 students at the University of Ghana, we found that 63 per cent had experienced family shifts, that 27 per cent had experienced family disruptions, and that only 10 per cent had experienced no family changes.

Concerning the relevant influence of the school upon delinquent behavior, we may ask: Were the delinquents more alienated¹³ from the school than the non-delinquents, as indicated by fewer grades completed and by higher rates of truancy? We found that 25 per cent of the delinquents had never attended school, and 52 per cent of the delinquents had 4 years or less of schooling, while by contrast only 1 per cent (or 2) of the non-delinquents had as little as 4 years of schooling. Female delinquents were the least educated; 61 per cent had 4 or fewer years of schooling, as compared with 46 per cent of the male delinquents. Both male and female delinquents were retarded educationally; the more important consideration, however, was their inability to sustain school interests and to continue attendance in school. It can be argued that lack of educational attainment by delinquents as contrasted with non-delinquents arose largely from the aspired educational objectives of the two groups. But these objectives alone would not account for the lack of school attendance. The crucial preliminary or concomitant cross-cultural symptoms of delinquency are truancy and dropping out from school.¹⁴ Consistently, many delinquents were truants and school drop-outs. Eighty-three per cent of the male delinquents and 86 per cent of the female delinquents who had been enrolled in school—as distinct from the illiterates—attended school irregularly or were truants or had dropped out of school. Sometimes their truancy preceded their delinquent orientation, and other times, their truancy or dropping-out from school was a concomitant part of a total pattern of delinquent behavior.

¹³ By alienated we mean estranged or isolated from a given institution or group. See Seeman, *On the Meaning of Alienation*, 24 AM. SOC. REV. 783 (1959).

¹⁴ KAVARACEUS, *JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND THE SCHOOL* (1947); CONANT, *SLUMS AND SUBURBS* (1961).

Seemingly, attending school was one purposive means for sustaining conformity to conventional norms. Truancy and especially the cessation of school attendance reduced the child's purposeful alternatives. Frequently, the child remained idle, his behavior became anomic, and his role became marginal. How this sample of delinquents would differ from youths who drop out of school and who do not become delinquent remains to be determined. Perhaps the latter group would have other associations and activities positive enough to sustain their conformity to lawful norms. But it appeared that the delinquent subjects, by becoming alienated from conventional role models, values, and disciplines, were predisposed to accept the deviant orientations and techniques of delinquent associates.

INFLUENCE OF PEER GROUPS UPON DELINQUENCY

The sociological hypotheses concerning the recruitment and initiation of the juvenile into delinquent behavior focus upon the hypothesis of differential association and the transmission of delinquent practices. This differential association hypothesis was formulated mainly from data of group offenders in the United States and has been confirmed in part by evidence from other Western societies.¹⁵ The implicit aspect of this hypothesis is the form of urbanization which facilitates the association among delinquents. Ninety-four per cent of the 99 male delinquents about whom we had information either had delinquent associates or loitered about delinquent hangouts and very likely were influenced by other delinquents. Of the 67 female delinquents, 91 per cent had delinquent companions, and of this number 58 per cent had accomplices either as partners in their thieving or as companions in soliciting. The transmission of delinquent practices meant that delinquency was learned predominantly from association with other offenders and frequently represented a shared experience in its execution.¹⁶

Some delinquents, particularly the younger ones, had no particular hang-out, but just roamed the

¹⁵ SUTHERLAND & CRESSEY, *PRINCIPLES OF CRIMINOLOGY* (6th ed. 1960). For a somewhat similar characterization, BUSIA, *op. cit. supra* note 7, at 96, found that "gangs of boys . . . roam about the streets and markets and are reputed to be clever pickpockets and practiced thieves."

¹⁶ For a comparable analysis in the United States, see Shaw & McKay, *Social Factors in Juvenile Delinquency*, in *CAUSES OF CRIME* (1931).

city. Typically, however, male delinquents had their rendezvous or hang-outs at market places, lorry stations, railroad terminals, and cinemas. Some delinquents also gathered at beaches. At market places and stations they found irregular work. They also found potential victims of theft, such as gullible incoming migrants—and little danger of apprehension by police—amidst the anonymity and absence of both formal and informal controls afforded by these locations. Thus they combined stealing and irregular jobs into a pattern of living. The cinema was also a kind of hang-out for delinquents and represented a prototype of the street corner in American society. Here the males congregated during the day on the outside, while the prostitutes used the cinema as a place for attracting potential clients, particularly after the end of a movie. Frequently non-delinquents regarded the cinema as a place of dubious virtue.

Because of the group aspect of delinquency, certain behavioral norms and values were discernible as components of a delinquent subculture. These discernible norms, values, and practices included defiance and disobedience of adults, truancy from school and home, lying, staying out late, increased promiscuity, secrecy about one's activities and one's friend's activities, suspicion of law-enforcement personnel, and increased aggressiveness in the males. Although some delinquents manifested individualized anti-social tendencies, their individualized reactions became socialized, reinforced, and elaborated under the influence of their delinquent associates. Furthermore, juveniles who were obedient to parents and teachers changed when they began to associate with delinquents. Sometimes, parents and teachers who were puzzled by this emerging incorrigibility regarded it as an individualized reaction but were dismayed by their inability to cope with it. It would seem that one crucial feature of the delinquent sub-culture is the effort to become emancipated from and to resist control by parents and other conventional adults.

In characterizing the nature of delinquent acts, especially thieving, we found that the types of thefts were simple, the amounts stolen were usually under five pounds, and the thieving was predominantly instrumental rather than expressive. Male delinquents usually stole small objects which they sold or pilfered food which they ate. Some delinquents, however, participated in more elaborate thefts, such as breaking and entering into homes

or picking pockets and passing the loot to a fleeing partner. But the kinds of offences which are prevalent in the United States, such as gang fighting over territory or "turf," random vandalism and destruction, and rape were committed infrequently. Indian hemp smoking occurred among some juveniles, but it was neither a widespread nor an entrenched pattern of deviancy.

Although a compensatory attitude towards virile masculinity may motivate American delinquents to aggressive behavior, we found that this attitude did not stimulate Ghanaian delinquents, because their masculinity was assured. But unemployment and underemployment did hinder their entry into the adult role in the age-grade system. While these hindrances were not as forceful in their influence as in the United States, they did contribute to the idleness and delinquency of the older delinquents.

From their mixture of work, play, and theft, some older delinquents implemented legitimate and illegitimate means to attain given ends; their legitimate means of work were supplemented by their illegitimate means of theft for subsistence ends. The female delinquents who depended upon the illegitimate means of prostitution for subsistence regarded this recourse as an easier way of earning a living than petty trading or domestic work. Furthermore, the various types of legitimate work were scarce and not necessarily as financially attractive as prostitution. In general, the delinquents might have been frustrated in failing to achieve satisfying occupational goals, but they were also confused and deprived. Consequently, their deviant behavior appeared to be a groping towards ill-defined goals of theft, play, and subsistence, rather than a systematic reaction against middle-class values.¹⁷

Finally their categories of relationships comprised the following types: First, cohesive relationships existed in organized groups whose predatory orientations and techniques were transmitted to the members who had to abide by specified codes. Second, loose and informal play relationships existed among companions whose diversions consisted of pranks, roaming, and stealing. Third, exploitive relationships consisted of a bond between one experienced delinquent and a naive companion who was persuaded or induced to steal and to share

¹⁷ This delinquent behavior would be contrary to the conception of delinquent behavior which has been formulated by Cohen as a reaction formation to middle-class values. See COHEN, *DELINQUENT BOYS: THE CULTURE OF THE GANG* (1955).

his loot. Sometimes, his victims were his parents or guardians. This type of relationship, however, should not be confused with the potential delinquent who steals accessible funds from his parents or guardians as a retaliatory gesture and as a means of economic support when he flees from home. Fourth, the intimidating relationships consisted of one or more delinquents who threatened and coerced another delinquent to steal.

CONCLUSIONS AND CROSS-CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

The intra-cultural effects of the family, school, and peer group upon delinquency which are singular to Ghana also reveal basic social processes which are comparable to those in the United States and other Western countries. First, we verified that delinquents experienced more stress in the family situation than did non-delinquents; the delinquents, significantly more frequently than non-delinquents, (1) resided with guardians farther removed than their parents and close-kin, (2) were shifted to other families, (3) were shifted for unfavorable reasons, (4) experienced the first family shift before the age of five, (5) were truants from the family, and (6) were affected by the broken home.

Second, the delinquents were more alienated from school values and practices than were non-delinquents, as is indicated by fewer grades completed and by markedly higher rates of truancy from school.

Third, the subjects who became delinquents were exposed and susceptible to the influence of delinquent associates. Whether manifested in stealing or in prostitution, delinquency is learned predominantly from association with other delinquents; these deviant influences from other delinquents alienated the recruits from the conventional influences of the family and school and placed them in an anomic and socially marginal position, so that their social purposes and degree of constructive participation were reduced to a minimum.

In this technologically developing society which is becoming increasingly urbanized, many youths, faced with this transition, lack the economic, recreational, and social outlets which would impel law-abiding behavior. Thus they are forced into a marginal position and left to their pursuits. In this respect, they resemble the unskilled youth of the lower class in the United States, among whom many are unemployed as a consequence of automa-

tion and hence can become alienated from conventional society.

While Ghanaian delinquents have features which are comparable to those of American delinquents, certain differences are also evident. Unlike American female sex delinquents, who are arrested for promiscuity, Ghanaian female sex delinquents are arrested for prostitution, because promiscuity is not illegal in Ghana. Unlike their American prototypes, Ghanaian male delinquents are arrested infrequently for rape, vandalism, and gang fighting, because they infrequently commit these offences.

The dynamisms of family life which affect delinquent behavior reside in parent-child relations in both the Ghanaian and American societies. Apparently, delinquents in Ghana experience a more disorganized family situation than do their counterparts in the United States. Of our sample, 15 per cent of the delinquents were living "on their own resources" away from their parents, while American delinquents are infrequently self-supporting before age 17. Furthermore, only 11 per cent of the male delinquents resided with both parents; in contrast, 50 per cent of a sample of American male delinquents studied by the Gluecks¹⁸ and 42 per cent of a sample of American Negro male delinquents studied by Monahan¹⁹ resided with both parents.

The Ghanaian practice of shifting the child to other families is indicated by the 78 per cent of delinquents who experienced one or more shifts to other families in addition to the 17 per cent of delinquents who experienced one or more transfers from one parent to another. But a surprisingly high, 50, per cent of the American delinquents in the Gluecks' study experienced one or more household changes.²⁰

The percentage of one parent families is relatively high among American and Ghanaian delinquents. The respective percentages of one parent families among American delinquents and non-delinquents are 35 and 20, in the Gluecks' study, while the respective percentages for this type of family among their Ghanaian counterparts, in our study, are 35 and 32.

The father is present less frequently than the mother in the families of delinquents in both societies. The respective percentages of the pres-

¹⁸ S. & E. GLUECK, UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY 88-89 (1950).

¹⁹ Monahan, *Family Status and the Delinquent Child*, 35 SOCIAL FORCES 250 (1957).

²⁰ *Op. cit. supra* note 19, at 120-21.

ence of father, only, and mother, only, in families of Ghanaian delinquents are 12 and 22, and in families of American delinquents, 59 and 84.²¹ Of 17,772 white male delinquents in Philadelphia, the respective percentages of the presence of father and mother only in the family are 3 and 18, and of 18,317 Negro male delinquents, the respective percentages of the presence of father and mother only are 4 and 39.²²

When families of delinquents and non-delinquents are compared, the mother was present more frequently in delinquent than in non-delinquent families in both Ghanaian and American groups. The respective percentages for the delinquent and non-delinquent subjects in our study and that of the Gluecks are 22 and 16, and 93 and 84.

The employment of the mother seemingly had no discernible effect upon the delinquent behavior of the Ghanaian subjects, but evidently her employment did have a bearing upon the delinquent behavior of the American subjects in the Gluecks' study.²³ The Ghanaian delinquents had a slightly lower percentage of employed mothers than did the non-delinquents, 77 to 80, but it should be noted that some mothers of delinquents were too ill to work. On the other hand, the percentages of employed mothers of American delinquents and non-delinquents were somewhat similar, 20 to 18,

but a higher percentage of mothers of delinquents than mothers of non-delinquents worked irregularly, 26 to 14. Ghanaian and American mothers differed in their type of employment. Ghanaian mothers were predominantly petty traders who could leave for home when they wished, who could enlist the aid of their children, and who generally could exert some supervision over them. On the other hand, American mothers worked as domestics, scrubwomen, waitresses, factory hands, entertainers, or lodging house managers and generally had less opportunity than Ghanaian mothers to supervise their children. The findings of our study indicate that the employment of the mother would or would not contribute to the delinquency of her child depending upon her capacity to achieve a satisfying and restraining relationship with her child.

These indicators point to the transcultural influences of the family, school, and peers upon delinquents in both Ghanaian and American societies. In both societies, delinquents seemingly experienced more frustrating, less controlling, and less secure relationships with their parents than did non-delinquents. In both societies, delinquents seemed relatively less able than non-delinquents to adapt and to discipline themselves to the norms of the school. And in both societies, the delinquents were thrust into marginal social roles and were predisposed or coerced to accept the deviant norms and practices of their delinquent peers amidst the rapidly changing context of the urban community.

²¹ *Id.* at 88-90.

²² Monahan, *supra* note 20, at 254-56.

²³ S. & E. Glueck, *op. cit. supra* note 18; E. Glueck, *supra* note 11.