

LOWER CLASS CULTURE, MOBILITY ASPIRATIONS  
AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY: A FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

by

Albert J. McQueen

Survey Research Center

The University of Michigan

Society for the Study of Social Problems

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Social scientists and practitioners confront a curious situation today in their determined search for answers to questions about delinquency causation. An impressive store of information and theory has accumulated over the years, in this country and abroad. But upon examination these products of long study and thought turn out to be a disjointed collection of partial, overlapping insights with an elusive quality of convergence. It is manifestly apparent that many of the major sources of juvenile law-breaking have long since been highlighted. What is most lacking is the aspect of continuity and wholeness, by which it can clearly be seen how relevant variables interact and converge in the life space of young persons to generate tendencies toward conforming or deviant adaptations.

The purpose of this paper is to show how often neglected essentials of sociological analysis can bring into focus social and psychological processes in such a way as to contribute to the integration of theory. Today hypotheses and theories dealing with delinquency causation proliferate at a steady pace. There are precious few attempts, however, to trace systematically the processes involved in the adaptation of persons to complex institutional forces. In an effort to reduce complex phenomena to manageable proportions in theory-building, we often restrict our efforts to a narrow range of variables that can be related to some form of aberrant behavior. The idea here seems to be that if enough such relationships are collected an overall picture of juvenile delinquency causation will emerge as pieces of the puzzle are put into place. The inadequacy of this approach is indicated by the fact that several decades of research find us today with but a few pieces that fit but far more that are in disarray.

A particular shortcoming of much generalizing is the failure to specify the conditions under which the relationship should be expected to hold. For instance, juvenile delinquency has been found repeatedly to be related to broken homes. This presumably is a piece of the puzzle. Yet there **are** broken homes which do not produce children who become delinquents. Thus it would seem essential that we know what kinds of broken homes may be expected to predispose adolescents to criminal behavior and what kinds not. Furthermore, we need to know what institutional and ecological frameworks contribute to successful or poor performance with respect to socialization and social control functions in broken homes.

What I propose is that there is an urgent need for structural-functional analyses of the forces involved in the adaptation of youths to different kinds of institutional structures. If the family is being studied, then the relevant types of families should be analyzed in terms of the impact of other institutions in the community on the family, as well as how the adjustment of family members to institutions outside the home are affected by interaction in the family. In this way, we are able to see how a number of factors on several levels of analysis converge to have a total impact on adolescents. One benefit should be an understanding of how variables in complex interaction function at particular points in the development of patterns of deviant behavior. Also, the integration of theories should be aided by the pruning and refinement that would occur with increased understanding of the relevance and limitations of particular theories.

One of the interesting byproducts of this approach is the development of broad theories of behavior, conforming and deviant, for the emphasis here is on patterns of adaptation, whatever their relationship to normative orientations in the community. The study of a social problem should contribute to the general theory of behavior, since the behavior that is problematic is behavior, and the analysis of it should deal with fundamental adaptive processes.

I should like to illustrate some of these ideas by doing an abbreviated structural-functional analysis of delinquency among lower class Negro boys. The emphasis will be on the emergence of a particular lower class subcultural orientation in view of the working man's economic role and subsequent stresses and conflicts adolescent boys face in their adjustment to the broader community.<sup>a</sup> Unfortunately, it will not be possible in this short paper to discuss any theory in detail or directly to relate theories to one another. However, the potentiality of structural-functional analysis for meeting the aims set above should be highlighted and suggested in these interpretations. A larger work will contain a detailed accounting.

The Flint Youth Study data I shall discuss consists of two samples of Negro boys, ages 12 to 17 years, who were matched on police contacts, age intelligence, grade in school, and father's occupation.<sup>b</sup> The 61 delinquent

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<sup>a</sup>David Bordua has outlined a similar approach in a short paper that has proved helpful for this analysis (1).

<sup>b</sup>In order to avoid cluttering this paper with details of data analysis and statistical tests, I shall pay relatively little attention to the kinds of analysis and test used, as well as significance levels obtained. Some

boys had had at least two contacts with police and the 61 control boys none. The I.Q. range is from 80 to 110, and all but ten of the boys were either junior or senior high school students. Their fathers were unskilled laborers and service workers. Approximately 95 per cent of all the mothers and 40 per cent of the fathers were interviewed.

Flint is an automobile manufacturing center whose population in 1960 was 195,000. High wages in the industry have over the years attracted large numbers of people to Flint.<sup>a</sup> Over 80 per cent of all the fathers work in auto and related plants. Since 96 per cent of all fathers were born and reared outside Flint, they most probably were drawn to Flint by work and wage opportunities. Their largely Southern origin--85 per cent were born and reared in the South--suggests that they have improved their standard of living by coming to Flint to work.

Although these men were not questioned about their aspirations, it should be a safe conjecture that they tend to have the same kinds of aspirations for mobility and betterment that other migrants and auto workers have been found to have.<sup>b</sup> Likewise, their strivings undoubtedly have been frustrated and trimmed down to conform to the realities of work and community life. The conditions of work are such that the American dream is a remote and fragile hope for most production auto workers. Being Negro means that discriminatory practices reduce their opportunities below the limited ones the average white worker would have available to him.<sup>c</sup>

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percentages will come from matched pair distributions, but in most cases unmatched distribution percentages will be reported, even though tests where the two sample comparisons are involved are based on matchings. In cases where nominal variables are involved in matched pairings, no test is appropriate. The tests most frequently utilized are the t-test (correlated means), the sign test, and Kendall's tau for large numbers of ties.

<sup>a</sup>"The earnings of production workers in this industry are generally higher than those in other industries. In April 1959, production workers employed in the automobile industry earned, on the average, \$111.49 a week or \$2.68 an hour. This compares with the average earning of \$89.87 a week or \$2.23 an hour for production workers in all manufacturing industries in the same month" (17, p.509). These figures include both skilled and unskilled workers. Frank Marquart, a long time union official and worker in Detroit, reports the average production worker's take-home pay at around \$75.00 per week (11, p.225).

<sup>b</sup>This picture of work conditions in the automobile industry is taken primarily from Chinoy (6), Guest (7), and Haber (8).

<sup>c</sup>I was not able to obtain data on discrimination in upgrading Negroes to skilled or supervisory positions. However, a Negro union official in Flint told me that no Negroes occupied supervisory positions at the second largest auto plant in Flint where his local was, and that he knew of no cases in other auto plants.

They face other problems in the plants. Production workers, on the whole, find little satisfaction in the simple, repetitive tasks of their work. In his study of production auto workers, Robert Guest found the main reason for wanting to take a job outside the plant to be "...dislike of conveyor-paced operations, the individual work load, the restricted job cycle, and the repetitive character of the job" (7, p.155). The fathers in these two samples evidently experience low job satisfaction as well; in that approximately two-thirds of each set stated that they would take a job outside the plant if they had the chance.

Perhaps the most distressing aspect of work for these men is the insecurity they face. The automobile industry tends to have what one author has called a "feast and famine" character, to be overly responsive to the business cycle (8, p.110). The unemployment rate for Flint has fluctuated widely during the past decade, from 2.3 per cent in 1950 and 1953 to 14.2 per cent in 1958 (13). Recessions and automation have reduced the work force drastically during the past few years. One plant that had approximately 24,000 employees in 1955 was down to 17,400 in 1960 (5). Also yearly retooling, model change layoffs, and unpredictable inventory reduction layoffs compound the worker's insecurity with wide fluctuations in monthly unemployment rates. In 1959 unemployment reached a low of 4.7 per cent in December after hitting a high for the year of 29.6 per cent during the previous month of November.

In conclusion, we may expect that the men in this study have been affected in the following ways by the work situation.

1. Coming to Flint to work in the auto plants has undoubtedly resulted in some improvement in their standard of living.
2. At the same time, economic and work circumstances hold them to the lower status level where any betterment beyond adequate subsistence, some comforts in the home and a few recreational pleasures will come only with extreme thrift and hard work, often by holding more than one job.
3. These men probably have seen their own occupational and income aspirations shrink in confrontation with limited opportunity and racial discrimination.
4. It has been necessary for them to face the constant insecurity of unpredictable unemployment for unknown periods.
5. They have had to gear their lives to work which offers few

satisfactions, with virtually no power to control the circumstances of the work life. Their lives are shaped by economic forces that are powerful, impersonal, incomprehensible, inexorable.

6. The total impact of these factors on their self-esteem, self-confidence, and masculine self-image must have been huge. None of these conditions lend support to the dominant values that extol orderly, responsible, and determined striving and accomplishment.

These are powerful conditions which, to some degree, shape the values and behavior of most lower class males.<sup>a</sup> To understand the characteristics and dynamics of their adaptations should yield important clues to lower class deviancy generally.

Despite their grievances and general discontent, lower class persons tend not to participate in those organizational phases of community life that should enhance their competitive position with respect to economic and political power (10, 18). Plagued by low self-confidence, limited education and verbal skills, and little knowledge of the intricacies of community affairs, these persons tend to remain voiceless elements in the community with no institutional means of making their grievances known in the power spheres of the community.

Being pretty much removed from broader community affairs, working men tend to adjust to their situation almost entirely in terms of the inner stress and frustration that pervade their lives rather than in terms of the dominant values of the community. They come to place great value on the "fun," "good times" and "excitement" to be found in leisure activities. Frenzied fun-making can provide a ready release from tensions and frustrations and from the dreariness and dullness of routine work. Since the family affords few opportunities for these kinds of intense experiences, lower class men tend to seek them outside the family.

The character of such fun-making leisure activities is determined in large part by the feelings their unfavorable economic and work situation produces: low self-esteem, damaged male ego, and feelings of impotence. They

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<sup>a</sup>The assumption here is that a common structure of experience along these lines exists for unskilled workers in general, shaping their values and behavior in patterned ways. Inkeles finds this a cogent explanation for patterns of workers' attitudes that cut across national boundaries. This does not mean, of course, that all lower class men are subject to these conditions to the same degree or at all (9).

need experiences that will make them feel like men again: strong, courageous, daring, controlling. I suggest that we have here the key to the dynamics of a lower class subcultural orientation. It is from efforts to make such adaptations that distinctive forms of behavior emerge among lower class people. These behavior patterns are widespread (even as the conditions underlying them are widespread), relatively stable, and perceived as such by lower class persons themselves. This does not mean that they are positively valued and sanctioned by all lower class people, without qualification. Adaptations may take several forms. Thus the one under consideration will be thought of as one lower class subcultural orientation which must compete with other values that will be discussed later.

Walter Miller has made a systematic analysis of the "focal concerns" of lower class culture that fits well my suggestion about the ingredients of this kind of lower class male adaptation (14). These focal concerns are descriptive dimensions of behavior that Miller finds lower class people, especially men, giving a good deal of attention to in their everyday affairs. They are, in order of attention: trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate, and autonomy.<sup>a</sup> Each of these dimensions involves a range of behavior and attitudes that are valued or disvalued.

The area of trouble is of particular relevance for the analysis of delinquency. The search for experiences of toughness, smartness, for excitement, chances to try one's luck, and independence often result in unconventional and illegal activities. Some of these feelings can be expressed in conventional pursuits such as athletic leagues, intense boasting and teasing in informal sociability, social games such as poker, pinochle, and the like. These experiences are pitched to a relatively low emotional key, however.

At the same time, there is an impressive array of palliatives that provide intense excitement and challenge to one's manliness. The "easy money" that flows through the lower class areas during boom periods draws a variety of commercial ventures that find ready response among distraught men: taverns,

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<sup>a</sup> Miller does not recognize the role of social structural factors in the creation of focal concerns. His explanation is that they are compensatory masculine experiences for men who doubt their own masculinity because they were reared in the lower class female-based household and have acquired feminine identities. While this may be a contributing factor, it is not a compelling reason. The prevalence of the female-based household in the lower classes (if indeed, this is so) could be accounted for in terms of the weak male economic position.

gambling joints, houses of prostitution, dope peddling, and so on. Like many cities with large working class populations, Flint attracts a good deal of such vice activities, especially to the Negro Ghetto bordering on one of the vast auto plants. The limitations and humiliations of racial discrimination make lower class Negroes (the status of all but a small segment of the Negro population) more susceptible to these escapist and expressive experiences than lower class whites. Police department records reveal that the following percentages of persons arrested in 1958 for the listed crimes were Negro:

prostitution	65	per	cent
drug laws	83	"	"
drunkedness	85	"	"
gambling	97	"	"
vagrancy- loitering	99	"	"

Of course, we do not know to what extent law enforcement practices have produced differential arrest rates for Negroes and whites. The most plausible expectation is that they work to the disadvantage of Negroes, who constituted **only some:12** per cent of the population in 1958.

This lower class propensity to participate in certain forms of illegal behavior should be found among the fathers in this study. Police records show that this is indeed the case: 40.2 per cent of the delinquents' fathers and 50.2 per cent of the controls' fathers had police records, with a median of 7 contacts for the former and 6 for the latter.<sup>a</sup> All the fathers in the delinquency sample and 94.4 per cent of those in the control sample had been found guilty of at least one offense. With no significant differences between them, the two sets of fathers turn out to be equally criminal. It is probably a fair assumption that many of the fathers without records have participated in some of these criminal activities without being caught. The high visibility of adult crime in the community should afford Negro children and adolescents opportunities to learn many skills and attitudes associated with crime. Where there is close contact with adults who are criminal the impact on youngsters should be great. This is borne out in the delinquency sample where there is a .31 correlation--significant at the .05 level--between the number of offenses for which the fathers were found guilty and the number of contacts the boys had with police.

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<sup>a</sup>About 50 per cent of both groups of fathers were arrested for crimes against public morality, which include all the vices listed above. Approximately two-thirds of all offenses for each group of fathers were committed in Flint between 1951 and 1961.

In light of the high criminality among the fathers of non-delinquents, it would be erroneous to assume a simple "like father, like son" kind of learning of criminal behavior. There must be intervening factors that cause father's criminality to dispose the son toward crime, as well as factors that apparently insulate the son from the father's criminal inclinations. The explanation of conformity becomes even more interesting and challenging than the isolation of reasons for deviancy.

It should be emphasized that the control boys may be deviant in many ways, despite the absence of police records. In fact, when asked what was the most serious trouble their sons had been in, 39 per cent of the controls' mothers stated that their sons had been in some such serious trouble as theft, fighting, destruction of property, and the like. Since all boys do things their parents don't know about and parents sometimes try to protect their sons, it is quite likely that a much larger percentage of the control boys were deviant, many seriously so and not caught.<sup>a</sup> There was a slight, though non-significant, tendency for the number of mothers reporting some serious trouble for their sons to increase with an increase in the number of offenses for which their husbands had been found guilty.<sup>b</sup>

In seeking out prime factors that make some boys susceptible to adult criminality and others resistant, we need to know the kinds of goals that motivate them, as well as the institutional circumstances surrounding competition for these goals. I shall discuss goals first.

One way of adjusting to emasculated occupational and income mobility hopes is to pass them on to one's offspring. When asked "what kind of job would you like your son to have as an adult?", 80.9 and 76.7 per cent of the fathers of delinquents and controls respectively mentioned a profession (not a significant difference). Furthermore, these men did not want their sons to take the kinds of jobs they hold: 79.2 per cent of the delinquents' fathers and 82.3 per cent of the controls' fathers expressed this sentiment (not a significant difference).

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<sup>a</sup>In a participant-observation study of adolescent attitudes and activities in Flint, Jerry Winter and I found a widespread deviant pattern among white and Negro boys, consisting of drinking, "making out" with girls, gambling and fighting. Fighting was loosely group-centered but not in gangs, none of which we found in Flint. Stealing parts from automobiles also comes in for a good deal of attention (12).

<sup>b</sup>The percentages of controls' mothers reporting some serious trouble for their sons varied with number of fathers offenses for which found guilty as follows:  
no offenses - 47.2%;            1 offense - 53.8%;            2 or more offenses - 60.0%.

They gained considerable support from their wives on both scores.

When these parental aspirations are multiplied by exhortations to mobility from the school, mass media, and community organizations, it is apparent that these lower class boys are confronted almost daily with values extolling the virtues of "getting ahead," "bettering oneself". In answer to the question, "what do you think it means to be a success in life?", the good-job-money-accomplishment-prestige category was mentioned 66.6 per cent of the time by delinquent boys to 69.1 per cent by their controls. Likewise, decisions involving work, education, and achievement were mentioned 75.0 and 70.0 per cent of the time by delinquents and controls in response to the question, "what are the important things you will have to make up your mind about, now or in the future?" The majority of both groups of boys either would not like to have their fathers' jobs or answered "don't know". Thus the great majority of the boys in this sample were preoccupied with their future, with finding a place for themselves in society that represents a higher level of success and accomplishment than their fathers had reached.

For the achievement of their mobility aspirations, most significant adults in lower class boys' lives try to impress upon them the necessity of being good boys, ambitious, hard-working, responsible, and alert to take advantage of every chance--in short, of being persons of character and determination. Approximately 85 per cent of all the fathers and 95 per cent of the mothers mentioned character-building or related aims in raising their children. Some of the areas mentioned are religious training, moral training, good manners, diligent work for educational goals, choosing good company, and the like. They try to train their sons to be respectable, to "make something of their lives" rather than follow in the footsteps of many of their fathers and other men around them.

We now have three cultural ingredients that play major roles in pointing lower class boys toward adaptations in which conventional or deviant characteristics loom large. They are mobility aspirations, a lower class sub-cultural orientation, and dominant community values related to striving.

Whether they have clear mobility goals or vague motivations to "get ahead" or "be somebody", the most problematic aspect of lower class boys' adjustment to their hopes is that they are being pulled in two directions, both

of which show promise of improvement.<sup>a</sup> One direction is toward the dominant values of the community which reward orderly, determined, responsible striving through the legitimate channels of formal training. They carry the aura of rightness and legitimacy. The competing direction is to follow the ubiquitous lower class male adaptation pattern and try to succeed in some "shady," illegal commercial line, such as being a "pimp," a position that is coveted by many Negro youths in Flint.<sup>b</sup> This career line is seen throughout the community as bad and illegitimate. To take the paths supported by dominant values demands hard work and time, but it offers broad prestige rewards in the community and the society, relatively high financial rewards, and the positive sanctions of most significant adults. Choosing the lower class subcultural orientation does not require extensive training, offers possible high financial rewards, but also high risk and only limited local prestige that is accompanied by negative sanctions or at least resigned toleration from many significant adults.

With two such conflicting sets of expectations in close juxtaposition, effective socialization to one should be difficult and tenuous. Furthermore, a youngster may receive gratifications from persons representing both sets of values in his everyday comings and goings on the playground, in school, in the neighborhood, at home. This accounts for the cultural ambivalence Cohen has found to characterize lower class youths (3, Chap. 5). They are not committed

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<sup>a</sup>It should be noted how this approach contrasts with Albert Cohen's (3). First, Cohen assumes the existence of distinct middle class and lower class values. I, on the other hand, see certain dominant societal values involving "character" and goal-directedness that most persons internalize to some degree. These are society-wide values. At the same time, lower class experiences foster the development of various schemes of value which do not replace the dominant values, but which exist alongside them. Second, what is most problematic is the quest for status mobility, not failure to live up to so-called middle class values, as Cohen assumes. Some shame and self-deprecatory feelings may well result from not living up to the ideals of the dominant values, but the discontent, alienation from dominant values, and hostility that characterize so much juvenile criminality more likely have their source in a sense of failure vis-a-vis mobility aspirations.

<sup>b</sup>Here is an example of how interviewing sometimes yield misleading results. In no case did a delinquent or control boy indicate a desire to enter a "shady" occupation. Yet during participant-observation in Flint, several informants told me that many Negro youths wanted to be "pimps" or "big-time" gamblers. These are the men who drive white cadillacs through the Negro district, have attractive light-brown girl friends and generally project the image of opulence and independence. They apparently have built an image that appeals to some Negro youths. No comparable aspirations were mentioned by white informants (12, p.5).

unconditionally to either set of values, which means that they lack the edge of moral imperative and conviction that strong commitment evokes. Indeed, one would expect them to experience a measure of alienation from both, a relative detachment and suspicion that may be magnified in the face of failure. It follows that lower class boys would tend to judge these dominant and subcultural expectations by pragmatic standards, that is, in terms of the consequences of trying to live up to the requirements of either.

On the whole, significant adults in the lives of lower class youths and community institutions these youths have contact with support their strivings through the legitimate avenues of achievement. There are, of course, numerous factors counteracting adult influence. But in balance lower class boys should be more positively oriented toward mobility strivings as prescribed by dominant values. A "shady" career might best be conceptualized as mobility insurance, to be turned to when all hope for legitimacy is lost. Thus failure or success vis-a-vis the dominant values is the more critical and problematic axis for judging oneself and sizing up one's life chances. Failure or the prospects of failure along this axis will lead to an intensification of the alienation process and the seeking of other alternatives, one of which will be the deviant pattern. I follow Cohen in assuming that the gratifications that always result from conforming to dominant expectations forestall a sudden and decisive break with them; hope lingers and temporizing with these values persists.<sup>a</sup> Likewise, a boy will only gradually be drawn--"half-consciously, tentative, and groping"--toward the criminal pattern, remaining susceptible to the influence of both sets of values. I surmise that most delinquents act within this twilight zone of ambivalence and non-commitment. Those who actively pursue a criminal career are the hard-core boys who have reached an advanced stage of alienation and cynicism with respect to the promise of legitimate striving.<sup>b</sup>

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<sup>a</sup>"The systems themselves may generate needs that cannot be legitimately or even illegitimately satisfied within the system, but this fact does not mean that the individual can lightly turn his back on the systems and refuse to conform to their expectations. For it is characteristic of social systems that through each of them we satisfy not one but many wants. Therefore, the loss of good standing in our family, our neighborhood, or our business community may result in the denial of satisfaction of not one but a whole set of wants. In still another way, therefore, dependence upon the institutional order encourages us to conform, even under conditions of strain" (4, p.471).

<sup>b</sup>Delinquent activities in Flint are of the "run-of-the-mill" variety rather than the "hard-to-reach" destructive gang type found in some metropolitan centers. Organized gangs are not in evidence in Flint (12, pp. 8-18). Inspection of the

With this kind of dynamic operating, it is crucial to isolate those factors that are pivotal in a lower class boy's perception of his chances to reach his goals via legitimate avenues. In a technologically advanced society the main avenue to mobility is the school. This is a testing ground where a boy can size up his chances of success and determine whether it is worthwhile continuing. But school itself is a highly competitive arena, where success in terms of academic achievement, acceptance and encouragement by teachers, and status among peers are all dependent in large measure on how a youngster compares with others with respect to a number of personal characteristics. Discouragement, shame and ultimately disenchantment with legitimate means to mobility will overtake the boy who sees himself failing in the educational arena, and who thus senses his chances of "being somebody" dwindling.

By several measures which can only be mentioned in passing because of limitations on the length of this paper, it is obvious that delinquent boys more than controls are tasting the bitter fruits of defeat. As early as the 7th grade they have significantly lower grade point averages than control boys and rated by teachers as less serious and as achieving less in relation to ability. Delinquent boys also dislike school more than control boys. Corollary with these attitudes is their lower occupational expectations, less certainty about occupational goals, and considerable unease about the future.

The next question in our analytic sequence is anticipated in a quotation from a Talcott Parsons essay on the school class as a social system. "The most important single predispositional factor with which the child enters the school is his level of independence. By this is meant his level of self-sufficiency relative to guidance by adults, his capacity to take responsibility and to make his own decisions in coping with new and varying situations. This... he has as a function of his experience in the family" (15, p.300). What variables in lower class family situations account for differential competence and readiness of lower class boys to cope with the academic and interpersonal demands made upon them by the school? Even when abilities are equal, some lower class

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delinquents' criminal patterns in this study impresses one with their versatility. Perhaps the conditions that nurture the malicious conflict and criminal gangs that Cloward and Ohlin (2) attempt to explain are found in the congested, isolated, highly unstable slum districts of very large cities, where the dominant values are less influential and where the organized syndicate is perceived as the only realistic mobility channel. I would agree with Jackson Toby that those kinds of gangs probably represent less than 10 per cent of the delinquents in this country at any given time (16).

boys are apparently more self-sufficient and self-directed and consequently attain a higher level of achievement in school than other lower class boys. These, of course, tend to be the control boys in the present study.

Since there is no time to analyze relevant family characteristics that may account for these differences, I shall list several highly suggestive findings from this study.

1. Parents of delinquents have lower average education than parents of controls.
2. Fathers of delinquents have lower average education than their mothers.
3. There is apparently lower effective family income (income available to meet family needs) in delinquents' than in controls' families.
4. Fathers in delinquents' families have less power and influence than fathers in controls' families.
5. Home ownership is a good deal lower in delinquents' families than in controls' families.
6. Delinquents' fathers are more unrealistic and insistent with respect to their aspirations for their sons than are the fathers of controls.
7. Delinquent boys share fewer activities with their fathers than control boys share with their fathers.
8. Parents of delinquent boys know less about their sons' friends and the families of their friends and also exercise less influence in their choice of friends than the parents of controls.

From our earlier discussions of lower class male adaptations and these findings, the father emerges as the single most important person in shaping the adjustment of the lower class boy. He plays the vital role in determining the characteristics of the family within which the boy must be socialized and, as a model, in determining the identities and ego strength that he will acquire.

This being the case, the delinquent boys surely would be handicapped in coping with the varied requirements of school. Their family life shapes up as somewhat disorderly, with parents probably often at cross-purposes, and low in the cohesiveness that grows out of common goals and activities. It should be no surprise to find these delinquent boys exhibiting less orderly, disciplined thought and work habits, as well as few effective skills for cooperative endeavours with others.

The delinquents' fathers are relatively ineffectual as family providers and managers of family affairs. Having little education, they probably lack the know-how and personal resources for carrying out these responsibilities and in the face of failures tend to become less committed to family goals (such as owning a home). There are hints in the data of tendencies in these men toward arbitrariness and exerting pressure on their sons with regard to their aspirations for the boys, while the fathers themselves are far from ideal models of character and responsibility. Neither, of course, are they good models of masculine character and strength or status success. These characteristics and relationships to their fathers should have had, among others, the following hastily stated consequences for these delinquent boys.

1. They most likely have been less well socialized to dominant values, which their parents wish for them and which prescribes personal traits so flagrantly absent in their fathers. This condition, in league with low social control over the boys activities, irrevocably exposes these boys to the influence of the ubiquitous carriers of unconventional lower class subcultural values. Furthermore, these boys should experience a high degree of threat and suspicion when participating in an institutional setting like the school, where dominant values provide the criteria for judging performance.

2. Since their fathers are poor masculine models, the delinquent boys probably have distorted images of themselves as males and seek to ward off incipient feminine qualities by compensatory aggressive demonstrations of their masculinity. What more enticing stage is there for a boy driven by such needs than the captive audience the classroom provides?

3. Because their fathers are status failures both in the economic and work world and in their families, the delinquent boys lack a success model, and should experience status deprivation keenly, as well as a clouded view of their own chances and means to success.

4. Since their fathers have few resources their sons want and are transparently weak, the delinquent boys probably have little reason to respect their fathers or to submit to their influence attempts. Thus, resistance to their fathers should carry over into their relations to authority figures generally, which would be a gross handicap in the classroom authority situation.

Lest I leave you with the impression of distinct differences between these two sets of boys and their families, it should be emphasized that they are different only in degree. The controls have many of the same family and

personal handicaps as the delinquents, they are not resounding successes at school, and as we have seen many of them have definite deviant predispositions. They are on the whole, however, more self-sufficient and better able to cope with school requirements and are more hopeful about realizing their aspirations.

Other areas that merit extensive consideration in this kind of unfolding analytic scheme are boys' perceptions of work opportunities and the nature of peer influences and activities. But it is now time to call a halt to this discussion, which after all started as an abbreviated structural-functional analysis of juvenile delinquency.

I only hope that this endeavor has demonstrated how structural-functional analysis helps to bring into sharper focus the essential interrelatedness of complex variables affecting the adaptations of adolescent boys. A number of theories have been implicated in this analysis, and had time permitted it would have been possible to show their relevance, limitations, and how they complement one another.

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