

# Culture and delinquency

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Obviously something is going on in today's society if more and more children are committing delinquent crimes. Sometimes we must ask our self what provokes a child to become delinquent and what makes the child gravitate so easily towards this lifestyle? I believe families must transmit values so as to lead children to accept rules that they are likely to perceive as arbitrary. It should be no surprise, therefore, to find that family life bears a strong relation to juvenile delinquency. Family life can be viewed from three general perspectives. The first is structure: Who lives within a household? The second is interaction: How do the family members treat one another? And the third is social setting: What is the nature of the community in which the family can be found? Each of these perspectives contributes information relevant to understanding the impact of family life on juvenile delinquency.

### Culture & Delinquency

Family is the foundation of human society. Children who are rejected by their parents, who grow up in homes with considerable conflict, or who are inadequately supervised are at the greatest risk of becoming delinquent. If anything would play a large part in delinquency it would be a family.

Understanding how the family and how the juvenile within the family works help us get to the core of delinquency. Families are one of the strongest socializing forces in life. They teach children to control unacceptable behavior, to delay gratification, and to respect the rights of others.

Conversely, families can teach children aggressive, antisocial, and violent behavior.

This statement alone could easily explain how the juvenile may end up becoming a delinquent. Wright and Wright (1994) suggest positive parenting practices during the early years and later in adolescence appear to act as buffers preventing delinquent behavior and assisting adolescents involved in such behavior to desist from delinquency. In many parts of America it's easy to separate high crime areas from the more socially acceptable ones.

Located within the confines of these crime ridden areas are kids who become a product of their environment at times due to lack of parenting and community supervision.

Many adolescents who grow up in impoverished neighborhoods feel a sense of being at the point of no return. Some may call it a vicious cycle but most who live in these areas call it a way of life. Most people in America desire wealth, material possessions, power, prestige and other life comforts but in reality according to the strain theory many people in the lower social classes will never achieve these goals so they attempt to do it illegally. It's hard to grow up in a area where everyone belongs to a gang or sell drugs and make it through without partaking in that lifestyle. It's almost at the point where the so called street life is a culture in itself. In some cases it is assumed that a child will carry on with gang traditions almost as it is expected that children will carry the last name of their biological father. When the odds are stacked against you like this, it's almost impossible to rise above it all. That's why juvenile delinquency is so prevalent in these areas it has become expected within the community and household as a mechanism for survival.

There are a lot of theories that pertain to the social structures here in our society for instance the Strain Theory, the cultural deviance theory and or <https://assignbuster.com/culture-and-delinquency/>

the differential opportunity theory. All of these in one way or another try to summarize and or add substance to the dilemmas youth face on a daily basis living within the confines of these almost segregated areas.

There was a time where racial ethnicity played a key part in what services you received whether it be educational or medical. During these times people were separated along color lines blacks didn't attend school with the whites and vice versa. Well now we are in the year 2011 and those times are a half a century behind us but the effects are still felt throughout our society. According to (Siegel & Welsh 2009) minority groups are ranked higher than whites when it comes to people living below the poverty level. What has happened since the days of segregation is most minorities have created what is called a culture of poverty.

A culture of poverty is when lower class people form a culture with their own values and norms which are sometimes in conflict with conventional society. An example of this is most often when police go in to lower class neighborhoods to investigate crimes it's hard to get answers because the people live by a code such as "snitches get stitches". It's hard for the people in these areas to trust outsiders because when they leave there is no one left to protect them. So for many juveniles they grow up with the perception that the police can't be trusted which intern makes them the enemy.

In the mid 90's the government felt a need to step in and supplement peoples income who lived in poverty stricken areas. The goal was to try and improve people's way of life in hopes that they would not resort to illegal ways of achieving more. According to (Smith & Tolan 1996) studies

conducted in Chicago showed that crime did fall as more and more people received welfare and or public assistance but it didn't last as law makers lobbyist and politicians revamped the plan to help it's lower class citizens.

Now the politicians in Chicago have created a new strategic plan known as weed and seed. The notion behind this is that they would weed out all known criminals in hopes of cleaning up the different areas and plant more human services in hopes of bringing about a economic revitalization. This would be helpful in the case of juveniles because they can be exposed to more than negativity in their neighborhood and maybe get exposed to life outside of the ghetto.

In order for our society to try and curb juvenile delinquency I feel that it is important that we take steps to set our children up for success. Living in these tough economic times may not be easy but we must understand that there is ways to help the people in the lower class while still obtaining economic goals at a national level. It's extremely expensive to try and keep our children locked up in the system while trying to provide adequate care during their stay in lock up.

I think that if we focused on the problem which is poverty that it will automatically increase our chances of having a more viable economy due impart to a smarter America not just a smarter Hillside or Beverly Hills. I believe in the notion that it takes a village to raise a child that village doesn't have to stop at the train tracks it should extend from coast to coast which at that point we can alleviate the borders between the haves and the have

not's because it stops being a neighborhood problem and it becomes a nations problem and together we can fix it.