ability of education and constructive leisure-time activities and of
the need for a general health program. It is shown, too, in the
subtle, yet easily recognizable, pressure exerted upon children to
keep them engaged in conventional activities, and in the resis-
tance offered by the community to behavior which threatens the
conventional values. It does not follow that all the activities par-
ticipated in by members of the community are lawful; but, since
any unlawful pursuits are likely to be carried out in other parts of
the city, children living in the low-rate communities are, on the
whole, insulated from direct contact with these deviant forms of
adult behavior.

In the middle-class areas and the areas of high economic status,
moreover, the similarity of attitudes and values as to social con-
trol is expressed in institutions and voluntary associations de-
signed to perpetuate and protect these values. Among these may
be included such organizations as the parent-teachers associa-
tions, women's clubs, service clubs, churches, neighborhood cen-
ters, and the like. Where these institutions represent dominant
values, the child is exposed to, and participates in a significant
way in one mode of life only. While he may have knowledge of
alternatives, they are not integral parts of the system in which he
participates.

In contrast, the areas of low economic status, where the rates of
delinquents are high, are characterized by wide diversity in norms
and standards of behavior. The moral values range from those
that are strictly conventional to those in direct opposition to con-
tentionality as symbolized by the family, the church, and other
institutions common to our general society. The deviant values
are symbolized by groups and institutions ranging from adult
criminal gangs engaged in theft and the marketing of stolen
goods, on the one hand, to quasi-legitimate businesses and the
rackets through which partial or complete control of legitimate
business is sometimes exercised, on the other. Thus, within the
same community, theft may be defined as right and proper in
some groups and as immoral, improper, and undesirable in others.
In some groups wealth and prestige are secured through acts of
skill and courage in the delinquent or criminal world, while in
DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL VALUES

stolen goods can be sold and the kinds of merchandise for which there is a ready market; they know what the high-stakes are, and they see in fine clothes, expensive cars, and other lavish expenditures the evidences of wealth among those who openly engage in illegal activities. All boys in the city have some knowledge of these activities, but in the inner-city areas they are known intimately, in terms of personal relationships, while in other sections they enter the child's experience through more impersonal forms of communication, such as motion pictures, the newspaper, and the radio.

Other types of evidence tending to support the existence of diverse systems of values in various areas are to be found in the data on delinquency and crime. In the previous chapter, variations by local areas in the number and rates of adult offenders were presented. When translated into its significance for children, the presence of a large number of adult criminals in certain areas means that children there are in contact with crime as a career and with the criminal way of life, symbolized by organized crime. In this type of organization can be seen the realization of authority, the division of labor, the specialization of function, and all the other characteristics common to well-organized business institutions wherever found.

Similarly, the delinquency data presented graphically on spot maps and rate maps in the preceding pages give plausibility to the existence of a coherent system of values supporting delinquent acts. In making these interpretations it should be remembered that delinquency is essentially group behavior. A study of boys brought into the Juvenile Court of Cook County during the year 1938 revealed that 81.8 per cent of these boys committed the offenses for which they were brought to court as members of groups. And when the offenses were limited to stealing, it was found that 89 per cent of all offenders were taken to court as group or gang members. In many additional cases where the boy

---


---

neighboring groups any attempt to achieve distinction in this manner would result in extreme disapproval. Two conflicting systems of economic activity here present roughly equivalent opportunities for employment and for promotion. Evidence of success in the criminal world is indicated by the presence of adult criminals whose clothes and automobiles indicate unmistakably that they have prospered in their chosen fields. The values missed and the greater risks incurred are not so clearly apparent to the young.

Children living in such communities are exposed to a variety of contradictory standards and forms of behavior rather than to a relatively consistent and conventional pattern. More than one type of moral institution and education are available to them. A boy may be familiar with, or exposed to, either the system of conventional activities or the system of criminal activities, or both. Similarly, he may participate in the activities of groups which engage mainly in delinquent activities, those concerned with conventional pursuits, or those which alternate between the two worlds. His attitudes and habits will be formed largely in accordance with the extent to which he participates in and becomes identified with one or the other of these several types of groups.

Conflicts of values necessarily arise when boys are brought in contact with so many forms of conduct not reconcilable with conventional morality as expressed in church and school. A boy may be found guilty of delinquency in the court, which represents the values of the larger society, for an act which has had at least tacit approval in the community in which he lives. It is perhaps common knowledge in the neighborhood that public funds are embezzled and that favors and special consideration can be received from some public officials through the payment of stipulated sums; the boys assume that all officials can be influenced in this way. They are familiar with the location of illegal institutions in the community and with the procedures through which such institutions are opened and kept in operation; they know where

---

1 Edwin H. Sutherland has called this process "differential association." See E. H. Sutherland, Principles of Criminology (Chicago: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1939), chap. 1.
actually committed his offense alone, the influence of companions was, nevertheless, apparent. This point is illustrated in certain cases of boys charged with stealing from members of their own families, where the theft clearly reflects the influence and instigation of companions, and in instances where the problems of the boy charged with incorrigibility reveal conflicting values, those of the family competing with those of the delinquent group for his allegiance.

The heavy concentration of delinquency in certain areas means, therefore, that boys living in these areas are in contact not only with individuals who engage in proscribed activity but also with groups which sanction such behavior and exert pressure upon their members to conform to group standards. Examination of the distribution map reveals that, in contrast with the areas of concentration of delinquents, there are many other communities where the cases are so widely dispersed that the chances of a boy's having intimate contact with other delinquents or with delinquent groups are comparatively slight.

The importance of the concentration of delinquents is seen most clearly when the effect is viewed in a temporal perspective. The maps representing distribution of delinquents at successive periods indicate that, year after year, decade after decade, the same areas have been characterized by these concentrations. This means that delinquent boys in these areas have contact not only with other delinquents who are their contemporaries but also with older offenders, who in turn had contact with delinquents preceding them, and so on back to the earliest history of the neighborhood. This contact means that the traditions of delinquency can be and are transmitted down through successive generations of boys, in much the same way that language and other social forms are transmitted.

The cumulative effect of this transmission of tradition is seen in two kinds of data, which will be presented here only very briefly. The first is a study of offenses, which reveals that certain types of delinquency have tended to characterize certain city areas. The execution of each type involves techniques which must be learned from others who have participated in the same activ-

ity. Each involves specialization of function, and each has its own terminology and standards of behavior. Jack-rolling, shoplifting, stealing from junkmen, and stealing automobiles are examples of offenses with well-developed techniques, passed on by one generation to the next.

The second body of evidence on the effects of the continuity of tradition within delinquent groups comprises the results of a study of the contacts between delinquents, made through the use of official records. The names of boys who appeared together in court were taken, and the range of their association with other boys whose names appeared in the same records was then analyzed and charted. It was found that some members of each delinquent group had participated in offenses in the company of other older boys, and so on, backward in time in an unbroken continuity as far as the records were available. The continuity thus traced is roughly comparable to that which might be established among baseball players through their appearance in official line-ups at regularly scheduled games. In baseball it is known that the techniques are transmitted through practice in back yards, playgrounds, sand lots, and in other places where boys congregate. Similarly in the case of delinquency traditions, if an unbroken continuity can be traced through formal institutions such as the Juvenile Court, the actual contacts among delinquents in the community must be numerous, continuous, and vital.

The way in which boys are inducted into unconventional behavior has been revealed by large numbers of case studies of youths living in areas where the rates of delinquents are high. Through the boy's own life-story the wide range of contacts with other boys has been revealed. These stories indicate how at early ages the boys took part with older boys in delinquent activities, and how, as they themselves acquired experience, they initiated others into the same pursuits. These cases reveal also the steps through which members are incorporated into the delinquent group organization. Often at early ages boys engage in malicious

"Contacts between Successive Generations of Delinquent Boys in a Low Income Area in Chicago" (unpublished study by the Department of Sociology, Illinois Institute for Juvenile Research, 1940).
mischievous and simple acts of stealing. As their careers develop, they become involved in more serious offenses, and finally become skilled workmen or specialists in some particular field of criminal activity. In each of these phases the boy is supported by the sanction and the approval of the delinquent group to which he belongs.

The manner in which the boy in the high-rate areas is exposed to delinquency values and assimilates them through his group contacts is most clearly revealed in autobiographical documents. To illustrate this process, short excerpts from the life-stories of three delinquents in widely separated sections of Chicago are presented, essentially as written.

**Case 1**

My start as a delinquent was as many more fellows started. It started with playing hooky from school. Then I showed how to get cookies, cakes, and a lot of other things that can make the day nice for a young truant. That was simple, the folks having credit at stores and paying every two weeks or month were the goats. I would go into the store and ask for whatever I wanted and when I got it all I had to say was put it on the bill, and walk out. When the time came for the bill to be paid it was all marked in with the regular purchases and nothing was said. From that it led to taking pennies from mother’s purse, stealing junk from yards, etc. Then it started to be a habit of going through the brothers’ pockets while he was at work and taking change, a dime, fifteen cents, a quarter and sometimes more, it all depended on how much change was there. That served to give me enough courage to prowl a house when the opportunity came one day. I would have never done it alone but being with one of my pals that was different. That led to heaving coal and selling it, stealing pigeons and sometimes chickens and selling them, also hanging around Hinder and Junge bakery and crawling through windows and stealing cakes and cookies, and also stealing and selling bicycles. And so it went, always increasing the value of the theft, until it came up to where I was using a gun and had dropped most of the petty things and was going after some real dough.

My neighborhood at the time of my first delinquencies was not the worst in the city, but the poorest. The parents living in the neighborhood were respectable, and if there boys or girls were found or heard of doing anything wrong they were taken care of. There were a lot of ways this was accomplished, for instance, a good paddling, well that came with all the remedies, then there was such a thing as making them stay in the house after supper and hit the hay early while the rest of his or her crowd was outside playing. Then there was another one, on Saturdays and Sunday afternoons every kid in the neighborhood went to the show but I knew plenty of kids that didn’t go all the time because they were caught, maybe stealing some little thing, playing hookey, or maybe even breaking a window on purpose.

As a whole, the people of the neighborhood were the right kind of people. They wanted and tried to do the best of them to know, to keep there kids on the right path. They forbade them to go with the bad actors and punished them when they found out that they were together. In the meantime the folks of the bad actors were just as busy trying to straighten them out.

The feelings of these people is this. Each family thought, well if Jones kid is going bad, let him, thats his peoples lookout, but mines not if I can help it. What somebody elses kid did did not bother them as long as it did not involve there kid or property.

Like in nearly every neighborhood there was a bunch of us younger guys that no amount of beating could keep us going right for over a few years. There was also the big gang, made up of older guys somewhere between 14 and 17 years of age. Then there was also the older bunch hanging around in front of the saloons. These guys were mostly men from about 21 to 31 mostly drunks and who hardly ever worked but they never mixed outside of themselves. My name and gangliness to get into anything that was going on me in with this bunch and after getting pitched a couple of times and kicking a few of the older boys, I was looked on as sort of a hero by the lads of my own class, and then I started hanging with these older boys steadily.

When I first started stealing or at the time of my first delinquency my gang was all little young fellows of my own age more or less sorts as it seems to me now as I look back and of course they did a little bit of stealing but when they did whatever they got they kept to themselves very seldom dividing with anyone else. I was all together different, whatever I had, stole, or bought, I always split it. When I stole a few pennies it was spent in the company of my pals and they got as much of whatever I bought as I did. For being so highbearted of course they looked on me as sort of a leader and thought I was a swell and clever guy to get away with things as I did. This also made me feel like a big guy and so I kept getting a little bolder as I went along and kept doing bigger jobs.

After I was admitted to the older gang, through my name and gangliness I was sort of a flunky. I was easy. They could get whatever I had and I’d do about everything they wanted me to, and not until I licked several of the younger members was I treated as a regular. After that, some other guy had to do the dirty work. I was still easy though, I gave away and let them talk me out of everything I had and nearly always had to be the lead man. For instance, if a bicycle was standing on some perch it was me that was told to go up and get it and not wanting to be thought yellow I got it. After it was sold I might get a fourth of what I should have and I’d never say anything.
DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL VALUES

We got tired of slot machines. One of the boys hit on the idea of snatching purses. My first purse snatching was at the elevated station. I waited alongside the steps on the ground ready to grab the purse. Along came a woman up the steps. She must have been about forty years old. I waited breathlessly, not wanting even to breathe for fear my intended victim would hear me. She came up the stairs slowly. I got a load on her purse, hit my hand in through the opening in the iron grill work, grabbed the purse, and was on my way. She must have been struck speechless, because I did not hear an outcry until I was about one hundred feet where I snatched the purse. I got away all right. My snatch was worth $35.00. It was not allowed to play any tricks or anything that was found in the purse, and many times we threw away watches, rings, keys, photos, necklaces, and purses, pen, and pents. The leader would never let us keep anything for fear we might get picked up and they would find something to informate us. It would be too bad as someone was bound to talk. Now that I think of it, this leader of ours was a pretty shrewd guy.

We snatched purses on elevated platforms. We got on the platforms by climbing the adjoining building to the roof, and going from the roof, to the station platform. We would wait until a train came and then we would spot our victim. When the train started we would all three of us reach in through the open windows and grab a purse. We were highly successful, but could not play a station more than once. This we could not keep up for more than three days because everyone was on the alert and they had tricked planted on platforms. We were almost caught once and so found out about the tricks.

One evening another fellow and myself were on the D—Station. We had climbed up an iron ladder. I grabbed a purse and a dick was on the other end of the same platform. The woman screamed and the dick was after me. I dropped the purse over the rail to the ladder. The dicks were not allowed to shoot at kids with short pants in those days, so I got away. We never worked that way any more. We snatched purses in the park by hiding in the bushes. When a lady came along and all was clear I would grab the purse and run through the bushes and run out to the street where the boy was waiting. We would hide in alleys, doorways, behind hill posters, and in any place where we could snatch a purse.

Then we started stealing from junk men. We would find a shed suitably located near an alley. We made sure the shed was nice and dark. Then we would wait for a junk man and one of the boys would go out and ask him if he wanted to buy some copper. The peddler would ask how much copper he had and the boy would say, "Plenty." The peddler would figure, "Well, here's where I get the kid," so he would come in and ask him if he and take his money. Then we would all run out and close the door. We could hear the peddler bellowing for help. Many times we would almost split our sides laughing at the antics of the peddler when we jumped him. We got

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND URBAN AREAS

It was this way until after I started hanging with another gang for a while and then came back to hang with the old one again. I got into an argument with one of the new leaders of the gang and kicked him and after that it was a toss up between me and the former as to who really was leader. After that I would hang with different gangs, once with this mob, another time with that, and everywhere I hung with seemed to think I was the whole circus. I could fight and I would and I was an all around true badman, who wouldn't talk if pinched.

CASE 2

One day when I was about nine, we were caught by the gang that beat me up my first day home from the orphanage. They wanted us to join their gang. I saw we would get the worst of it, so I made a bargain with them. I told them to let James (my brother) alone, and if they did, I would join their gang. They wanted us of us and I pleaded and begged. Finally, the leader, the fellow that gave me a beating, agreed. I made James promise he would say nothing to me. The gang was about thirty strong. They would steal milk off porches, bread from bread boxes, steal from peddlers and take kids' lunch money from them. At first I just watched for them.

One day they said they would go out that night and break into peanut slots for the pennies. I told them I couldn't stay out that late, so we made a plan. We would start out about seven o'clock and be back before nine o'clock. Each man would be given a chance to show his mettle. We would travel in groups on each side of the street until we spotted a gum slot or peanut slot. Each of us had stones and pieces of rock in our pockets. The leader would be the first to break into the slot machine for pennies. He would take a hammer and knock in the back of the slot, at the same time holding his hat or cap, whatever he happened to be wearing at the time, so that the pennies would roll or slide right into it. We were on the side lines and in case the proprietor or someone tried to grab him we would let loose a barrage of stones that would slow him up and give whoever was doing the dirty work a chance to get away. Thus we were almost sure of getting what we wanted.

What my turn came I wanted to back down. I was shaking like a leaf. They threatened to jump me, so I took the hammer and battered a machine which held gum balls. I was so nervous when I did the penny slot that I hit it in such a manner that I bursted the glass with my elbow. I dropped the hammer and grabbed my cap which I had laid under the slot. When I got to the gang my cap held a mixture of glass, gum balls and pennies. My arm was numb. I have never had my crazy bones. I must have collected thirty pennies, about a dozen gum balls, and some glass. The boys tapped me on the back and told me I did fine which made me feel good. We made about a dollar apiece almost every time. I would go home from these forages and give James a dime to keep his mouth shut. I would tell me I was playing with the older boys. She believed me.
DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL VALUES

four of us. Rudy and Tom liked dice and cards and they taught James and me all about it. All our money we used for playing cards, shooting dice, going to theaters, ice cream, candy, Riverview, and White City. Mostly we were in White City. We would take in everything at White City until our money gave out. We would then sneak on the L.A. and C. and get home about 9:00 or 10:00 P.M. We were bawled out, but that's all.

CASE 3

I can only remember the things I done since I was eleven years old. I was going to school for crippled children. We finally moved into a nineteen-year-old woman would come and take me to school. They gave us our dinner there and brought us home at a quarter after three. When I got home I would eat supper and go to the corner and meet some of the kids in the neighborhood. Most of the people who lived there were poor. So we used to get a couple of cheaper wagons and burlap-sacks and go down to the tracks and steal coal out of the freight car. Then we would take it home. We would go to get coal three or four times every night. On Saturdays we would go into the stock yards and chase cows or pigs. Some days we would go to Mr. G's stable and rent a horse and wagon to ride around with. When I was twelve I went to the hospital and was operated on. I had my ankle stiffened so I would walk straight. I hid in the hospital for eight or nine months. After I came home I walked on crutches for three months before I could use my leg. As soon as I could walk I went out with the boys and started stealing coal again. One day as I was getting coal I was caught. A detective took me into a railroad shanty and asked me where I lived and when I would not tell him, he went to the phone to call the police. I ran out of the shanty and he chased me, but I got away from him.

When I was fourteen my father died and we moved. I had one year of school to finish so I started to go to the school near where we lived. I was there about three weeks when I started to go by the name of William Jones. We called him Bill for short. He had a fancy for pigeons and rabbits. I started to go out nights and we would steal as high as one or two pigeons a week. We would sell them as fifty a pair.

We needed something to go to different neighborhoods with so we stole a couple of bicycles and put wire baskets on the handle bars to carry them in. We stole pigeons for about two years and then we quit. We started to go with a lot of kids who were breaking into schools. One day I was in the park with one of the kids, when one of the park officers arrested us. He had been told to watch in the park for the lad I was with. He had been taken to the juvenile home and they asked us a lot of questions about the schools. The lad I was with told them I was with him and they put the other kids and they turned me loose. At the time I was arrested I was fifteen and going to high school. When I went there seven months and then I quit. Jones was working for a meat market and I decided I would go to work. I got myself a job in an electrical
DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL VALUES

what greater if he appeared in court as a member of a group than they were if he appeared alone, and much greater if he had one or more delinquent brothers. Of the boys who had no brothers with official delinquency records, 56.5 per cent continued in adult crime, as compared with 72.0 per cent of those known to have one or more delinquent brothers.

Taken together, these studies indicate that most delinquent acts are committed by boys in groups, that delinquent boys have frequent contact with other delinquents, that the techniques for specific offenses are transmitted through delinquent group organization, and that in officially proscribed activity the boy is supported and sustained by the delinquent group to which he belongs.

DIFFERENTIAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Other subtle differences among communities are to be found in the character of their local institutions, especially those specifically related to the problem of social control. The family, in areas of high rates of delinquents, is affected by the conflicting systems of values and the problems of survival and conformity with which it is confronted. Family organization in high-rate areas is affected in several different ways by the divergent systems of values encountered. In the first place, it may be made practically impotent by the existing interrelationships between the two systems. Ordinarily, the family is thought of as representing conventional values and opposed to deviant forms of behavior. Opposition from families within the area to illegal practices and institutions is lessened, however, by the fact that each system may be contributing in certain ways to the economic well-being of many large family groups. Thus, even if a family represents conventional values, some member, relative, or friend may be gaining a livelihood through illegal or quasi-legal institutions—a fact tending to neutralize the family's opposition to the criminal system.

Another reason for the frequent inefficacy of the family in directing boys' activities along conventional lines is doubtless the allegiance which the boys may feel they owe to delinquent groups. A boy is often so fully incorporated into the group that it exercises...
more control than does the family. This is especially true in those neighborhoods where most of the parents are European-born. There the parents' attitudes and interests reflect an Old World background, while their children are more fully Americanized and more sophisticated, assuming in many cases the role of interpreter. In this situation the parental control is weakened, and the family may be ineffective in competing with play groups and organized gangs in which life, though it may be insecure, is undeniably colorful, stimulating, and enticing.

A third possible reason for ineffectiveness of the family is that many problems with which it is confronted in delinquency areas are new problems, for which there is no traditional solution. An example is the use of leisure time by children. This is not a problem in the Old World or in rural American communities, where children start to work at an early age and have a recognized part in the system of production. Hence, there are no time-honored solutions for difficulties which arise out of the fact that children in the city go to work at a later age and have much more leisure at their disposal. In the absence of any accepted solution for this problem, harsh punishment may be administered, but this is often ineffective, serving only to alienate the children still more from family and home.

Other differences between high-rate and low-rate areas in Chicago are to be seen in the nature of the existing community organization. Thomas and Znaniecki have analyzed the effectively organized community in terms of the presence of social opinion with regard to problems of common interest, identical or at least consistent with reference to these problems, the ability to reach approximate unanimity on the question of how a problem should be dealt with, and the ability to carry this solution into action through harmonious co-operation.

Such practical unanimity of opinion and action does exist, on many questions, in areas where the rates of delinquents are low. But, in the high-rate areas, the very presence of conflicting systems of values operates against such unanimity. Other factors

---


DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL VALUES

hindering the development of consistently effective attitudes with reference to these problems of public welfare are the poverty of these high-rate areas, the wide diversity of cultural backgrounds represented there, and the fact that the outward movement of population in a city like Chicago has resulted in the organization of life in terms of ultimate residence. Even though frustrated in his attempts to achieve economic security and to move into other areas, the immigrant, living in areas of first settlement, often has defined his goals in terms of the better residential community into which he hopes some day to move. Accordingly, the immediate problems of his present neighborhood may not be of great concern to him.

Another characteristic of the areas with high rates of delinquents is the presence of large numbers of nonindigenous philanthropic agencies and institutions—social settlements, boys' clubs, and similar agencies—established to deal with local problems. These are, of course, financed largely from outside the area. They are also controlled and staffed, in most cases, by persons other than local residents and should be distinguished from indigenous organizations and institutions growing out of the felt needs of the local citizens. The latter organizations, which include American institutions, Old World institutions, or a synthesis of the two, are rooted in each case in the sentiments and traditions of the people. The nonindigenous agencies, while they may furnish many services and be widely used, seldom become the people's institutions, because they are not outgrowths of the local collective life. The very fact that these nonindigenous private agencies long have been concentrated in delinquency areas without modifying appreciably the marked disproportion of delinquents concentrated there suggests a limited effectiveness in deterring boys from careers in delinquency and crime.  

Tax-supported public institutions such as parks, schools, and playgrounds are also found in high-rate, as well as in low-rate, areas. These, too, are usually controlled and administered from

---

8 Rates of private character-building institutions (representing the number of social settlements, boys' clubs, and Y.M.C.A.'s per 10,000 boys 10-16 years of age) decrease from Zones I to V as follows: 22, 10, 20, 7, 3, 2.3, 1.5.
without the local area; and, together with other institutions, they represent to the neighborhood the standards of the larger community. However, they may be actually quite different institutions in different parts of the city, depending on their meaning and the attitudes of the people toward them. If the school or playground adopts its program in any way to local needs and interests, with the support of local sentiment, it becomes a functioning part of the community; but, instead, it is often relatively isolated from the people of the area, if not in conflict with them. High rates of truants in the inner-city areas may be regarded as an indication of this separation.

These more subtle differences between contrasting types of areas are not assumed to be wholly distinct from the differences presented in quantitative form in earlier chapters. They are, no doubt, products or by-products of the same processes of growth which physically differentiate city areas and segregate the population on an economic basis. This economic segregation in itself, as has been said, does not furnish an explanation for delinquency. Negative cases are too numerous to permit such a conclusion. But in the areas of lowest economic status and least vocational opportunity a special setting is created in which the development of a system of values embodied in a social, economic, and prestige system in conflict with conventional values is not only a probability but an actuality.

The general theoretical framework within which all community data are interpreted will be fully stated in the concluding chapter. Briefly summarized, it is assumed that the differentiation of areas and the segregation of population within the city have resulted in wide variation of opportunities in the struggle for position within our social order. The groups in the areas of lowest economic status find themselves at a disadvantage in the struggle to achieve the goals idealized in our civilization. These differences are translated into conduct through the general struggle for those economic symbols which signify a desirable position in the larger social order. Those persons who occupy a disadvantaged position are involved in a conflict between the goals assumed to be attainable in a free society and those actually attainable for a large propor-

DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL VALUES

...tion of the population. It is understandable, then, that the economic position of persons living in the areas of least opportunity should be translated at times into unconventional conduct, in an effort to reconcile the idealized status and the practical prospects of attaining this status. Since, in our culture, status is determined largely in economic terms, the differences between contrasted areas in terms of economic status become the most important differences. Similarly, as might be expected, crimes against property are most numerous.

The physical, economic, and social conditions associated with high rates of delinquents in local communities occupied by white population exist in exaggerated form in most of the Negro areas. Of all the population groups in the city, the Negro people occupy the most disadvantaged position in relation to the distribution of economic and social values. Their efforts to achieve a more satisfactory and advantageous position in the economic and social life of the city are seriously thwarted by many restrictions with respect to residence, employment, education, and social and cultural pursuits. These restrictions have contributed to the development of conditions within the local community conducive to an unusually large volume of delinquency.

The problems of education, training, and control of children and youth are further complicated by the economic, social, and cultural dislocations that have taken place as a result of the transition from the relatively simple economy of the South to the complicated industrial organization of the large northern city. The effect of this transition upon social institutions, particularly the family, has been set forth in great detail in the penetrating studies of E. Franklin Frazier. In this connection he states:

During and following the World War, the urbanization of the Negro population was accelerated and acquired even greater significance than earlier migration to cities. The Negro was carried beyond the small southern cities and plunged into the midst of modern industrial centers in the North. Except for the war period, when there was a great demand for his labor, the migration of the Negro to northern cities has forced him into a much more rigorous type of competition with whites than he has ever faced. Because of his rural background and ignorance, he has entered modern industry as a part of the great army of unskilled workers. Like the immigrant groups that
have preceded him, he has been forced to live in the slum areas of northern cities. In vain social workers and others have constantly held conferences on the housing conditions of Negroes, but they have been forced finally to face the fundamental fact of the Negro’s poverty. Likewise, social and welfare agencies have been unable to stem the tide of family disorganization that has followed as a natural consequence of the impact of modern civilization upon the followings and mores of a simple peasant folk. Even Negro families with traditions of stable family life have been not unaffected by the social and economic forces in urban communities. Family traditions and social distinctions that had meaning and significance in the relatively simple and stable southern communities have lost their meaning in the new world of the modern city.

One of the most important consequences of the urbanisation of the Negro has been the rapid occupational differentiation of the population. A Negro middle class has come into existence as the result of new opportunities and greater freedom as well as the new demands of the awakened Negro communities for all kinds of services. This change in the structure of Negro life has been rapid and has not had time to solidify. The old established families, generally of mulatto origin, have looked with contempt upon the new middle class which has come into prominence as the result of successful competition in the new environment. With some truth on their side, they have complained that these newcomers lack the culture, stability in family life, and purity of morals which characterized their own class when it graced the social pyramid. In fact, there has been insufficient time for these new strata to form definite patterns of family life. Consequently, there is much confusion and conflict in ideals and aims and patterns of behavior which have been taken over as the result of the various types of suggestion and imitation in the urban environment.4

The development of divergent systems of values requires a type of situation in which traditional conventional control is either weak or nonexistent. It is a well-known fact that the growth of cities and the increase in devices for transportation and communication have so accelerated the rate of change in our society that the traditional means of social control, effective in primitive society and in isolated rural communities, have been weakened everywhere and rendered especially ineffective in large cities. Moreover, the city, with its anonymity, its emphasis on economic rather than personal values, and its freedom and tolerance, furnishes a favorable situation for the development of devices to im-

prove one’s status, outside of the conventionally accepted and approved methods. This tendency is stimulated by the fact that the wide range of secondary social contacts in modern life operates to multiply the wishes of individuals. The automobile, motion pictures, magazine and newspaper advertising, the radio, and other means of communication flaunt luxury standards before all, creating or helping to create desires which often cannot be satisfied with the meager facilities available to families in areas of low economic status. The urge to satisfy the wishes and desires so created has helped to bring into existence and to perpetuate the existing system of criminal activities.

It is recognized that in a free society the struggle to improve one’s status in terms of accepted values is common to all persons in all social strata. And it is a well-known fact that attempts are made by some persons in all economic classes to improve their positions by violating the rules and laws designed to regulate economic activity.4 However, it is assumed that these violations with reference to property are most frequent where the prospect of thus enhancing one’s social status outweighs the chances for loss of position and prestige in the competitive struggle. It is in this connection that the existence of a system of values supporting criminal behavior becomes important as a factor in shaping individual life-patterns, since it is only where such a system exists that the person through criminal activity may acquire the material goods so essential to status in our society and at the same time increase rather than lose, his prestige in the smaller group system of which he has become an integral part.