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## Rural delinquency ; an empirical investigation of delinquency in a rural county, with an attempt at a typology of delinquency

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RURAL DELINQUENCY  
AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF  
DELINQUENCY IN A RURAL COUNTY  
WITH AN ATTEMPT AT  
A TYPOLOGY OF DELINQUENCY

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A THESIS  
PRESENTED TO  
THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
COLLEGE OF THE PACIFIC

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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by  
William Bates  
September, 1955

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## INTRODUCTION

Almost from the inception of American sociology, there has been serious work done in the investigation of juvenile delinquency. This can be seen, perhaps, most clearly in the work of the men of the Chicago school, such as W. I. Thomas,<sup>1</sup> Clifford Shaw,<sup>2</sup> Frederick Thrasher,<sup>3</sup> and so on. From the work of Shaw, there arose a serious emphasis upon the interrelationship of the physical environment and delinquency. He tried to show that delinquency was a function of the urban environment. But he, and most of the other workers in the field, was working in an almost completely urban research field. There has been, in fact, little attempt to investigate the field of rural delinquency from the aspect of sociology. As a result of this, the work done by sociologists has been chiefly concerned with that type of delinquency which has been associated with the urban environment.

In recent time, much of the impetus for research in delinquency has passed from the hands of the sociologist into that of the psychologist. In this type of research

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas, W. I., The Unadjusted Girl, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1923.

<sup>2</sup>Shaw, Clifford, The Jack Roller, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930.

<sup>3</sup>Thrasher, Frederick, The Gang, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927.



should be included the work of men like Fritz Redl,<sup>4</sup> Carl Rogers,<sup>5</sup> and David Abrahamsen.<sup>6</sup>

Following the psychological studies, has come the interdisciplinary studies such as the Cambridge-Somerville<sup>7</sup> and Glueck and Glueck works.<sup>8</sup> Just recently there appeared also the peculiar physiological psychiatric work of Sheldon.<sup>9</sup> But all these works have dealt almost exclusively with urban youth, even the work of men like Kvaraceus<sup>10</sup> who came from the field of education.

Because of this heavy emphasis of research on urban delinquency, and the consequent lack of literature in the field of rural delinquency, some of the writers in the field of social disorganization have inferred that delinquency is

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<sup>4</sup>Redl, Fritz and Wineman, David, Controls from Within, Glencoe, Free Press, 1952.

<sup>5</sup>Rogers, Carl, The Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1939.

<sup>6</sup>Abrahamsen, David, Crime and the Human Mind, New York: Columbia University Press, 1942.

<sup>7</sup>Powers, Edwin and Witmer, Helen, An Experiment in the Prevention of Delinquency, New York: Columbia University Press, 1951.

<sup>8</sup>Glueck, Sheldon and Glueck, Eleanor, One Thousand Juvenile Delinquents, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950.

<sup>9</sup>Sheldon, William H., Varieties of Delinquent Youth, New York: Harpers and Brothers, 1949.

<sup>10</sup>Kvaraceus, William C., Juvenile Delinquency and the School, Yonkers, N. Y.: World Book Co., 1945; The Community & the Delinquent, Yonkers, N. Y.: World Book Co., 1954.



an urban problem.<sup>11</sup> Leaving the impression that it is simply an urban one, and not a rural problem also, they have directed attention away from the study of rural delinquency.

It might also be pointed out, in passing, that the text-books on rural sociology give little attention to the study of delinquency in rural areas. Thus, they also tend to perpetuate this notion that delinquency is an urban problem and not a rural one. In general, when they do discuss delinquency and crime, they point out that the incidence of delinquency is less in rural areas than in urban, but they do not attempt to analyze the delinquency that does exist.<sup>12</sup>

For these reasons, then, this paper will attempt to do three things. From the very existence of a study on rural delinquency, an attempt will be made to direct attention to the existence of rural delinquency and to reawaken study in this field. Secondly, a typology of delinquency will be delineated which will attempt to link the field of juvenile

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<sup>11</sup>Cnf. Elliott, Mabel A. and Merrill, Francis, Social Disorganization, New York: Harpers and Brothers, 1950, p. 89. Cnf. also Faris, Robert E., Social Disorganization, New York, The Ronald Press, 1955.

<sup>12</sup>Cnf. for example, Landis, P. H., Rural Life in Process, New York: McGraw Hill, 1948, pp. 114 - 155; also Kolb, J. H. and Brunner, E. De. S., A Study of Rural Society, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1940.

Some do not even mention delinquency, e. g., Holmes, Roy H., Rural Sociology, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1932. Nelson, Lowry, American Farm Life, Cambridge, Mass.: Howard University Press, 1954.

delinquency with the field of social theory. Finally, certain specific hypotheses about rural delinquency will be drawn from this theoretical framework and will be tested by a specific study in the area involved.



## CHAPTER I

### TOWARD A SOCIOLOGICAL TYPOLOGY

One result of the intense emphasis of research on urban delinquency, has been the masking of delinquency types by a predominance of the special products of urban environmental conditions. But a typology of some sort must be constructed if one is to investigate delinquency in a meaningful manner. Even before such a typology can be constructed, however, it is necessary that a definition of delinquency be found which has some sociological relevance.

If delinquency is defined merely as any action performed by a minor which is adjudged delinquency by the court, or could so be judged, the notion of delinquency seems unrewarding to investigate from a sociologically relevant conceptual framework. It actually becomes a special aspect of the sociology of law or of government, rather than that of the field of social disorganization. On the other hand, if one takes a broad psychological definition, such as delinquency is that type of behavior which indicates lack of adjustment on the part of the child, then the field is immediately expanded to a point where it is almost impossible to handle. The meaning is almost gone because of the broadness of the definition. For example, when a child screams to get his own will, or when a child



is "un-housebroken" at the age of five, such action is socially unacceptable, but it is scarcely delinquency.

For the purpose of this paper, delinquency will be defined in a manner which will not be strictly legalistic or strictly psychological, but rather will fit into the general framework of a theory of personality development and societal organization. Thus, for the rest of this paper, delinquency will be defined to mean:

All behavior of persons who have entered the age of social living (circa 8) and have not attained majority, (18 to 20) which is considered sufficiently injurious to the greater society, to be corrected by some agency of the greater society when it is known.

This definition involves three basic elements. First of these elements in the order of importance, is that of the greater society. This concept is to be taken to be the society as a whole. In any community studied, the totality of the community will be taken as the greater society. It will be the largest societal group which is a reference group for the study. This is opposed to a lesser society, which is any large number of people in the community smaller than the totality who identify themselves, or are identified by others, as belonging to a recognizable group within the greater society. These concepts and related ones will be further clarified later on.

The second element of importance is the age limitation. That is, delinquency has been defined as action of



those persons only who are not considered entirely competent or entirely trained in the eyes of the greater society to which they belong, even though the lesser society may consider them such. Thus, frequently, first generation foreign-born groups will consider a boy or girl of fourteen a man or woman. However, our society as a whole does not. On the other hand, one must be old enough to have the greater society consider one at least partially capable of socially-meaningful activity. Thus, an infant playing with a gun, who accidentally discharges it and kills someone, is not considered responsible for the action in any society with which the writer is acquainted.

The third important element, is that of greater societal action. An action is considered delinquent only when the greater society would consider it necessary to take some type of corrective action by one of its own agencies when the activity is known. This definition, then, eliminates from delinquency, those actions which are technically violations of law, but which the formal agencies of societal control do not attempt to correct, and public opinion does not say they should. Thus, if a policeman attempted to enforce the provisions of the Welfare and Institutions Code which make a child delinquent who habituates poolhalls and smokes tobacco, he would be considered as acting without prudence.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cnf. California Welfare and Institutions Code,



Note, however, that this definition would include violations of unwritten laws in primitive societies, such as would call for some action by a person other than the parents, when such a person would be acting in the name of the community.

Before developing the typology of delinquency, it will be necessary here to define some terminology which will be used in making the framework for the typology. It was noted above that the greater society is used to mean the totality of the people in any given community. The greater society will be the totality which is taken from the frame of reference for any given study and which, for the purpose of the study, does not look to any larger group for institutional definitions. Thus, in the civilized community, the greater society could be the nation, and the agency of the greater society will be an agency of government. The formality of serious deviant behavior will normally be defined either specifically or generically by law.

The lesser society is any group smaller than the greater society which has its own institutions differing from the institutional definitions of the greater society.

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Division 2, Part 1, Chapter 2, section 700 (g) who habitually visits without parents or guardian, a public billiard room or public poolroom, or a saloon, or a place where any spirituous, vinous or malt liquors are sold; bartered, exchanged or given away. (h) Who habitually . . . . . smokes cigarettes . . . .



It is to be definitely noted, that the use of the terms greater society and lesser society is not intended to denote value judgments. It merely notes relative size or importance in the community under study. It should also be noted here that the lesser society may look to another place where it will be the greater society. For example, the Mexican society, which is a lesser society in the United States, looks to Mexico.

When a small group of people coming from a lesser society find themselves in conflict with the greater society, because of situational definitions which were learned in the lesser society and are not appropriate for the greater society, and when because of this conflict they develop situational definitions which are not accepted by either the greater society or the lesser society, then they will be called a sub-society.

For the purposes of this study, society will be taken to mean the persons constituting a group, as given in the above paragraphs. The term culture, will be used to mean the totality of the behavioral complexes accepted by the group. This is merely a special way of writing the usual definition of culture, which Kluckhohn, e.g., defines as

"A distinctive way of life of a group of people, their complete design of living."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Kluckhohn, Clyde, "The Study of Culture" in Daniel



In this context, then, the phrase "greater culture" will indicate the totality of the accepted behavior of the greater society, and "lesser culture" and "sub-culture" will indicate the totality of the accepted behavior of the lesser society and the sub-society, respectively.

With these definitions, then, it is possible to proceed immediately to the typology of delinquency. The four delinquency types which will be here defined, always understanding that this typology is tentative and may require further classes, is as follows:

1. the asocialized delinquent
2. the lesser-culturally socialized delinquent
3. the sub-culturally socialized delinquent
4. the accidental delinquent.

The ASOCIALIZED DELINQUENT. In any delinquent behavioral pattern where the operating factor is that of stasis, the delinquent pattern will be called that of asocialization. By stasis is meant any interference with the normal process of socialization in the psychological, rather than the social sphere. In the framework of the social psychology of Mead, for example, this would be a person whose socialization, whose self, has only progressed

to the first stage. This will include the person whose personality has suffered a turning toward malevolence, to use the very heuristic concept of H. S. Sullivan. It will include those persons classified by psychologists as sociopathic or suffering from a "primary behavior disorder." In the framework of sociology, it is a category which will contain all delinquency which is psychogenic.

The LESSER-CULTURALLY SOCIALIZED DELINQUENT. Any delinquent whose behavior is defined by the greater society as delinquent, but is not defined as delinquent by the lesser society from which he came, will be called a lesser-culturally socialized delinquent. For convenience's sake, this will be abbreviated to that of "lesser cultural delinquent."

At first glance this type of delinquency may seem impossible. Actually, however, this is a type of delinquency rather frequently met. Thus, in Laytonville where this writer taught school, some of the fifteen and sixteen year-old boys were taken by their fathers on their drinking sprees. The local culture did not define this activity as delinquent. The greater society does define it as delinquent. Hence, had the juvenile court law been enforced in the area, any of these youths and their parents would have been subject to court action. There are many other areas of intercultural conflicts which could be mentioned here. They include definitions of the wrongness of the fish and game violations



which the Indians simply laugh at; the necessity for obeying the school attendance laws which many lesser societies do not accept; and the importance of our traffic code, which large numbers of our juveniles learn to disobey from the activities of their parents.

This brief section clearly shows, then, that areas of conflict do exist, so that it is possible for a child to be delinquent within the framework of the greater society, without being so considered within the framework of the society which actually socialized him.

The SUBCULTURALLY SOCIALIZED DELINQUENT. Any delinquent whose behavior is considered delinquent by the greater society and also by the lesser society from which he arose, but is not considered delinquent by the small group with which he identified, will be considered a sub-culturally socialized delinquent. This term will be shortened to subcultural delinquent or gang delinquent for the remainder of this paper.

Here it may be well to pause and consider briefly the etiology of these sub-cultures and sub-societies. It is thought that these groupings arise in the areas of conflict between the greater culture and the lesser culture. Although it is true that the American culture is a very general abstraction, and is made up of several distinct cultural types, nevertheless, there are certain group



standards that are clearly recognizable as American. The first and most evident aspect of American culture is the use of the American language. This is the language which comes from England, but differs now from the language of that country both in syntax and semantics. There are certain minimal common cultural ideals, such as honor of the flag and country, the notion of progress, and so forth. There are also the instruments of cultural transmission; the school, the radio, the movies, and so forth.

Actually, however, our culture is multiple. There is a basic quadruple forking along religious lines giving us a secular culture, pretty much derived from Protestant Christianity, and maintaining many of its values; a Protestant culture, which is the culture usually considered American by persons seeking to define the religious background of the culture; a Catholic culture, represented by the people coming from the later immigrant stock, chiefly of "non-Nordic" types; and a small but definitely influential Jewish culture.

Each of these cultures has its own folk-lore and looks to various places and times for its ideal forms. To further complicate this picture, we also have many national cultures which contain conflicting ideas and ideals of behavior and different value systems.

Because of the polycultural society, the possibility



exists that persons coming into this culture will be confused. The process, although by no means clearly restricted to the foreign-language speaking groups, can be most clearly illustrated in this group. When a child is born into a Mexican family in the Los Angeles area, where the language in the home is Spanish, and where the customs of the family are also those of Mexico, the child is in a peculiar position. He is reared at home in an essentially Mexican culture. When, however, the child enters school, he is exposed to a world completely different from his own. The language is different, the customs are different, the very ideas are different. Hence, the child of necessity is confused. He cannot learn to read "this is the dog" because "dog" does not mean anything to him. The pictures of the farms and the animals, and even the cottages of the city are things which he has never experienced. Hence, the reading is not a problem of learning the association of words and symbols which stand for words. Rather, it is the problem of learning the meaning of the new and strange words whose ideas are not the ideas of the world of the child.

Now it can happen that the child, especially the more gifted one, is entranced with the new world which he sees around him. As a result of this, he struggles with all his might to identify with this new world and become a part of it. If the parents are not too strongly opposed



to this movement on the part of the child, he may become integrated into the greater cultural pattern with little or no conflict except that caused by discrimination.

There is, however, another reaction possible. The confusion which the child experiences from the conflict with the home and the school may lead him to reject both, and make an unconscious synthesis of his own. Because of this confusion and lack of acceptance in either cultural group, the child will be somewhat lost and at loose ends. Now note that in this process we are postulating a home which will supply the minimal psychological and social needs so that the child will not develop in a neurotic manner or tend to become a psychopath.

If this child meets with other children of his own type during this period of confusion, it is possible that these children may form a relatively formal grouping. They may develop their own language, type of clothing and general patterns of activity which are accepted neither by the lesser culture, which gave them their early socialization, nor by the greater culture which is attempting to complete the process in the schools.

It should be evident that the process we are here attempting to delineate is not the usual pre-adolescent or adolescent closing-out of adults from their lives. Rather, it is a strictly sub-cultural socialization process by which



through a closed, small-group interaction process, a new culture is being developed, distinct from the old cultures from which they sprung, but containing elements of them.<sup>15</sup>

Although the early phases are similar to those of the ordinary pre-adolescent gang, the isophilic stage of development of H. S. Sullivan, it does not develop in the usual fashion, with the gang breaking up at the age when the adolescent usually starts his hetero-sexual development. Just the opposite; the group keeps together at the age when it would normally be breaking up. There is a type of stasis at the end of the gang-age. But this does not mean that the hetero-sexual adjustment does not take place. It does not mean that the gang is homosexual. What frequently happens is that this gang itself is the group which operates in the formation of the sexual life of its members. Thus, the "gang-bang" or some modifications of it may be the norm for the members for inter-sexual relations. The normal breaking-up of the pre-adolescent close dyads and triads which form the gang nuclei when the hetero-sexual interests start to arise, does not take place. The groupings continue past their normal break-up time; they give a sense of belonging to their members who are, at least in

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<sup>15</sup>This process is well described by Cohen, Albert, Delinquent Boys, The Culture of the Gang, Glencoe: Free Press, 1955. This is the best accounting of gang-formation available.



their own eyes, rejected by members of the two societies.<sup>16</sup>

It is, then, this sub-cultural delinquency which has, in one form or another, become known both in sociological circles and newspaper circles as gang delinquency. And it is this form of delinquency which is frequently considered when one is discussing delinquency. Also, the prevalence of this type of delinquency in urban areas tends to mask the recognition of other types.

The ACCIDENTAL DELINQUENT. The fourth type of delinquency considered is that of the accidental delinquent. It is the person whose behavior in a given instance is not that approved of by society, but whose general behavioral pattern is acceptable. Here will also be included those youths who are caught in sexual delinquencies which are common in adolescent society, but which are not strictly forbidden by the greater society as long as the activity is not too public. After all, most persons acquainted with adolescent behavior know that a large number of the adolescents are engaged in a rather active sexual life

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<sup>16</sup>This material is a digest of the notions on development presented by Harry Stack Sullivan, The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry, New York: W. W. Norton, 1955. In Chapter XVI, Preadolescence, he considers the pre-adolescent gang or group; in XVII, Early Adolescence, he discusses the break-up of the gang following puberty; Stolz, Herbert R. and Stolz, Louis Meek, Somatic Development of Adolescent Boys, New York: Macmillan Co., 1951, show that this occurs at about the middle of the fourteenth year.



which starts between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. As long as pregnancy does not result, and as long as the activity is kept fairly discreet, the greater society and its agencies do not attempt to interfere. After all, such activity is even in the folk-lore.

From this typology, then, it is possible to draw some hypotheses for testing in a specific situation, each of which will be more formally treated in turn later in the paper. These general hypotheses are as follows:

1. Delinquency will be related to the heterogeneity of the society in which it occurs.
2. The age when delinquency will most probably occur will be the age when the child comes into the most formal conflict with the greater society; In our society this will be at the entrance into the ninth grade, or at the nearest school-break to it. Thus, in a society with an 8 - 4 school system, the big jump in delinquency will occur for those who have completed the eighth grade. In a system with a 6 - 3 - 3 plan, the first big jump will be at the completion of the sixth grade, with another following the completion of the ninth.
3. From this conceptual framework, urbanization will make it possible for the sub-cultural delinquent to form; The more persons and the more varieties of conflicting cultures in the area, the more probable will be the

formation of this type of delinquency. However, the lesser-cultural delinquent will be present wherever there is a lesser culture which defines as acceptable, behavior which is not so considered by the greater society of the community. The accidental delinquent and the asocialized delinquent will be present wherever, and as long as, human beings are human beings. Hence, these types of delinquents will be expected in any area, without reference to urbanization, although with the increase of tensions from urban living and with the increase of opportunities or temptations, their number may increase somewhat in urban areas. This means, then, that delinquency is to be expected in rural areas, which will give, as it were, the bottom limit to incidence of delinquency, if urban and rural is the reference.



## CHAPTER II

### INCIDENCE OF RURAL DELINQUENCY

Before continuing with this paper, it might be well to pause here and examine the third statement in the preceding section, namely, that there is delinquency in the rural areas, and that it forms, as it were, a bottom limit to the incidence of delinquency. A group of fifteen counties, chosen at random from the state, have here been listed with the percentage of urban population, ranging from 96.5% to 0%. The delinquency rate and rank order for delinquency rate of each county has also been listed. This rate was computed by dividing the number of arrests of minors for the year 1950 by the number of persons between the ages of 10 and 19, as given by the census of 1950.

<u>County</u>	<u>% Urban</u>	<u>Delinquency Rate</u>	<u>Rank Order</u>
Los Angeles	97.5	8.6	6
Alameda	94.7	10.1	2
Santa Clara	74.3	6.5	7
Orange	67.6	6.4	8
San Bernardino	66.4	11.4	1
Riverside	57.6	10.2	3
Monterey	54.4	8.5	5
Imperial	49.1	5.9	9
Butte	41.9	8.4	4
Madera	38.8	4.4	11
Merced	31.5	5.3	10
Sutter	30.0	4.0	13
Siskiyou	19.4	4.1	12
Lake	0	3.2	14

This table rather clearly shows that there seems to be a minimum incidence of delinquency, even though the rate of urbanization is nil.

Furthermore, and as a consequence, it shows that there certainly is rural delinquency. Thus, if it is of consequence to study delinquency, it certainly is of consequence to study rural delinquency, since it does exist, and is part of the total picture of delinquency.



## CHAPTER III

### DELINQUENCY IN SHASTA COUNTY

Following the general theoretical framework which was outlined in the first part of this paper, the remainder of the paper will consist in an analysis of the youths brought to the attention of the Probation Officer of Shasta County for the two years 1952 - 1954. From the general conclusions on pages fourteen and fifteen, specific hypotheses will be drawn which pertain to the area under consideration, and they will be tested as far as possible from the data available.

Shasta County has an area of 3,853 square miles, with a population of approximately 46,100. This comes, roughly, to about twelve persons per square mile. However, of this total population, 12,000 live in the county seat, Redding. There is no incorporated town in the entire county, except the county seat itself. With the same exception, there is no area large enough to be considered urban by census standards.

Like the rest of California, this area has seen some rapid growth. The following figures will give some idea of the rapidity and fluctuation.

1930	-	14,000
1940	-	28,000
1942	-	34,000
1945	-	25,000
1950	-	35,000
1953	-	39,400
1955	-	46,100

It will be noted from this table, that the county lost population from 1942 to 1945. This period of rapid growth and equally rapid loss within a short period is due in large part to the tremendous Federal construction project, Shasta Dam, which was completed at this time. Despite the fluctuation caused by the dam, in the twenty-five year period from 1930 to 1955, the county had almost a 350 per cent increase. This was not entirely concentrated in the county seat, but was spread through the county, chiefly in the centers of Project City and Central Valley, the boom towns north of Redding which had housed the dam builders, and which almost vanished following the completion of the dam: Anderson, a residential and farming area, seat of the district fair south of Redding; and the Burney area east of Redding. None of these areas, however, are concentrated or large enough to be considered urban by any standard.

From this knowledge of the county and the general hypotheses of the first part of this paper, the following specific hypotheses will be drawn:

1. Since type-three delinquency--the gang delinquen-



cy can only arise where there is a relatively crowded population, there will be little if any sub-cultural delinquency.

2. Since the county has grown rapidly, and many of the persons have come from quite different areas, delinquency of type two will be present, together with one and four.

3. Since the school system at that time was on the 8 - 4 plan, the big break in delinquency rates will occur at the completion of the eighth grade. Or, conversely, there will be relatively few delinquents from grades lower than nine.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE SUB-CULTURAL DELINQUENT

It will be noted that in the previous part of this paper, the sub-cultural groups were said to exist only where there is a rather serious difference between the greater culture and the lesser culture. In rural areas, this situation does not seem to arise. It is possible for the developing youth to miss many of the pressures present on the urban youth because of the space in which he can move. The impact of the greater culture is not so strong upon the individual, and it cannot impress its demands so continuously simply because of the distance between persons.

Also, because of this factor of space, it is quite difficult for youths to be in sufficiently intimate contact to develop a sub-culture among themselves. For this to develop, it is necessary that there be rather constant contact for relatively long periods of time. Furthermore, there seems to be less enclave groups in the rural areas, so that it is not easy for a large number of youths from a single or small number of lesser cultures to come together. Hence, sub-cultures groups should be a rarity in rural areas.

This is the theoretical or deductive conclusions



drawn from the conceptual framework. How is it supported by the empirical data? From the examination of the records of the persons brought to the attention of the Probation Officer in Shasta County for a two-year period, there is no record of gang activity. Furthermore, when this matter was discussed with the Sheriff, the Under-Sheriff, the Chief of Police of Redding and his Captain, these men were in complete agreement with the Probation Officer and her Deputy, in saying there were no indications that any formal post-adolescent gangs were in operation.

Here it might be helpful to consider some peripheral information about rural gangs. When this writer first came into the field as a rural parole officer, he had had three years teaching experience in the Los Angeles area, during which time he had also been active in youth work among the Mexicans in the area. He also had had a year and a half experience working as a supervisor at Preston School of Industry, one of California's Correctional schools. From these two experiences, he was rather sure that delinquency was a problem of learned behavior, coming essentially from the delinquent primary group; In other words, that it was chiefly a gang phenomenon.

From systematic questioning of sheriffs, chiefs of police and probation officers, together with such school persons as he came into contact with, he was surprised to

find that there was no evidence of gang activity of this nature in the area. However, this could mean that such groups existed, but were not recognized by the authorities. After all, it is a recognized fact that the world of the adolescent is not the world of the adult. Furthermore, the adolescent does his best to remove the adult from this world. Moreover, such activities would only come to the attention of the authorities by some spectacular outbreak of violence or other criminal activity.

Three incidents, however, led the writer to reject the idea that these gangs were present but not recognized. The first incident occurred in Susanville. The writer had placed a fourteen-year old boy, who had been in a Youth Authority facility, in a foster-home in town. Within two months he was teletyped by the probation officer, that the boy was on his way back to the Youth Authority in Sacramento. The county officials would not have the boy in the area since he had attempted to form a gang of the type he had heard about when in the Youth Authority facility. Since this was something new to the students of the high-school, they listened to the boy, but when the proposals went beyond their own experiences, they let the school officials hear about it. The school reported it to the probation officer, who sent the boy back to the Youth Authority.



The second case happened in Chico. The probation officer here asked the writer for his assistance in a pending case. The Sheriff's office had apprehended a young girl (15 years old) on a charge of petty theft. With further investigation it was discovered that she had organized, or attempted to organize, a real gang on the model of one with which she had become acquainted in Alameda, whence she had come. Attempting to overawe and impress the other youngsters, she engaged in a spree of burglary and shoplifting until caught. The entire history of the group she was trying to organize was scarcely two weeks. When the other persons whom she mentioned were questioned, they said that they thought she was crazy. The children themselves rejected the leadership she attempted to bring to the group.

The third case occurred in Willows. A group of youngsters there engaged in a serious group of burglaries which aroused considerable attention from the authorities. This writer made the initial home investigations on these boys, and knows the cases about as well as any one does, who was not a member of the group. It is his opinion that the case was strictly one of accidental delinquency. When the boys were released on parole, they did not attempt to continue their association or show any need for further activities of that sort, which would be expected in the

case of subcultural delinquency.

In sum, then, it seems evident that hypothesis One has been maintained, since there was no trace of the class Three delinquencies.

It seems highly improbable that no evidence for such delinquency would be found should it exist. After all, it is found in great numbers in the more urban areas.



## CHAPTER V

### THE SCHOOL AND THE SHASTA COUNTY DELINQUENT

Earlier in this paper, the hypothesis was suggested that there would be a big jump in the delinquents from among those who finished the eighth grade. This was hypothesized because the difference between the lesser culture and the greater culture would be more serious in the high-school age group. That is, when the child would go from the elementary school, which is closely related to the home, to the more formal and remote secondary school, the impact of the greater culture is more direct and more immediately felt. The following table seems to substantiate this:

<u>Grade Completed</u>	<u>Number</u>
five or less	6
sixth	3
seventh	8
eighth	34
ninth	45
tenth	49
eleventh	24
high school graduate	21
not given	23

Now, it might be suggested that this merely corresponds to the developmental age of the child. That is, the delinquency is connected with the onset of puberty. But Stolz and Stolz<sup>12</sup> clearly show that the age of the onset of

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<sup>12</sup> Stolz and Stolz, op. cit., passim.

adolescence is between 11.8 and 12.7 years. That means that the incidence of delinquency should jump at about the completion of the sixth grade. This writer would hypothesize that such a jump would be found in a school system which runs 6 - 3 - 3. In this case, the impact of the greater society would increase at the seventh grade, rather than the ninth. Hence, the seventh grade youngsters should show the increase of delinquency. This could be tested without too much difficulty. However, at the present time, the material is not at hand to do such a test.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE ECOLOGY OF SHASTA COUNTY DELINQUENCY

Since the pressure of the greater culture will be more evident and more strongly felt in the urban area of the county, it seems to follow that the higher the concentration the greater will be the number of the delinquents; granted that the lesser societies are present in the community. For this reason, then, it seems logical to suppose that Redding will have a disproportionate number of delinquents. Furthermore, the areas of Central Valley and Anderson, even though they are in no sense urban, will have a larger number of delinquents than the rest of the county, since they tend to be areas of first settlement for persons intending to settle around Redding. As a result, then, they should be less stable and have a population, from that fact, whose adolescents will be less formed in the proper behavioral definitions accepted in the area.

With a total number of delinquents of 200, for whom residence is defined as in the county, Redding contributes 108, Central Valley 28, and Anderson 19. The rest of the county had 45 delinquents in all. But Redding, with half the delinquents, has only about a quarter of the population of the county. The entire



area which is defined as Central Valley and the entire area defined as Anderson have each a population of about 1,500 persons.

DISTRIBUTION OF DELINQUENCY IN SHASTA COUNTY

	<u>Delinquents</u>		<u>Population</u>	
Total	200	100%	46,100	100%
Redding	108	54	12,000	26.1
Central Valley	28	14	1,500	3.3
Anderson	19	10	1,500	3.3
Rest of County	45	22	35,000	67.3

That is, there are two areas which have been found to have a population representing about 6.7% of the population of the county, but having nearly 25% of the delinquents. The remainder of the county, with nearly 69% of the population, has actually only about 22% of the delinquents. That is, very clearly, a small proportion of the county contributes a very large number of the delinquents. This shows rather clearly that these three areas contribute delinquents in relation to their density of population; but those areas whose density is quite low still contribute some delinquents.



## CHAPTER VII

### FURTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF SHASTA COUNTY DELINQUENCY

Since it was suggested that delinquents will tend to come from the lesser-cultural groups, i.e., that the lesser societies will tend to produce the lesser-cultural delinquent, especially when the greater culture is not able to form the child in an effective manner, it could be deduced that the delinquents will come from the more mobile families, rather than from the stable families. The following figures tend to confirm this idea:

Born out of state	85
Born out of county	99
Born in the county	31

It will be seen that there are almost six times as many children born out of the county than in the county among the delinquents. This, of course, may merely reflect the total in-migrant child proportion. But of this number of native-born delinquents, twelve are Indians; who by definition come from a lesser culture. This leaves only 19 native-born non-Indian delinquents. This means that only one delinquent in about sixteen is a white person born in the county. It does not seem possible that this merely reflects the in-migration of the population. However, the ideas suggested here could be formulated into a formal

hypothesis and tested in a more formal manner. The actual hypothesis might be formulated in this manner:

In an area of in-migration, the in-migrants will have a significantly higher number of delinquents than will the group who are born in the area.

Were it possible to get the total number of youths born in the county in the ages covered by this study, the hypothesis could be tested. It might also be interesting to study the self-image of the in-migrant delinquent and that of the stable delinquent to discover if the process of moving itself contributes something to the formation of the delinquent behavioral pattern.

It might also be noted here that this phenomenon of in-migration, giving rise to large numbers of delinquents, is not a phenomenon which has been specifically noted in the general literature of delinquency. As noted above, the presence of the large number of sub-cultural delinquents in the urban areas where most of the research was done, may have actually masked this phenomenon.



## CHAPTER VIII

### FAMILY BACKGROUND

It is interesting to notice, also, the almost identical proportion of unbroken homes among the three groups. If the mere moving around itself would mean that the greater society would be unable to give its norms to the children, then the significance of broken homes among children of in-migrant families would not be as great as among those children who have not been moving. Or to put it another way. Since there is no factor of external instability (moving) to account for some of the child's problems, then one would expect internal instability in the form of broken family to be more prevalent. Actually, this notion does not stand up to an empirical test. The following table will show this clearly.

<u>Birthplace</u>	<u>Broken Homes</u>		<u>Unbroken Homes</u>
<u>Totals:</u>	213	116	97
Shasta County	29	15	14
In State	99	57	42
Out of State	85	44	41

$\chi^2$  value: 1.1  
df= 4

These figures show, then, that there is little difference between groups with respect to the number of children coming from broken homes. The suggestion was made that the native-born should come from the broken homes in greater proportion than the non-native. This is simply not upheld by the data here gathered.

The  $\chi^2$  value shows that there are more than eight chances out of ten that these differences are due to chance.



## SUMMARY

In the course of this paper several things have been attempted. First, it has been conclusively shown that delinquency is not just an urban problem. That is, delinquency is not found exclusively where there is large urban concentration. There is at least a certain minimum of incidence of delinquency in the rural areas which must be considered in any comprehensive approach to delinquency.

Secondly, it has been shown that delinquency in the rural areas is not simply a function of gangs. The small sub-cultural group called the "gang" simply does not seem to exist in rural areas. Furthermore, there has been no evidence uncovered which would substantiate the notion that a delinquent must learn his delinquency from contact with another; as certain theoretical frameworks for explaining delinquency would seem to demand.

Furthermore, it was shown that the delinquency increases enormously in the group entering high-school. It was suggested that this is due to the greater impact of the greater society upon the individual. The secondary school is more removed from the influence of the home and the small community in which the child is being reared.

It was further shown that a very small proportion of the delinquents--less than ten per cent--came from the

In-county, born white population, which further tended to confirm the notion that the delinquents came from the groups which were not closely integrated into the community life.

A final interesting fact was uncovered, and that was that the percentage of delinquents coming from broken homes did not vary greatly from one group to another. From this one might be tempted to infer that broken homes in themselves are not problems which adequately account for the delinquency of the groups.

In conclusion, this writer hopes that the conceptual framework here set up will make it possible for persons in the field of sociology to draw sociologically relevant hypotheses about delinquency which will be testable within a sociological framework. Furthermore, he hopes that the non-urban factors in delinquency will be investigated more thoroughly, since they can show much about the phenomenon that is masked by the peculiar factors present in the delinquency found in the large urban concentrations of population.



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