

THE NEGRO FAMILY IN THE UNITED STATES

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CHAPTER XVII

REBELLIOUS YOUTH

The disorganization of Negro family life in the urban environment, together with the absence of communal controls, results in a high delinquency rate among Negro boys and girls. However, among Negroes, as among whites, boys are much more frequently brought before the courts than girls. For example, in 1933 there were 9,864 Negro boys as compared with 1,803 Negro girls dealt with in delinquency cases disposed of by sixty-seven courts in the United States,¹ not including the 283 boys and 8 girls whose cases were disposed of by federal authorities.² Since the misconduct of Negro girls has been considered to some extent in connection with the problem of unmarried motherhood, our attention here will be directed mainly to the misconduct of Negro boys which may be dealt with under the law.³

Negro boys and girls are younger on the whole than the white boys and girls handled by the courts. In the sixty-seven courts for which we have records in 1933, 87 per cent of the Negro boys and 84 per cent of the Negro girls as compared with 79 per cent of the white boys and 69 per

¹ U. S. Department of Labor, *Juvenile Court Statistics and Federal Juvenile Offenders* (Children's Bureau Pub. 232 [Washington, 1936]), p. 29. Only 67 of the 255 courts reporting delinquency furnished information on color.

² *Ibid.*, p. 81.

³ As defined in the report of the Committee on Socially Handicapped-Delinquency, of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, "delinquency is any such juvenile misconduct as might be dealt with under the law" (*The Delinquent Child* [New York, 1932], p. 23).

cent of the white girls were under sixteen years of age.⁴ Moreover, available studies indicate that the rates of delinquency for both Negro boys and Negro girls are distinctly higher than for white boys and girls. For example, in New York City the Negro rate is about three times the white rate, while in Baltimore it is more than four times the white rate.⁵ Then, if we view the situation from the standpoint of the Negro alone, we find that in three southern cities—Richmond, Memphis, and Charleston—the proportion of Negro cases has been about one and a half times their relative numbers in the population of these cities, while in Indianapolis, Gary, and Dayton, the proportion has reached three or four times their relative numbers.⁶

It is difficult to detect any significant trend in juvenile delinquency among Negroes for the country as a whole. However, in certain localities one may find fairly definite indications that the rates have mounted or declined over a period of years.⁷ In the District of Columbia the rate has declined from 922 per 10,000 boys of juvenile court age in 1927 to 737 in 1933. During the same period the rate in Hudson County, New Jersey, declined from 698 to 263; and in Fulton County, Georgia, from 644 to 496 for the four years 1930-33. On the other hand, in Baltimore from 1930 to 1933 the rate rose from 672 to 962, and in New York City it leaped from 170 in 1927 to 342 in 1928 and remained close to the latter rate until 1933. But even the trends observable in the various cities throw little or no light on the

⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10; see also Sophia M. Robison, *Can Delinquency Be Measured?* (New York, 1936), pp. 62-64.

⁶ See T. J. Woolfer, Jr., *Negro Problems in Cities* (New York, 1928), p. 227.

⁷ U.S. Department of Labor, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

problem of Negro delinquency. In order to get an understanding of the problem, it is necessary to study the delinquent boy or girl in relation to his or her family and community setting.

The facts brought out in a study of Negro juvenile delinquency in Nashville, Tennessee, during recent years will enable us to get some understanding of the social factors which are responsible for delinquency in southern cities.⁸

TABLE 18

NUMBER OF NEGRO BOYS AND GIRLS BROUGHT BEFORE THE
JUVENILE COURT, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, 1925-29

	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929
Boys.....	210	169	186	200	176
Girls.....	98	96	95	84	68

During the period from 1925 to 1929, the number of Negro boys brought into the juvenile court in Nashville fluctuated considerably, whereas the number of Negro girls declined from 98 to 68 (see Table 18). The number of Negro delinquents brought to court during this period was only slightly in excess of their relative numbers in the population of the city.⁹ In 1929 about 70 per cent of the boys and 63 per cent of the girls were from twelve to fifteen years of age. Nearly a half of the boys were charged with stealing; whereas the majority of the girls were charged with incorrigibility and

⁸ The information on Nashville is taken from a Master's thesis written under the direction of the author (see Mary LaVerta Huff, "Juvenile Delinquency in Nashville" [Fisk University thesis (Nashville, Tenn., June, 1934)]).

⁹ However, in 1932 the number of delinquent boys increased to 324 and the number of girls to 83. This increase might have been due to the apprehension of more delinquents when the Negro probation force was enlarged.

disorderly conduct. It should be added that these Negro delinquents were apprehended as ordinary criminals and brought to court by the police much more frequently than the white delinquents.

The complaint of a deputy sheriff against a ten-year-old offender gives some notion of the demoralization of childhood represented in these delinquency cases:

This boy was brought in on a state warrant charging tipping and the boy admits that he sold a pint of whisky for the people for whom he was working, to some man he did not know, for \$1.50 and gave the money to the people for whom he worked. H. make an investigation of the boy's home and found conditions deplorable. The boy's mother does not live there but at the place where she works. The boy lives with a married sister whose home is filthy and unsanitary and an unfit place to live. The boy does not have supervision. He will not tell the truth and is badly in need of supervision.¹⁰

In the charges brought by police officers against a fifteen-year-old boy, who was sentenced to the Children's Detention Home for a year, one can see to what extent these homeless children in the slum areas of southern cities are subjected to all types of vicious influences:

The proof is that he, S. P., A. W., and two other men were all in one bed together on Sunday morning, March 3, and were engaged in lewdness. They admit they were guilty of lewdness. The boy is not going to school and has not been at home in weeks. He lives in this room where the officer caught all this lewdness at 7 A.M. The boy has heretofore been at the C.D.H. for larceny. He is delinquent and a truant.¹¹

But more often these boys are picked up for acts of theft ranging from petty stealing to burglaries. The record of a boy only eleven years of age charged with larceny states:

¹⁰ From court record.

¹¹ From court record.

The boy's father came in court and made complaint that the boy would not work or go to school but was stealing all around the neighborhood and was teaching the small boys with whom he associates to steal. His mother brought him to court this day and made the same complaint and both request that he be committed to the S.T.A. From the statements of both parents and after talking to the boy the court is satisfied that he is a truant and delinquent and is stealing.

Often these young lawbreakers are schooled in crime by older boys or men or even members of their families. This was evident in the case of the eight-year-old-boy charged with housebreaking and larceny:

Policeman B. found a raincoat and two pairs of shoes in the home of this boy and arrested him. The boy admits that he and his uncle C. B. went to the home of F. about 12 o'clock at night and the uncle took a watch and chain and the boy a raincoat and the shoes home with him. The boy says that they broke in the house. The boy's uncle got away and he does not know where he is.

Sometimes boys as young as eleven or twelve are apprehended as members of criminal gangs engaging regularly in housebreaking and thefts. The extreme youth of the boys caught in such delinquencies is indicative of the general lack of parental control among some elements of the Negro population. In the complaint of the aunt against her wayward twelve-year-old nephew we get a hint of the broken homes from which so many of these delinquents come:

This boy was brought into court by his aunt; she states that the boy's mother is dead, that his father does not provide for the boy, that she has reared him since he was one year old, that he will not work nor go to school and associates with bad company and she can no longer control him and wants the court to take the custody of him. She promises to clothe him.

In fact, only 67 of the 176 delinquent Negro boys brought into court in 1929 came from families in which both parents

were living together. In 37 other cases, although both parents were living, they were separated, chiefly because of the desertion of the father. Fifty-nine boys came from homes where either the mother or the father was dead; and 13 had both parents dead. The home situation was even worse in the case of the 68 delinquent girls; only 15 of them came from normal families.

The charge of incorrigibility against 50 of these girls involved five specific offenses: sex delinquency, truancy, ungovernability, running away, and continued association with vicious companions.¹² In 27 cases there was sex delinquency ranging from initial sex experiences to promiscuous relations and prostitution. Truancy, which was often associated with sex delinquency, was found in 23 cases. Although ungovernability was found as the sole offense in 7 cases, in 9 other cases it was associated with sex delinquency, truancy, and running away. Fourteen of the 15 girls who were charged with running away were most frequently guilty of sex offenses, while the 5 girls charged with association with vicious companions were generally guilty of the other four offenses. A view of the type of family background from which some of these girls come is given us in the following excerpt from the story given by a girl charged with incorrigibility:

I never want nor expect to return home again, never. I guess I haven't a home anyway. I asked my adopted father to never come out here to see me. He wouldn't get me any clothes then because I said I didn't want to see him. He said if I didn't want to see him I sure couldn't have any of his money or anything his money bought. When I left home to come here I told that woman he lived with that the last thing I intended to do was to poison both of them. I might change my mind though.

My own mother and father are dead. I liked my adopted father

¹² Huff, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

all right while my adopted mother was living. They were like real parents to me. When my adopted mother got sick and stayed for a while papa began running around with this woman that he is living with. One of my chums put me on to it. This woman lived next door to her and she used to see him going there. As soon as mama dies he took this woman in. It wasn't more than a week after mama died. I told him that he ought to be ashamed, and I said so much to him that he slapped me. He never had hit me before, and think, hit me about that hoar, I never would eat at the same table with them. After she came there to live I would leave for school at 6 o'clock in the morning, and I wouldn't come home until late at night. I hated to go home. I promised to poison both of them and they believed me. They tried to get Miss R. to put me in the C. D. Home a long time before she sent me. Miss R. said she didn't blame me for not wanting to stay around them. They would throw up to me about my real mother, that she had had four children and never been married. I never heard anything about this till this woman came.¹³

In some cases the delinquent behavior of these girls has not only been taken over from their parents or other adults but represents their response to what is held up to them as their expected role in life. A woman who called the probation officer for aid in managing her thirteen-year-old niece described the latter as follows:

But I know Mary. I ought to when I have had her every since she was five months old. I know I understand her. She is exactly like her mama. Her mama is my baby sister, but the truth is the truth. She had Mary when she was only 15 by an old nigger that didn't have a dime to his name. He run off and she never heard of him again after he got her in trouble. I kept her in my house until Mary was born, and treated her good and helped her with the baby. Then when Mary was five months old this gal ups and runs off with another nigger and I ain't laid eyes on her from that day to this. Mary has never seen her mama to remember. So this gal has just done like her mama. I understand alright.

¹³ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 61.

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This girl's aunt was reputed to have once been a prostitute and was known to be engaged at the time of the complaint in bootlegging. Her neighbors described her as "another whore" and claimed that she had forced her niece to "hustle" in order to get money for food and clothing.¹⁴

Occasionally, delinquency on the part of these girls is the result of the gradual breaking-down of standards that have been built up in the rural environment. This is shown in the following document, which was furnished by a seventeen-year-old girl.¹⁵ Moreover, this document is of particular interest because it shows that, although the girl's immediate family was broken by desertion on the part of the father, in the rural community the children were integrated into the larger family group. However, when the girl came to live in the urban environment, the absence of a normal family life became the means by which she was led into sex delinquency.

From the time that I can remember anything my mother and we children were living with our grandfather who had a farm out at ——— Tennessee. I was happy and so were my brothers I remember and sisters until grandpa would begin fussing. I remember how he used to fuss long before I remember what he would be saying. I would know that something made him mad. Soon my mother married again to a man who had pretty good money for a country farmer. Then mama moved away to a town about seven miles from us. All of us cried and begged her to take us but she wouldn't. She said grandpa and grandma had helped raise us up to where we was then and that we was just the size where we could be of help to them, and said that now we could help pay grandma and grandpa for the expenses they had been at for us. She said our father had never done anything for us. That was the first time I had heard her say anything about our father to remember. I guess when grandpa would be fussing he would be saying something about him, but I didn't know it. Anyhow I

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 77-79.

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red how he looked and asked grandma about him but she in't say much. But before I was much larger I tooked and asked ima about him and found out that papa quit my mama about months before my youngest brother was born and came here with another woman. This woman use to come to the house when mama and papa was living together and tried to be so nice to mama. Mama really didn't know that papa and this woman was going together.

Grandma said when one of mama friends told her about it she got mad at her. Not long after this papa pretended that his oldest brother was at the point of death in the city, and that he had to go at once. He didn't come back again until my baby brother had been born and was six years old. He didn't know papa and was scared of him like he would be of any other strange man. When my baby brother saw him he said "Oh there is Jimmy Holloman." He really didn't know papa. Then papa got mad about that. That night my brother had earache and was crying. Papa got mad about this and said that he needed a whipping for keeping up all that racket. Grandpa told him if he laid his hand on the child he would kill him dead. Papa left the next day and didn't come no more until grandpa had been dead a long time. Mama had married and we were all large children. He came to visit his sister and brother who lived at home. Folks use to say that I looked exactly like his sister, Aunt Molly. But Grandma didn't like that because she said that Aunt Molly was nothing but a slut. She was married but she had had ten children and wasn't but two of them her husband's. The other eight had stray daddies. We didn't know how to act toward him and none of us would call him papa. We would just begin talking and wouldn't call him anything. He stayed a month. He swore that he wasn't married but he got a lot of letters while he was there. He went to fishing one day and me and my sister went into his things and found some things that almost made both of us faint. We found first two letters from two children of his that he had in —— a little town not far from here. They were thanking him for sending them some stockings and other clothes. The oldest one of these children was a boy and we found out after we come here that this boy was almost as old as my youngest brother. The other was a girl. We couldn't speak for a while after we read these letters. There was a letter from their mama too. She said in that letter something I will never forget the longest day I

live about people calling her a fool for still being crazy about him but that as long as she was satisfied they could go to hell. My grandma and grandpa had said so many times that papa was nothing but a nasty, stinking, low down nigger, who was too lazy to work and take care of a family. I don't know why we ought to have been surprised to find out more of his dirt but we were. I dreaded for him to come back from fishing and hoped that he would soon go home. There he was sending this woman and those bastards things when he hadn't send us hardly \$20 worth the whole while that he had been away.

Later, the girl came to the city to live with her father and stepmother. Her story continues:

I hated so bad to live in the place in which they were living. It was an apartment flat with three families living up stairs and three downstairs. Brother said that he had heard that not a one of the couples was married. He didn't believe that papa was married to this woman either. They played cards all day Sunday. This made me sick because grandma had never allowed us to go to dances let alone play cards. I had to sleep in the same room with papa and his wife. Brother slept in a cot in the kitchen. There wasn't but two rooms. Papa and this woman would often wake us up in the night doing their business. I wouldn't let on that they woke me up. The springs would squeak and this woman wouldn't let that noise do but I could hear easy enough. This made me sick again I never had heard such at grandma's house and I looked down on that kind of stuff. My sister came and we just lived through it. Sister and I dreaded for night to come. We hated papa more and more.

The two sisters and their brother continued to go to church as they had done in the country. This caused their father to ridicule them about their "country" habits. Tension between the father and the children continued to become more acute until finally there was an open break in which the children engaged in a fist fight with their father. As the result, the girls were put out of the home and reported to the court as being incorrigible. Instead of sending them to the detention home as the father requested, the

court put them on probation to their brother. When their brother married, they were without a home. The girl who was charged with sex delinquency because of her conduct described below, and sent to the detention home, ends her story with the following comment:

After I had seen so much out of my father, and my brother had changed so I just seemed to slip. When I began living on the place I would have one day off. I didn't have any place to go. My boy friend invited me to spend my off-time over at his place. Everybody sows their wild oats at some time or other in their lives. I don't believe that I am guilty of any sin because I am going to marry this feller.

Let us turn our attention from this southern city to New York City, where, as we have seen, Negro juvenile delinquency rates suddenly jumped in 1928 to 342 per 10,000 boys as compared with 170 in 1927.¹⁶ In 1930 there were for all the boroughs 839 Negro children, or 11.8 per cent of the total of 7,090 children, brought before the Children's Court. When delinquents from all agencies were considered, there were 1,065 Negro children, or 10.3 per cent of the total of 10,374 children. However, the proportion of Negro delinquents among the delinquents in both groups varied in the different boroughs. The rate was highest in the Manhattan borough, where Negro delinquents before the Children's Court comprised 26 per cent of the total; whereas, in the borough of Brooklyn, Negro cases comprised only 5.4 per cent of all the delinquents before the court.¹⁷

For our purposes here, we shall consider Negro boys and girls arrested because of delinquency and neglect in the Harlem area during the years 1930-34.¹⁸ On the whole, the

¹⁶ See p. 359 above.

¹⁷ Robison, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

¹⁸ This information was collected in 1935 from the records of the police precincts while the author was engaged in a study of Harlem for the Mayor's Commission on Conditions in Harlem (see Map V).

number of Negro boys and girls arrested for delinquency has declined since 1930, although the figures for 1934 indicated that the number of delinquents was mounting again. This was especially noticeable in the case of the delinquent girls

TABLE 19
NUMBER OF DELINQUENT AND NEGLECTED NEGRO BOYS AND
GIRLS ARRESTED IN THE HARLEM AREA, 1930-34

SEX	AGE	YEAR				
		1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
Delinquent						
Male.....	10-16	362	265	212	229	271
	Under 10	36	18	9	9	9
Female.....	10-16	27	15	20	28	36
	Under 10	0	1	0	1	1
Neglected						
Male.....	10-16	11	10	5	5	6
	Under 10	16	9	5	7	9
Female.....	10-16	10	3	1	3	1
	Under 10	6	6	11	6	7

(see Table 19). The vast majority of the Negro delinquents were between ten and sixteen years of age; only about 3 per cent of the boys, except in 1930, being under ten years of age. However, if the children arrested because of neglect are considered separately, we find that the vast majority were under ten years of age.

When we analyze the offenses for which these boys and

girls were arrested, we find that, as in Nashville, the chief offense of the boys was larceny and burglary; whereas 50 per cent of the girls were charged with incorrigibility. Thus, in 1934 about 30 per cent of the delinquent boys were charged with larceny and 10 per cent with burglary. Among the more serious offenses charged against the boys, assaults and holdups ranked third and fourth, respectively; whereas sex offenses held second place among the girls. Two boys were charged with homicide in 1931 and one with the same offense in 1932. Although there was no change in the rank of these various offenses among either boys or girls during the five years, the proportion of boys arrested for larceny and burglary increased appreciably, while the proportion for assaults and holdups declined slightly.¹⁹ The majority of the less serious crimes were indicative of the lack of recreational facilities and programs for the children of the Harlem community. For example, in 1934 eleven of the boys were charged with hitching on trolleys and twenty-seven with stealing rides on the subways. On the other hand, the comparatively few boys charged with selling on the streets or shining shoes most likely reflected the general poverty of the families in the area.

The relation of juvenile delinquency to the organization

¹⁹ A study of delinquent and neglected Negro children in New York City twelve years ago showed a different distribution of offenses for the boys. According to that study, the most common charges against Negro boys were disorderly conduct and desertion of home; whereas approximately 85 per cent of the Negro girls were charged with desertion of home and ungovernable and wayward conduct. The most common charges against the whites were stealing and burglary. Thus, our figures indicate that the charges against Negro boys are at present similar to those against white boys (see Joint Committee on Negro Child Study, *A Study of Delinquent and Neglected Children before the New York City Children's Court in 1925* [New York, 1927], p. 6).

of the Harlem Negro community is not so apparent as in Chicago, where, as we shall see, it is definitely related to the economic and cultural organization of the Negro community.²⁰ In Chicago the percentage of Negro delinquent cases among the cases brought before the juvenile court has steadily increased since 1900. In that year 4.7 per cent of all cases of boys before the court were Negro boys. The percentage of Negro boys increased for each five-year period until it reached 21.7 in 1930.²¹ In Table 20 we have the number of delinquent and dependent boys and girls brought into the juvenile court each year during the decade 1920-29. Naturally, these figures do not include all cases of delinquency; in fact, they do not include all the cases of arrests for delinquency. For example, in 1927 there were 1,503 boys arrested for juvenile delinquency, although only 342 cases were taken into the court.²²

The marked increase in the proportion of Negro cases has coincided with the increase in the Negro population during and since the war period. However, what is more important is that this increase has followed the settlement of the Negro migrant in areas characterized by a high delinquency rate.²³

²⁰ See the author's *The Negro Family in Chicago*, chap. ix, for a full discussion of the relation of delinquency rates to the economic and cultural organization of the Negro community.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 206. During this same period the percentage of Negro girls in the total cases increased from 11 to 20.9.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 205, n. 1.

²³ Shaw, who has shown in a number of well-known studies the relation between delinquency and community disorganization, makes the following statement: "It is interesting to note that the main high rate areas of the city—those near the Loop, around the Stock Yards and the South Chicago steel mills—have been characterized by high rates over a long period. Our data are based on records that go back thirty years, and the early and late juvenile court series show conclusively that many of the areas have been

The Negro, like other groups marked off from the general population because of color and low economic and cultural status, has found a dwelling-place in the deteriorated area just outside the Loop.²⁴ In the zone nearest the center of the city, the juvenile delinquency rate, based upon arrests, was over 40 per cent.²⁵ From a physical standpoint

TABLE 20*

NUMBER OF NEGRO BOYS AND GIRLS BROUGHT INTO THE JUVENILE COURT OF COOK COUNTY DURING EACH FISCAL YEAR
DECEMBER 1, 1919—NOVEMBER 30, 1929

Year	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929
Delinquent:										
Boys	182	194	177	161	310	326	320	342	427	435
Girls	128	100	116	108	107	98	117	154	166	132
Dependent:										
Boys	45	30	26	26	52	79	86	79	109	81
Girls	40	26	37	46	61	50	73	76	101	102

* Taken from the records of the Institute for Juvenile Research.

this area showed extreme deterioration and gave evidence of the expansion of the central business district. On the one hand, there were dilapidated houses carrying signs of rooms for rent at fifteen and twenty cents a bed, junk shops, markets with stale meat, and crowded Negro quarters with filthy bedding half-visible through sooty and broken window

characterized by high rates throughout the entire period. It should be remembered that relatively high rates have persisted in certain areas notwithstanding the fact that the composition (racial) of population has changed markedly" (Clifford Shaw *et. al.*, *Delinquency Areas* [Chicago, 1929], p. 203).

²⁴ Cf. Sophonisba P. Breckinridge and Edith Abbott, *The Delinquent Child and the Home* (New York, 1912), p. 153.

²⁵ See Map IV, p. 303.

panes. On the other hand, new motorcar salesrooms furnished signs of the future role which the regenerated area would play in the organization of the city. In keeping with the general character of the area, all organized community life had disappeared, and the inhabitants were, on the whole, remnants of broken families and foot-loose men and women. In 1921 the men in the county jail who claimed residence in this area comprised over 9 per cent of the adult males living in the area.

TABLE 21

NUMBER OF NEGRO BOYS ARRESTED FOR JUVENILE DELINQUENCY
AND RATE OF DELINQUENCY IN SEVEN ZONES OF THE SOUTH
SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, CHICAGO, 1926

	Zone I	Zone II	Zone III	Zone IV	Zone V	Zone VI	Zone VII
Boys arrested..	33	208	373	364	223	59	5
Rate.....	42.8	31.4	30.0	28.8	15.7	9.6	1.4

Although the delinquency rates in the next three zones were lower than in the first zone, they were still comparatively high. About three out of ten boys from ten to seventeen years of age were arrested for juvenile delinquency in these zones. The significant drop in the delinquency rate appeared in the fifth zone, where only 15 per cent of the boys of juvenile-court age were arrested for delinquency. In the sixth zone the delinquency rate continued to decline sharply, and in the seventh zone only 1.4 per cent of the boys were charged with delinquent behavior (see Table 21).

The decline in delinquency coincided with the decline in dependency, family desertion, and illegitimacy in the seven zones indicating the expansion of the Negro population. The

rates were high in those areas that were characterized by physical decay and the lack of organized community life. In these areas the customary forms of social control, as represented by the family and the simple folk culture of the migrants from southern communities, tended to break down or to disappear altogether. Consequently, some of the fairly well-organized families lost control of their children who took over from boys or gangs patterns of delinquent behavior which were characteristic of these areas. The children from the numerous broken families, and whose mothers had to carry the entire burden of supporting their families, easily drifted into delinquency.²⁶ In the third zone, where prostitution and other types of criminal behavior flourished, not only were the children subjected to the criminal influences in the neighborhood, but they were also influenced by the criminal behavior of their parents. The decline in the delinquency rate in the areas toward the periphery of the community coincided with the increasing stabilization of family life and the disappearance of various forms of social disorganization.

What we have observed in regard to juvenile delinquency in the Negro community in Chicago is characteristic of other cities, in the South as well as the North. Though the process of selection which is apparent in the economic and cultural organization of Negro communities is less pronounced and not so well defined in some cities, the incidence of juvenile delinquency is closely tied up with the organization of the community. Juvenile delinquency flourishes in those areas where the Negro, because of his poverty and cultural backwardness, is forced to find a dwelling-place. In the slum areas of Negro communities, because of the numerous

²⁶ See Table 6, p. 307, above.

broken homes and the employment of the mother, the children lack parental control which is sometimes able to offset the influence of the vicious environment. Negro families with higher aspirations who are able to achieve some economic security are constantly escaping from the deteriorated slum areas. They move as far as they are able into the areas where the more stable families and substantial elements in the Negro population live and maintain orderly community life. This selective process is the outcome of the rigorous competition which Negro families must face in the modern urban environment, and their success or failure depends largely upon their cultural as well as economic resources.