

Social Background Patterns and Juvenile Delinquency Nexus in Lesotho: A Case Study of Juvenile Delinquents in Juvenile Training Centre (JTC), Maseru

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ABSTRACT In recent time, juvenile delinquency and its associated problems pose serious threat to Lesotho and across the globe. This includes actions and inactions of children below the age of eighteen, of which the child is subject to conviction by the state. This study investigated the social background patterns of juvenile delinquents to ascertain their contributions to juvenile delinquencies in Lesotho. The study made use of all the 43 juveniles who were in the Juvenile Training Centre (JTC) in Maseru at the time of this research. Relevant data were collected through the use of survey questionnaires with close-ended questions. The results in the main corroborated what exists in literature that most delinquents come from broken homes; most delinquents are males; delinquency is at a higher rate in urban areas compared to the rural areas and that most delinquents are part of peer groups who engage in delinquent behaviours. Precisely, Maseru the capital city of Lesotho and Leribe were found to be the districts with highest rates of juvenile delinquency. It was also discovered that most of the juveniles have fathers who are employed in the mining industry. The most committed offence across the country was robbery. The high rates of robbery, housebreaking and stock theft indicate that poverty may be the factor behind the scene in Lesotho, which requires urgent attention from the government to tackle and eradicate poverty.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of juvenile delinquency was relatively unknown as a distinct area of academic interest to most scholars in sociology and related disciplines until late in the nineteenth century. Prior to that time, juvenile offenders were considered culpable of certain crimes or were punished like adults in the criminal justice system without any special consideration of their age. Lauer (1998: 138) quotes Platt (1969) who states that the concept began to change in the nineteenth century when a group of reformers set out to redeem the nation's wayward youth in the United States of America. Following this was an establishment of a juvenile court system in the United States. Consequently juveniles were treated differently from adults, and certain acts that were ignored or treated informally came under the jurisdiction of a government agency (Lauer 1998: 138).

Juvenile delinquency means bad or criminal behaviour, usually of young people. However, behaviours considered as delinquent varies across countries and is culturally relative. In this regard, what may be treated as delinquent behaviour in one country or state may not necessarily be treated as such in another, so is the age

at which a child may be held legally responsible for his or her actions. Cweba (1992) quotes from Davis (1970: 197) that the legal meaning of juvenile delinquency varies a great deal with respect to place, time, social category and circumstances. She sums up that juvenile delinquency refers to acts that are committed by minors (person under eighteen years of age, or sixteen or seventeen) as each country's law stipulates, which are regarded as crimes when committed by persons over the respective ages.

Under the juvenile law in Lesotho, juveniles are children below the age of eighteen. Lesotho's Children's Protection Act no. 6 of 1980, Section 2, stipulates that "child" means an unmarried person under the age of eighteen years. Juvenile delinquency is the behaviour of children which under the juvenile law may subject children to juvenile court procedures (Cweba 1992: 6). Against this background, Mangold (1948: 368) in Hlabana (2004: 3) argues that a juvenile delinquent does not necessarily mean an individual who is guilty of some certain offence, but it may include someone who has developed an anti-social attitude or who is characteristic of behaviour that will, if unchecked, lead to conduct that the public cannot tolerate.

Juvenile delinquency is significant in Africa as in other parts of the world. It is significant in Africa because just as children's problems in the nineteenth century triggered a chain reaction of social improvement, it was often the complications of handling effectively the young persons coming before courts in the urban areas which led to the appointment of probation officers (Hlabana 2004: 3). In Lesotho, the first juvenile court system was established in 1974, which has led to the numerous juvenile courts in respective districts within the country. However, in Lesotho the Juvenile Training Centre (JTC) Maseru is the only place where convicted juveniles acquire corrections and rehabilitation services.

From the above, it is apparent that juvenile delinquency does exist in Lesotho so far as there is such admission into JTC. The children held in this centre committed different sorts of crime and are assumed to have hailed from diverse social and economic background. At present time, there is a clear indication that the population of the Juvenile Training Centre seems to fluctuate because of persistent detention in remand facility, which points to the fact that children are increasingly being involved in various types of anti-social behaviours in Lesotho. Even though the fluctuating number of juveniles into this facility is a source of worry, the most important issue that needs to be revealed is the predominant social backgrounds characteristics or the types of social background that produce most of this category of children. This study, therefore, delved into the investigation of the social background factors that are most commonly associated with juvenile delinquency in Lesotho, which has high positive potential and implication for their adjustment under rehabilitation. The study specifically investigated a group of social background variables and conditions, which include juvenile delinquents' family background characteristics, their residential or location background and environment, beliefs and attitudes towards education, and the nature of juveniles' peer network system of juveniles.

This current study is important because since juvenile delinquency is a social problem, the results may be useful in identifying major contributing factors to the incidence of delinquency. When the delinquent is convicted of an offence, and taken into a correctional centre, the chances

of engaging into further delinquent acts after the release are high if the contributing factors to the delinquency are not tracked or known. Therefore the search for a holistic knowledge of the social background patterns of delinquents in Lesotho motivated this study.

Brief Theoretical Explication of Juvenile Delinquency

Some sociologists have propounded deviance theories that explain the foundations of general crime, which also accommodate explanations for juvenile delinquencies. The deviance theoretical approach regards juvenile delinquency like adult crimes as social problems that result from particular violations of the norms rather than a general breakdown (Lauer 1998: 17). For the purpose of this study, the following theories are variations of deviance perspective that are applicable in explaining juvenile delinquency in Lesotho, namely differential opportunity theory, sub-cultural theory, differential association theory and social disorganisation theory.

In line with Merton (1957)'s anomic theory, is the *differential opportunity theory* of Cloward and Ohlin (1960), which was first developed by Cloward in 1959. According to this theory, there are other than one way in which juveniles reach their aspirations, which may be either through a legitimate or illegitimate means. In the urban lower class areas where there are few legitimate opportunities, it is easy for other individuals to find opportunities of a different kind, mainly through illegitimate route. They argue that the opportunities are just as well established and access is just as limited as in the legitimate structure. Thus position in society dictates the ability to participate in both conventional and criminal avenues of success (Williams and McShane 2004: 122). Practically, in line with their proposition, different individuals have unequal access and opportunities to achieve their life goals. This implies that children from more affluent homes with better education and wealthier parents are opportune with greater life chances and means to achieve their life aspirations through culturally defined ways, compared to their counterparts from less privileged families with little or no life chances to depend on. In response to the imminent lack of opportunity due to lack of resources, the less privileged children tend to device other op-

portunities, which may not be legitimate but descriptively delinquent towards meeting their life goals.

Human beings are invariably products of their environment and social background. Albert Cohen propounded the *sub-culture theory*, in which lower class boys reject the standards of achieving set by the middle class. They form their own values, which in most cases lead to delinquent behaviour. Cohen's theoretical explication of root of delinquency is akin to the differential opportunity of Cloward and Ohlin (1960). However, while Cloward and Ohlin (1960) were more interested in explaining the root towards achieving life goals quantified in standard culturally accepted success of individuals, Cohen (1955) differ remarkably in his focus on achieving popularity and fame in the society. Presumably, all societies measure the behaviour of their members based on the society's acceptable values, norms and standards. In practice, being in conformity with these values becomes a question of what position and access that an individual possesses in the society. While those from high resource base families exhibit values that are the acceptable standard, those from low class families invariably get involved in other activities and behaviours that earn them acceptance and popularity in their specific sub-culture. In other words, instead of behaving in conformity to the societal standard, those individuals behave according to the standard of their contra-culture or sub-culture which is in disharmony with the mainstream societal values. For instance even though, the mainstream societal values condemn violence and aggression, these behaviours are permissible in many lower class sub-cultures as a means of survival.

From a different perspective, Sutherland (1939) formulated the *Differential Association Theory*. While the theory has been modified over time, initially it argued that criminal behaviour is learned through social interaction, especially within primary groups. Primary groups are people with whom an individual has an intimate and frequent face-to-face interaction. They include the individual's parents, spouse, children, close peers, colleagues, and most significant others. Sutherland argues that every human being is exposed to various and contradictory ideas of right and wrong behaviour. Even those who consider themselves

and their acquaintances major examples of law-abiding citizens share some ideas that are deviant with some other people. Sutherland emphasized that children and other individuals usually tend to accept those definitions of behaviour that they encounter most often in our primary group interaction, irrespective of whether the behaviour is legal or not. The theory clearly assumes that deviance is acquired through a learning process, where the potential delinquent is in constant interaction with deviant groups compared with his or her less interaction with non deviant groups. It further argues that individuals learn to be deviant through exposure to more definitions of what behaviour is acceptable though illegal than to those that conform to the law (Lauer 1998: 20). However, the exposure must be frequent, prolonged, intense, and must start early in life. Furthermore, an individual will not become deviant without an opportunity to practice the deviant behaviour.

Ecological approach of Shaw and McKay (1942) indicates that the nearer one lives to the central business district, the greater the rate of delinquency and the farther one lives from the centre of the city the lower the rate of delinquency. This emanates from the assumption that the decline in efficiency of institutional and informal social control increases with the fast changes in industrialisation or urbanisation (Bezuidenhout 2004: 88). Shaw and McKay confined their ecological approach to the concept of social disorganisation. *The Social Disorganization Theory* developed by the Chicago School asserts that mapping can show spatial distributions of delinquency and crime. Shaw and McKay (1942) demonstrated that social disorganization is prevalent in the urban areas, specifically the slum and areas of transition, where the poor migrants can only afford to live. Slum urban areas and areas in transition are characterised by a high rate of population turnover and ethnic diversity. In their analysis, Shaw and McKay established among other facts, that 1) there is consistency in the spatial pattern pertaining to rate of juvenile delinquency, with the highest rates in the inner-city areas and declining with distance from the city centre, and 2) the spatial pattern of delinquency rates showed noteworthy long-term stability although the population structure in the inner city areas changed to a great extent

throughout the decades. Most researchers, mainly criminologists and sociologists maintained that social disorganisation manifests in value inconsistencies, normlessness that characterise neighbourhoods with diverse cultural backgrounds and orientations. Children that are brought up in such contradictory value environment will tend towards exhibiting a high level of confusion and delinquency.

RESEARCH SETTING AND METHODOLOGY

This study was an institutional based study carried out among inmates of the Juvenile Training Centre (JTC), Maseru, Lesotho, where convicted juveniles undergo the process of rehabilitation and correction. The study population, which constituted the sampleⁱⁱ, include 43 residents in JTC made up of 6 girls and 37 boys. The data were collected in 2008 through the use of survey questionnaire, which were either administered by the researcher or self administered by the respondents, depending on the level of literacy of the respondent. The content of the questionnaire ranges from questions that bother on the family background of the respondents; educational history; offence history; nature of peer group network system; family discipline; location of residence or neighbourhood etc. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to analyse the data collected. Results from the analysis are presented in frequencies and percentages. A bivariate cross-tabulation analysis was further used to reveal the relationships between various variables studied.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents revealed the differences in the categories of respondents studied. The study (Table 1) revealed that the respondents who are aged 15 years and above constitute a larger proportion of the sample (95.3%). The rest were aged between 12 and 14 years, which constitute only 4.7 percent. The majority of the respondents, 86 percent were males, while the females constitute only 14 percent of the respondents. Responses on the edu-

cational level showed that none of the respondents had completed secondary or tertiary educational level. The larger proportion of the respondents (34.9%) is still attending secondary education. Interestingly, 32.6 percent of the respondents never had any formal education, which is quite a great number for people of this age category. Respondents undergoing class 4 to 6 and Junior College level were 16.3 percent of the population.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

<i>Socio-demographic characteristics</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Sex</i>		
Female	6	14.0
Male	37	86.0
Total	43	100.0
<i>Age (in years)</i>		
12 - 14	2	4.7
15+	41	95.3
Total	43	100.0
<i>Residence</i>		
Urban	31	72.1
Rural	12	27.9
Total	43	100.0
<i>Educational Level</i>		
Class 4 – Class 6	7	16.3
JC level	7	16.3
Secondary level	15	34.9
COSC level	0	0
Tertiary level	0	0
None	14	32.6
Total	43	100.0

Types of Offence Committed by the Juveniles

The categories of offence committed by the juveniles or the offences they are charged with are shown in Table 2. The most committed offence is robbery, which was committed by 23.3% of the respondents. The least committed offences were fraud and drug trafficking, which were committed by 2.3% of the respondents respectively.

Interface between Offence Committed and Selected Social Background Variables

The result of the relationship between respondents' school attendance and offences they are charged with is shown in Table 3. The respondents who claimed to be attending school have mostly committed robbery (24.1%), stock theft (20.7%) sexual offence (20.7%) and house-

Table 2: Distribution of offences committed

<i>Offences of respondents</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Sexual offence	8	18.7
House breaking	9	20.9
Culpable homicide	2	4.7
Robbery	10	23.3
Assault	1	2.3
Stock theft	7	16.3
Murder	2	4.7
Fraud	1	2.3
Drug trafficking	1	2.3
Statutory offence	2	4.7
Total	43	100.0

breaking (17.2%) compared to other offences like culpable homicide, assault and murder where they were less involved. On the other hand, the inmates who did not attend school before their conviction were high in housebreaking (28.6%) and robbery (21.4%). In comparison between the two categories, while

house breaking and robbery were found to be the highest recorded offences for the non-school inmates and schooling inmates respectively, robbery is found to be the commonest offence where the two groups were involved.

Based on gender differences (Table 4), males were found to have committed most of the offences, with higher rates in sexual offence, housebreaking and robbery, which comprise 21.6 percent and 27 percent correspondingly. Females were only involved in housebreaking, stock theft and fraud, with an astonishing proportion of 66.7 percent in stock theft as compared to their male counterparts (8.1%). Table 5 shows that all the respondents who are aged between 12 to 14 years were charged with only housebreaking. Most of the respondents aged 15 years and above are convicted of robbery (24.4%), housebreaking (20.9%), sexual offence (18.6%) and stock theft (16.3%).

Table 6 shows the relationship between level

Table 3: Relationship between school attendance and offence committed

<i>School attendance</i>	<i>Offence respondent is charged</i>										<i>Total</i>
	<i>Sexual offence</i>	<i>House breaking</i>	<i>Culpable homicide</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Assault</i>	<i>Stock theft</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Fraud</i>	<i>Drug trafficking</i>	<i>Statutory offence</i>	
Yes	6(20.7)	5(17.2)	1(3.4)	7(24.1)	1(3.4)	6(20.7)	1(3.4)	1(3.4)		1(3.4)	29(100.0)
No	2(14.3)	4(28.6)	1(7.1)	3(21.4)		1 (7.1)	1(7.1)		1(7.1)	1(7.1)	14(100.0)
Total	8(18.6)	9(20.9)	2(4.7)	10(23.3)	1(2.3)	7(16.3)	2(4.7)	1(2.3)	1(2.3)	2(4.7)	43(100.0)

Table 4: Relationship between gender and offence committed

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Offence respondent is charged</i>										<i>Total</i>
	<i>Sexual offence</i>	<i>House breaking</i>	<i>Culpable homicide</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Assault</i>	<i>Stock theft</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Fraud</i>	<i>Drug trafficking</i>	<i>Statutory offence</i>	
Male	8(21.6)	8(21.6)	2(5.4)	10(27.0)	1(2.7)	3(8.1)	2(5.4)		1(2.4)	2(5.4)	37(100.0)
Female		1(16.7)				4(66.7)		1(16.7)			6(100.0)
Total	8(18.6)	9(20.9)	2(4.7)	10(23.3)	1(2.3)	7(16.3)	2(4.7)	1(2.3)	1(2.3)	2(4.7)	43 (100.0)

Table 5: Relationship between age and offence committed

<i>Age</i>	<i>Offence respondent is charged</i>										<i>Total</i>
	<i>Sexual offence</i>	<i>House breaking</i>	<i>Culpable homicide</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Assault</i>	<i>Stock theft</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Fraud</i>	<i>Drug trafficking</i>	<i>Statutory offence</i>	
12-14 years		2(100.0)									2(100.0)
15+	8(19.5)	7(17.1)	2(4.9)	10(24.4)	1(2.4)	7(17.1)	2(4.9)	1(2.4)	1(2.4)	2(4.9)	41(100.0)
Total	8(18.6)	9(20.9)	2(4.7)	10(23.3)	1(2.3)	7(16.3)	2(4.7)	1(2.3)	1(2.3)	2(4.7)	43 (100.0)

Table 6: Relationship between level of education and offence respondents committed

Class	Offence respondent is charged										Total
	Sexual offence	House breaking	Culpable homicide	Robbery	Assault	Stock theft	Murder	Fraud	Drug trafficking	Statutory offence	
Primary 4-6	4(57.1)	1(14.3)		1(14.3)			1(14.3)				7(100.0)
JC level	2(28.6)	2(28.6)	1(14.3)			2(28.6)					7(100.0)
Secondary level		2(13.3)		6(40.0)	1(6.7)	4(26.7)		1(6.7)		1(6.7)	15(100.0)
None	2(14.3)	4(28.6)	1 (7.1)	3(21.4)		1 (7.1)	1 (7.1)		1(7.1)	1(7.1)	14(100.0)
Total	8(18.6)	9(20.9)	2(4.7)	10(23.3)	1(2.3)	7(16.3)	2(4.7)	1(2.3)	1(2.3)	2(4.7)	43(100.0)

of education and offence committed. The study shows that inmates with primary 4-6 education are more on sexual offence (57.1%) compared to their involvement in other crimes like robbery, housebreaking and murder with record of 14.3 percent each. Those with Junior Certificate are proportionately equally high in sexual offence, housebreaking and stock theft at 28.6 percent for each case. Secondary school drop-outs were more involved in robbery (40%) followed by stock theft (26.7%) than in other offences like housebreaking (13.3%), assault, fraud and statutory offence with less than 10 percent involvement in each. Those inmates who never attended school were convicted mostly for housebreaking (28.6%) and robbery (21.7%).

Relationship between Family Background Factors and Offence Committed

Marital status of parents, family size (number of children in the nuclear family), the parent-child relationship, occupation of the father, whether any of the parents was ever in prison, and the relationship between parents were the proxy variables for family background.

The study in Table 7 discloses the relationship between marital status of parents and the offences of the respondents. Inmates whose one of their parents is widowed have the highest count of offences compared to other categories. Their offences were mainly in robbery, housebreaking, and culpable homicide at 26.7% for each case. Drug trafficking, sexual offence and murder were not offences of high record by this group. Next to this group are inmates whose parents are married and those that are double orphaned. For these two categories, sexual offence was their greatest problem where they were involved, especially for those who are double orphaned (33.3%). Similarly, apart from sexual offence, they were also involved or convicted of robbery at 25 percent response rate for each group respectively. The study revealed that those from separated homes or single parenthood were convicted of theft and house breaking respectively.

The study further investigated and analysed the relationship between the extent of family violence, captured by the number of times that the respondent's father beats his or her mother and the amount of mother's love as it relates to

Table 7: Relationship between the marital status of respondent's parents and offence respondent is charged

Marital status of parents	Offence respondent is charged										Total
	Sexual offence	House breaking	Culpable homicide	Robbery	Assault	Stock theft	Murder	Fraud	Drug trafficking	Statutory offence	
Separated						1(50.0)				1(50.0)	2(100.0)
Widowed	1 (6.7)	4 (26.7)		4(26.7)		4(26.7)	1(6.7)		1(6.7)		15(100.0)
Both deceased	4(33.3)	1 (8.3)	2(16.7)	3(25.0)	1(8.3)			1(8.3)			12(100.0)
Single		1(100.0)									1(100.0)
Married	3(25.0)	2 (16.7)		3(25.0)		2(16.7)	1(8.3)			1(8.3)	12(100.0)
Total	8(19.0)	8 (19.0)	2(4.8)	10(23.8)	1(2.4)	7(16.7)	2(4.8)	1(2.4)	1(2.4)	2(4.8)	42(100.0)

Table 8: Number of times respondent's father beats mother and offence respondent is charged

<i>Father beats mother</i>	<i>Offence respondent is charged</i>										<i>Total</i>
	<i>Sexual offence</i>	<i>House breaking</i>	<i>Culpa-ble homicide</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Assault</i>	<i>Stock theft</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Fraud</i>	<i>Drug trafficking</i>	<i>Statutory offence</i>	
Often		2(50.0)				1(25.0)			1(25.0)		4(100.0)
Rarely	2(40.0)	2(40.0)		1(20.0)							5(100.0)
Never	5(17.2)	1 (3.4)	2(6.9)	9(31.0)	1(3.4)	6(20.7)	2(6.9)	1(3.4)		2(6.9)	29(100.0)
Total	7(18.4)	5(13.2)	2(5.3)	10(26.3)	1(2.6)	7(18.4)	2(5.3)	1(2.6)	1 (2.6)	2(5.3)	38(100.0)

the type of offence committed, shown in Tables 8 and 9. Most of the respondents responded that their father never beat their mother. Less number of respondents agreed that their fathers beat their mothers often, while most inmates responded that their fathers never beat their mothers. While most respondents who admitted that their fathers beat their mothers often were inclined towards housebreaking (50%), inmates who indicated that such violence occur rarely were more preponderantly involved in sexual offence (40%) and housebreaking (40%). Those who reported no violence between their parents committed robbery (31%) and stock theft (20.7) compared to other categories of crime. For mother's love, the study revealed that inmates who claimed that their mothers love them a bit were less in number compared to those who believed that their mothers love them much. The types of offence common among

those who claim that their mothers love them very much include, robbery, sexual offence and housebreaking, while those who believed that their mothers love them just a bit were involved in only two types of offence, murder and drug trafficking.

The analysis of the relationship between fathers' occupational status in terms of what the fathers do for a living and the offence the respondents are convicted of is shown in Table 10. The results show that among the respondents whose fathers are unemployed, there is a high rate of sexual offence, which constitute (66.7%). They have also committed robbery, as well as those whose fathers are both self-employed and employed. Those who claim their fathers are employed are charged with most of the offences, though they committed less of fraud and drug trafficking offences.

Similar to the above, Table 11 shows the re-

Table 9: Relationship between mother's affection and offence respondent is charged

<i>Mother's love</i>	<i>Offence respondent is charged</i>										<i>Total</i>
	<i>Sexual offence</i>	<i>House breaking</i>	<i>Culpa-ble homicide</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Assault</i>	<i>Stock theft</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Fraud</i>	<i>Drug trafficking</i>	<i>Statutory offence</i>	
Just a bit							1(50.0)		1(50.0)		2(100.0)
Very much	8(20.5)	8(20.5)	1(2.6)	10(25.6)	1(2.6)	7(17.9)	1 (2.6)	1(2.6)		2(4.9)	39(100.0)
Total	8(19.5)	8(19.5)	1(2.4)	10(24.4)	1(2.4)	7(17.1)	2 (4.9)	1(2.4)	1 (2.4)	2(4.9)	41(100.0)

Table 10: Relationship between what fathers do for a living and offences the respondents are charged

<i>Father's occupational status</i>	<i>Offence respondent is charged</i>										<i>Total</i>
	<i>Sexual offence</i>	<i>House breaking</i>	<i>Culpa-ble homicide</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Assault</i>	<i>Stock theft</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Fraud</i>	<i>Drug trafficking</i>	<i>Statutory offence</i>	
Unemployed	2(66.7)			1(33.3)							3(100.0)
Self-employed	1(25.0)	1(25.5)		2(50.0)							4(100.0)
Employed	4(12.5)	5(15.6)	2(6.3)	7(21.9)	1(3.1)	7(21.9)	2(6.3)	1(3.1)	1(3.1)	2(6.3)	32(100.0)
Total	7(17.9)	6(15.4)	2(5.1)	10(25.6)	1(2.6)	7(17.9)	2(5.1)	1(2.6)	1(2.6)	2(5.1)	39(100.0)

Table 11: Relationship between whether fathers have been in prison before and offences respondents are charged

<i>Father ever in prison</i>	<i>Offence respondent is charged</i>										<i>Total</i>
	<i>Sexual offence</i>	<i>House breaking</i>	<i>Culpable homicide</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Assault</i>	<i>Stock theft</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Fraud</i>	<i>Drug trafficking</i>	<i>Statutory offence</i>	
Yes		1(20.0)	1(20.0)	3(60.0)							5(100.0)
No	7(20.6)	5(14.7)	1(2.9)	7(20.6)	1(2.9)	7(20.6)	2(5.9)	1(2.9)	1(2.9)	2(5.9)	34(100.0)
Total	7(17.9)	6(15.4)	2(5.1)	10(25.6)	1(2.6)	7(17.9)	2(5.1)	1(2.6)	1(2.6)	2(5.1)	39(100.0)

relationship between respondents' parental background with regard to whether their fathers have been served prison sentence. The results of the analysis on this issue show that the respondents whose fathers have been in prison before committed robbery as there are 60 percent of them. Those who claim their fathers have never been in prison before are highly charged with most other offences, especially sexual offence, robbery and stock theft.

Residential Location, Peer Social Network System and Delinquency

The respondents come from various residential locations, peer social network system but the extent to which these characteristics or attributes are related to the type of offence that they are charged with or convicted of is presented in Table 12. The study revealed that most of the respondents represented by 72.1% are from urban areas, as opposed to the rural residents who constitute only 27.9%. With regard to specific districts, 75% of the Maseru respondents reside in the urban area, which is really a large amount compared to those from rural areas, who constitute only 25%. Similar situation applies to Leribe, where a very large number (83.3%) of the respondents are from the urban areas, while 16.7% are from the rural areas. However, this result on the preponderance of urban residents being implicated in

juvenile delinquency has some limitations and exceptions, in the case of *Thaba-Tseka* and *Mafeteng* districts where the urban residents tend to engage less in delinquent behaviours than their rural counterparts.

Table 12: Relationship between district of respondent and the location of residence

<i>District of respondent</i>	<i>Location features</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	
Maseru	12 (75.0)	4 (25.0)	16 (100.0)
Berea	3 (75.0)	1 (25.0)	4 (100.0)
Quthing	3 (100.0)	0	3 (100.0)
Butha-Buthe	2 (100.0)	0	2 (100.0)
Leribe	10 (83.3)	2 (16.7)	12 (100.0)
Thaba-Tseka	0	2 (100.0)	2 (100.0)
Mohale's Hoek	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	2 (100.0)
Mafeteng	0	2 (100.0)	2 (100.0)
Total	31 (72.1)	12 (27.9)	43 (100.0)

Further analysis on the relationship between location of residence and specific crimes (Table 13) shows that respondents from the urban areas were more involved in housebreaking (29%) and robbery (25.8) than in other delinquent acts. On the other hand, rural respondents reported being charged or convicted of sexual offences (33.3%) and stock theft (25%) than their urban counterparts.

The relationship between the district where the respondent lives and the offence the respondent is charged with is shown in Table 14.

Table 13: Relationship between respondent's location of residence and offence committed

<i>Location of residence</i>	<i>Offence respondent is charged</i>										<i>Total</i>
	<i>Sexual offence</i>	<i>House breaking</i>	<i>Culpable homicide</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Assault</i>	<i>Stock theft</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Fraud</i>	<i>Drug trafficking</i>	<i>Statutory offence</i>	
Urban	4(12.9)	9(29.0)		8(25.8)	1(3.2)	4(12.9)	1(3.2)	1(3.2)	1(3.2)	2(6.5)	31(100.0)
Rural	4(33.3)		2(16.7)	2(16.7)		3(25.0)	1(8.3)				12(100.0)
Total	8(18.6)	9(20.9)	2 (4.7)	10(23.3)	1(2.3)	7(16.3)	2(4.7)	1(2.3)	1(2.3)	2(4.7)	43(100.0)

Table 14: The relationship between district of residence of respondent and offence the respondent is charged

<i>District of respondent</i>	<i>Offence respondent is charged</i>										<i>Total</i>
	<i>Sexual offence</i>	<i>House breaking</i>	<i>Culpable homicide</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Assault</i>	<i>Stock theft</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Fraud</i>	<i>Drug trafficking</i>	<i>Statutory offence</i>	
Maseru	3 (18.8)	4(25.0)	1 (6.3)	1 (6.3)		3(18.8)	1 (6.3)		1(6.3)	2(12.5)	16(100.0)
Berea	2 (50.0)	1(25.0)		1(25.0)							4(100.0)
Quthing		1(33.3)		1(33.3)	1(33.3)						3(100.0)
Butha-Buthe						1(50.0)		1(50.0)			2(100.0)
Leribe		3(25.0)		7(58.3)		2(16.7)					12(100.0)
Thaba-Tseka			1(50.0)				1(50.0)				2(100.0)
Mohale's Hoek	2(100.0)										2(100.0)
Mafeteng	1 (50.0)					1(50.0)					2(100.0)
Total	8 (18.6)	9(20.9)	2 (4.7)	10(23.3)	1 (2.3)	7(16.3)	2 (4.7)	1 (2.3)	1(2.3)	2 (4.7)	43(100.0)

There were no respondents from Qacha's Nek and Mokhotlong. Most of the respondents are from Maseru, with the largest proportion of them committing housebreaking with intention of theft, which is 25%. Maseru district is followed by Leribe and Berea with regard to the overall proportion of the juveniles. For these two districts, respondents who come from Leribe are mostly charged with robbery, and less charged stock theft, while the largest proportion (50%) of respondents in Berea is charged or convicted of sexual offences, which is not an economic offence.

Peers are recognised as persons that play important roles in juveniles' delinquencies. The relationship between activities done with friends and the offence the respondent is charged with was analysed. Table 15 shows that of those who claim that they do not engage in delinquent behaviour when they are with their

friends 30.8% committed robbery, while 15.7% were involved in sexual offence and housebreaking respectively, among other offences where they were not mainly involved into. The majority of the respondents who claimed to have used drugs at some point in time with their friends were involved in all the offences, when compared with other groups. Quite a number of them (24%) were charged of robbery and housebreaking respectively, even sexual offence and stock theft were recorded high among these groups.

DISCUSSION

Previous investigation on the importance of various social background contexts as determinant factors for drug addiction, which is one of the delinquent acts by children revealed that some factors tend to be more important than

Table 15: Relationship between activity done more with friends and offence of respondent

<i>Activity done with friends</i>	<i>Offence respondent is charged</i>										<i>Total</i>
	<i>Sexual offence</i>	<i>House breaking</i>	<i>Culpable homicide</i>	<i>Robbery</i>	<i>Assault</i>	<i>Stock theft</i>	<i>Murder</i>	<i>Fraud</i>	<i>Drug trafficking</i>	<i>Statutory offence</i>	
Use drugs	4 (16.0)	6 (24.0)	1(4.0)	6(24.0)	1(4.0)	3(12.0)	1(4.0)	1(4.0)	1(4.0)	1(4.0)	25(100.0)
Fight other peer groups	1(100.0)										1(100.0)
Steal property		1(100.0)									1(100.0)
No delinquency	2 (15.4)	2 (15.4)	1(7.7)	4(30.8)		3(23.1)				1(7.7)	13(100.0)
Total	7 (17.5)	9 (22.5)	2(5.0)	10(25.0)	1(2.5)	6(15.0)	1(2.5)	1(2.5)	1(2.5)	2(5.0)	40(100.0)

others in either controlling the behaviors or exacerbating them (Obioha 2002, 2008). His study revealed that level of family liberalism is the most influencing factor that sets deviants and non deviants apart. More serious types of deviance with particular reference to addiction is associated with lower parental supervision, lower family discipline and higher liberalism, rather than with strict family background at the opposite. Other background contexts include, level of family stability, descriptive of the marital condition of parents, which is consistent with previous works in the same direction (Kolvin et al. 1998) who found that marital disruption such as divorce or separation of parents in adolescents' early years may predict later delinquent act and deviance such as hard drug abuse. Another distinguishing factor that has been implicated from these previous studies is residential location while growing up, where rural locations are more controlling compared to the urban neighbourhoods, which are descriptive of anomie and value inconsistencies.

From the present study, it was discovered that juveniles who come from families that are characterized by separation of parents, divorce, death of one spouse, death of both parents and whereby a parent was never married are far more than those from families with both parents still living together. This consents with what exists in literature that most delinquents come from broken homes or non intact homes where both parents are not harmoniously living together (Cweba 1992: 17-18; Lauer 1998: 156). Broken home and other social problems such as unemployment and conflicts act as incentives to engage in delinquency. This is because broken homes often mean broken lives for children and young people. A family is recognized by sociologists and criminologists as the first and most important agent of socialization, where personality formation begins. In families characterized by separation, death of one parent or both and divorce, the child grows up in an unstable environment different from the normal type of family. In such a family, there may be loose moral control and instability, which may result in ineffective socialization of a child, thus there is a big chance of a child deviating from the norms of society. Moreover, the stress associated with the instability may lead a child to engage in delinquent behaviour in pursuit of happiness and sense of belong-

ingness that the child is deprived of in his or her family.

The fact that most of the respondents or the juveniles studied are charged or convicted of economic related crimes such as housebreaking, robbery and stock theft, as opposed to other offences is an indicator of presence of poverty and social deprivation in the lives of these children. For this category of juveniles, making ends meet appears very difficult because their families are fundamentally impoverished.

Most of the respondents claimed that their mothers love them very much, as indicated in the analysis, in which case lacking or not having mother love is not positively correlated to the delinquency of the juveniles. However, it is commonplace to suggest that in some cases lavishing love and affection, especially from mothers do lead children into perceiving outside world condition as a place where the type of their mothers' affection prevail. In such situation, they tend to strongly believe that the emphasized others are affectionate to them and therefore may not count on their errors or actions or inactions that are morally wrong. The most common ground among scholars has been the fact that lack of emotion and strained relationship between parents and children do possibly lead children astray to juvenile delinquency. Previous studies have demonstrated that though various family factors have been associated with delinquency, but the most important is the quality of the relationships between parents and children (Lauer 1998:155). The rate of delinquency in this case is higher among those youth whose parents define them in negative forms, compared to others. He emphasizes that poor relationships mean that the parents' moral and emotional authority over the children is weakened, which tends to weaken children's bonds with the social order and increases the likelihood of delinquency. Cweba (1992: 13-14) argues that children have certain basic needs, the most important being emotional security, which can be provided most effectively by a close intimate relationship with mothers. If the child is deprived of maternal love particularly during the early years, a psychopathic personality can develop. With such personality, children develop a tendency to act impulsively with little regard for the consequences of their actions, showing little response to punishment or treatment.

Similarly, further analysis found that the majority of respondents have never seen their fathers beat their mothers, which also signifies absence of domestic violence in the family. This finding is remarkable and somewhat contradicts the most observed inclination and what exists in the literature, where most literature allude that delinquents mostly come from families characterized by domestic violence, deprivation and lack of love and affection.

The study also found that more than a half of the sample of the respondents has employed fathers, but incredibly, they are mostly charged with robbery and stock theft, which are economically motivated crimes and delinquencies. However, the real situation in the families where these children come from may depict utmost deprivation, which may have accounted for their involvement in the aforementioned economic delinquencies. In other words, fathers being employed do not automatically imply that his earnings are sufficient for the whole family members' needs or that that he makes resources available to these children. Interestingly, the extra information gathered by the researcher reveals that at least half of the employed fathers work in the mining industry in South Africa. One may argue from this point that since miners take a long time away from their families, mothers are left to raise the children on their own, in which case the family is run by one parent, which may have some implications on the delinquent behavior of children. Besides, the fact that most of the employed fathers are migrant workers in the mining industry in South Africa creates the condition that makes it simply difficult to make resources or his earnings available for the upkeep of his family members back home, since he comes home once in a while. This raises a couple of questions and concern about miners in relation to their families' upkeep. It could be the working habits of the miners, which adversely affect their families, disturbing a good growing atmosphere for their children. It could also be that they stay too long away from their families and eventually make other families in diasporas and desert their initial families at home in Lesotho? Or that they do not remit enough money home to support their families, which end up in poverty and economic deprivation? In relation to the above, Bezuidenhout (2004: 91) explains that there is a link between delinquency of chil-

dren and poor working habits of their fathers. The children find alternative means to meet their needs, mostly through deviant means as their fathers fail to provide them with the basic necessities and economic needs.

Peer groups and activities have always been linked to delinquency, as it exists in the previous literature. The findings from this study indicate that most of the respondents have more than one close friend. More than one close friend is close to a gang, which relates with what the literature documents that juveniles who join gangs are likely to engage in delinquent behaviour. The results further demonstrate that quite a good number of the respondents have at some point in time used drugs in company of their friends. This category of respondents who was mostly involved in robbery and house-breaking, even sexual offence and stock theft were recorded high among this group who has once used drugs. This signifies that the greater the number of close friends and use of drugs, the higher the chances of engaging in delinquent behaviours, especially economic related once.

The population of respondents is mainly comprised of 72.1 percent from the urban areas of Lesotho, and 27.9 percent from the rural areas. With regard to specific residence, the greater proportion of respondents reside in Maseru and Leribe, of which more than one third in each case are from the urban areas. Maseru is the capital town of Lesotho, and Leribe's urban area is nearest to Ficksburg across the border. Further unsystematic information collected by the researcher revealed that most of the respondents who reside in the urban areas in Leribe (Holtse) find a way into nearby farms and shops owned by white South Africans in Ficksburg to steal property. Leribe is mainly characterized by housebreaking, robbery and stock theft incident, which are economically motivated. The preponderance of most of the juveniles being residents of urban areas supports the ecological theory of the Chicago school, especially the social dis-organization theory of Shaw and Mckay (1942), who opined that delinquency opportunities are more apparent in the city neighbourhoods with conflict in values and cultures as opposed to the rural, simple, face to face environment where mechanical solidarity is pre-eminent. Similarly, it could be argued from the point of view of city

marginality and transition that Leribe and Maseru are urban neighbourhoods in Lesotho that share boundaries with South Africa. Both may be regarded as neighbourhoods in transition as many migrant workers in the neighbouring South African white owned farms and factories live there. The revelation that most residents from the urban areas are charged or convicted of housebreaking and other economic crimes, while those from rural areas were mostly implicated in sexual offences sheds some light on the priorities and interests of different groups of juveniles and opportunities available to commit such offences. In the real life situation, rural neighbourhoods with their traversed bushy pathways create ample opportunities for sexual offences, including rape, while the urban neighbourhoods with unequal distribution of economic resources and deprivation make them amenable to economically motivated offences like housebreaking, robbery and even fraud, which rarely happen in the rural areas.

Education is important and attending school may be regarded as decreasing chances of engaging in delinquency and increasing focus on constructive school work. However, the findings reveal that about two-third the population of the respondents was attending school at the point of their arrest or conviction, while the rest were not. Perhaps the juveniles tend to make more friends at school, and engage in delinquent behaviour together.

The greater number of males as opposed to females among the juveniles is in line and consonance with what has been established in some fundamental literature of criminology and sociology (Lauer 1998: 157; Hlabana 2004: 1) where it has been consistently found that males are more likely to be involved in lawbreaking and offences than female due to some sociological, biological and economic factors. Astonishingly, an important revelation of this study is that females were implicated to have committed stock theft at a far higher rate than their male counterparts, in which case the former comprises 66.7%, and the latter only 8.1%. This is a surprising and unexpected discovery especially in a patriarchal society like Lesotho, as females are believed to be rather weak to be involved in a tedious process like stock theft. Practically, stock theft entails certain skills of communication with animals, which under normal circumstances in Lesotho are possess-

ed by males who are herd boys, not females. Although, it may be too quick for one to conclude that this act of stock theft was executed by the females alone, without any sort of support or collaboration from their male supposed accomplices. There may obviously be some masculine undertone to this offence which was not revealed at the point of the discovery. However, the masculine connection with some sort of offences was demonstrated in the case of robbery, where it was found to be the most committed by males. The practicality of robbery involves a certain level of violence and boldness coupled with labeled stereotype of masculinity.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from this study that there are some social background patterns that are correlated with juvenile delinquencies. Even though some of the findings of this study are consistent with what exist in previous literature in criminology and sociology, there are some findings that appear to be at variant with already accepted notions. In-depth understanding of the pathways of these factors will lead to dealing with some of the problems and delinquencies that emanate from them. Besides, meaningful and expected outcome based rehabilitation and training of the juveniles will be achieved by instituting appropriate intervention programmes that are tailored according to the prevalent background factors or attributes of these juveniles. In other words, the ongoing social engineering process should target towards altering the social background.

NOTES

¹ The Maseru Juvenile Training Centre deals with the juveniles from a treatment approach, where there is counselling, provision of formal education, vocational training, and other activities including creative recreational activities such as sports. Means like church attendance are also used to resocialise the attitudes and behaviours of the juveniles. JTC has two compounds. One compound is that of girls and the other of boys. However, the girls move to the boys' campus to attend educational sessions. The formal education levels range from Primary education to High School education. The classes are of a common structure, where there are both boys and girls in a class. From early morning to 12:00 p.m. they attend educational sessions, except on weekends, where they engage in some organized activities such as football. In each compound there is a television set, where children watch refreshing programmes including movies.

² The study made use of the whole population as the sample because of the smallness of the entire study population.

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