



## On Family Causes in Juvenile Delinquency

LI Ruoyu<sup>[a],\*</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup>Institute for Human Rights, China University of Political Science and Law, Beijing, China.

\* Corresponding author.

Received 5 June 2020; accepted 14 August 2020

Published online 26 August 2020

### Abstract

Preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency is a social problem that countries in the world attach great importance to. Some scholars have listed juvenile delinquency as one of the world's three major public hazards, along with environmental pollution and drug trafficking. The family, as a community of people, plays an important role in any stage of a person's socialization process. Therefore, in the prevention and reduction of juvenile delinquency and crime, the family, as one of the most important factors for educating young people to ensure the healthy development of their psychology and behavior, is an indispensable line of defense.

**Key words:** Youth; Crime; Family prevention

Li, R. Y. (2020). On Family Causes in Juvenile Delinquency. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 21(1), 62-65. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/11803>  
 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/11803>

### I. INTRODUCTION

Preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency is a social problem that countries in the world pay great attention to. Some scholars have listed juvenile delinquency as one of the world's three major public hazards, along with environmental pollution and drug trafficking. Statistics from the China Youth Crime Research Association show that in recent years, the total number of juvenile delinquency has accounted for more than 70% of the total national criminal delinquency, of which 15- and 16-year-

old juvenile delinquency cases accounted for more than 70% of the total juvenile delinquency case. Juvenile delinquency is on the rise, and its transformation of characteristics from individual, loose, sudden, accidental to new features such as groupment, closeness, technical, repeated occurrence and "cross-infection" has seriously affected social order and the stability of people's daily lives. It affects thousands of households and becomes a major problem the society must face.

The family is a life community formed by people taking marriage and blood relationship as a link. As a cell of society, the family not only provides the basic environment for people's survival, but also decides the initial and most important form of human individual socialization. No matter at which stage of a person's socialization process, the role of the family is very important, especially in one's childhood. When a person is born, he or she is more like a small "animal" with genes of human nature. The socialization of a person begins from his or her family, and the degree and direction of the socialization depend on the family as well. The family environment is an important factor that affects the healthy development of children's psychology and behavior. Research data at home and abroad have shown that children's early life experience profoundly affects the development of their lives. Through the parenting behaviors of their parents, the social values, behaviors, attitude systems and social ethics are passed on to the children, and thus constitute the specific content and goals of children's socialization. Therefore, the quality of the family environment is very important for a person's growth. The famous British scholar Locke once pointed out: "The impression we got when we were young, even if it was extremely small, so small that it was almost unnoticeable, has a very significant and long-lasting effect." As one of the most important factors for educating the healthy development of young people's psychology and behavior, the family is an indispensable line of

defense in preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency. Therefore, in the study of criminology, the relationship between family environment and crime, especially the relationship with juvenile delinquency, has always received extensive attention. The following is a brief discussion of the poor family environment and its relationship with juvenile delinquency that have a greater relationship with the country's current juvenile delinquency.

## 2. SOME DEFECTS IN THE "FAMILY STRUCTURE"

### 2.1 Some Defects in the "Broken Family"

A "broken family" is also called an incomplete family or a defective family. It refers to a family lacking one or both parents, such as one or both parents die, the parents divorce, one or both parents are sentenced to prison for crime, the parents are separated for a long time, parents remarry, etc. Just as the alarm clock lacks gears and cannot run the time signal, the incompleteness of the family affects the normal function of the family as an organic whole, which leads to family failure to some extent.

Generally speaking, the father in a family normally will affect the child's strength, courage and authority etc., to make the child feel safe; and the mother will give the child meticulous care and consideration. Parents' roles are different from each other. They can complement each other and cooperate with each other, but they cannot replace each other. Children of single-parent families often have various adverse reactions in their young hearts due to lack of fatherly or motherly love, and can easily lead to psychological imbalances. Without the warmth and care of their parents as well as the protection and correct guidance of their families, children's normal needs are not reasonably met, and they often cannot support themselves. Therefore, these minors usually have a very strong material desire, accompanied by a strong sense of loneliness and frustration. When the reasonable needs of economic and emotional sustenance are not met, some people will choose crime to lead to a "false" happiness. According to a survey, 60.2% of the 1,634 juvenile delinquents in the Tama Junior College in Tokyo came from divorced families. The criminologists James Bray and Partick Brady have concluded after extensive clinical research on the children of broken families: "Compared with the children who lives in normal families, children that lives in broken families are more likely to exhibit behavioral anomie problems and inappropriate behaviors. Family breakdown is often associated with disharmony, conflict, hostility, and aggression, all of which are factors that cause juvenile delinquency." (Kang, 1998, p.636) American sociologists R. Amoto and B. Keith, through an empirical survey of more than 1,300 adolescents, found that family structure is the high risk factor and main cause

of adolescent deviant behavior, drug abuse, premature sexual experience, academic failure and emotional trauma. (Xu, 2004, p.211) All the conclusions above show that there is a close connection between the broken family and juvenile delinquency.

### 2.2 Some shortcomings when "family relations are not harmonious"

Disharmony family refers to the emotional dissonance between family members. The characteristic is that although the family structure is complete, the family is "psychologically broken" due to frequent noise and tension. The negative impact of family with parental disharmony on children can be summed up in five points: the first is to cause the children to suffer psychological trauma and "pollution"; the second is to cause the children to be distorted in character and personality; the third is to worsen the behaviors of the children; the fourth is to make the children's character worse; the fifth is to make the children form anti-social awareness. Specifically, the children living in inconsistent families are extremely emotionally lonely. They feel that they have no one to care about them and have no spiritual support. In order to find solace, they may interact with the bad groups in society or even run away from home, thereby sliding into the crowd of illegal and criminal. They witnessed how parents moved from harmony and love to swearing apart, which would make teenagers doubt the true feelings of the world, feel that the world is so unreliable and so untrustworthy between people. It is difficult for these children to establish a correct outlook on life and values. The long-term inner pain makes them unwilling to communicate with people. When they encounter problems, they choose closed-door thinking instead of the communication with other people. When their psychological balance cannot be balanced, they are likely to take extreme measures to deal with the problems. Criminologist Evan Rael, after studying the family of juvenile offenders, pointed out: "The conflict between the parents in a disharmony family is a more obvious precursor of juvenile crime than that in the broken family. Children's feelings about the happiness of their parents' marital status is a more meaningful factor of juvenile delinquency." Parental conflict is one of the important factors of juvenile delinquency, which has been recognized and generally accepted by people.

### 2.3 Some shortcomings in "improper family education"

In youth education, parents are the children's first teachers. Parents' education of their children is not only their duty, but also their social responsibility. The effectiveness of family education depends on family education methods to a large extent. Poor educational methods are an important factor leading to juvenile delinquency. There are several types of improper education that are more common in families in our country:

A. Pampering type. That is too much pampering, which manifests itself in being spoiled for the children, and obeying the children to do whatever they want. It is also a manifestation of excess kinship. This generation of parents of today's teenagers, mostly from families with many children, have experienced natural disasters and lived very hard in their childhood. Nowadays, living conditions have greatly improved, and each couple has only one child. Children often become the pearls of their parents. Therefore, parents love their children more and give their children everything they could to avoid the children suffering from their own suffering again. In that case, parents normally tend to blindly satisfy their children's excessive demand for substances. This often makes the children develop the following bad characters and behavior attitudes: (1) depressed, not thinking about making progress. The family's over-satisfaction with the children's material and physiological needs makes the children's inner emptiness and poverty, which making them short-sighted and unprogressive. (2) greedy to enjoy, so easy to do evil. Hands hold for clothes and mouth open for food. This kind of life makes children lazy and easily breed a sense of contempt for labor. (3) Self-centered. The life of a "little emperor" is easy for children to form a sense of selfishness. The children in the doting family have poor ability to live and study alone. They will not do anything when they are out of the house, and even when they begin to do something they are easily to feel frustration. Insufficient socialization, ignorance of human relationships, not good at dealing with interpersonal relationships, not welcomed by others in the society, lonely, low self-esteem, a strong sense of jealousy, all of which are the labels on them, causing them to take extreme actions to destroy people who are stronger than themselves at the end. Rousseau, the famous French thinker and educator, famously said: "Do you know what method can make your child an unfortunate person? This method is to obey him."

B. Brutal and rigid type. This kind of family has too high expectations for their children, but it lacks scientific and correct educational methods. Often regardless of the ability, interest and original level of their children, the most import goal of this kind of parents is that their children could become the people they want. Besides ignoring the children's thoughts and abilities, when the children are "disappointed", their parents always adopt the method of beating and scolding. The lack of "appreciative education" can easily make the child lose his motivation and doubt his own ability, so that the child can not feel warm, and has a strong confrontational psychology as well, whose personality is prone to abnormal development.

C. Discriminatory and abusive type. This type means to use brutal reprimand and corporal punishment to educate children. Children must obey the will of their

parents unconditionally. Once there is a little dissatisfied, the scold and corporal punishment will come. This kind of feudal dross of "filial sons under sticks" is a purely barbaric educational method, which is not only intolerable by modern civilized society, but also extremely detrimental to the healthy growth of children. It will hurt the children's self-esteem, induce lies, and lead to the confrontation between the children and their parents. Eventually, the children might break the pot and fall down, embarrass himself or herself, and embark on the road of illegal and criminal.

D. Laissez-faire type. That is, parents are indifferent to their children, letting go and give up or ignore the education to their children. It may be a busy job and no time to take care of the education of the children; it may be a laissez-faire at the beginning, neglecting the education of the children; or it may be a helpless choice after both hard and soft application are useless... No matter what the situation is, the parents are negligent. Adolescents are in the growing stage, they are weak in discriminating right from wrong, and lack the ability to evaluate their own behavior. If parents leave the children unattended and lack the emotional communication with the children, the most likely things to happen are that the children's psychological confusions and doubts cannot be promptly dealt with, the children's inner desires and needs cannot be satisfied, and the children's psychological comfort cannot be obtained. Furthermore, the children will form psychological barriers and personality defects such as depression, suspicion, irritability, indifference, loneliness, lack of sense of responsibility and compassion, and they are easy to contract bad habits under the influence of social unhealthy factors and embark on the path of illegal and criminal.

In summary, improper family education methods, no matter which one is, are one of the important factors that cause young people to produce psychological deviation and commit crimes.

---

### 3. NEGATIVE IMPACT OF "INCORRECT PARENTAL CONDUCT"

---

Parents and children get along day and night, and they are inseparably connected from feeling to economy, so parents are often the first objects of worship for their children. And minors are curious and vulnerable to hints and influences, good at imitating, have strong plasticity, but not good at discerning right from wrong, so they normally tend to imitate people they worship in their hearts. In that case, bad behaviors of parents are easily transmitted to their children, causing them to go astray. According to the investigation, with a father who did not commit crimes, only 8.4% of their children had a criminal history; with a father who committed a crime, the proportion of children with a criminal history was as

high as 37%. At the same time, with a mother committed a crime, the proportion of children with a criminal history was even more high to 46.5%. In 1992, the National Judicial Committee of the National People's Congress commissioned the China Youth Crime Research to conduct a large-scale investigation of youth crimes in eight provinces and cities. The survey was conducted in accordance with the sociological sampling method. The samples were taken from prisons, juvenile detention centers, reeducation centers, and labor schools, involving more than 2000 people in total. The results of the survey showed that among the juvenile delinquents, family members with criminal records accounted for 20.5%, of which 10.7% were serving sentences. Among the young criminals whose family members have a criminal record of crimes, about 50% believe that criminal family members have consciously imparted crime to them, or have a subtle influence. And the situation after their relatives committing crimes will cause them to have inferiority, self-abandonment, and indifferent psychology. (Guo, 2002) The conclusion of the British educator Neal is even more straightforward: "Problem teenagers are the product of problem parents." (Shang, 2004) It is clear that the relationship between the parents' bad behavior and the children's criminal behavior is close.

---

## CONCLUSION

For everyone, the family is the starting point of life, a haven of life and rest. The growth of every child is inseparable from parental upbringing, teaching and caring. Parents' words and teachings are essential to the healthy growth of children. If parents often care about and communicate with their children with love, the children might have compassion and responsibility with a high probability. The establishment of a child's sound personality can not be separated from the care and love of

parents. Giving the child an intimate hug, a happy smile, a focused look, a devoted conversation, and even a timely criticism will make the child feel that his or her parents are paying attention to him or her and loving him or her. The efforts of parents making for the peace and happiness of the family, and the sense of responsibility to society and family of parents, will form an invisible force in the minds of the children, helping them grow healthy and happy. Therefore, to do a good job in family education will stop the juvenile delinquency at the source. However, family education should also implement the policy of comprehensive development of morality, intelligence and physical fitness, and give top priority to moral education. Educate children how to be a person, to be a person who has both moral and academic excellence, to be a person who is good for the country, society and the people. Educate children to observe discipline and social ethics, be civilized and polite, be willing to help others, and not to do anything with selfishness or that harms others and public interests. We must cultivate and improve children's ideological and moral standards, fundamentally prevent the occurrence of criminal acts, and truly achieve the purpose of preventing and reducing juvenile crime. All in all, family peace is social peace, family harmony is social harmony.

---

## REFERENCES

- Guo, X. (2002). *Crime and governance theory* (p.484). Zhonghua Book Company.
- Kang, S. H. (1998). *Criminology—History, present stage and future* (p.636). Qunzhong Publishing House.
- Shang, X. Y. (2004). Family education should be the first defense line of preventing juvenile delinquency. *Issues on Juvenile Crimes and Delinquency*, (4), 23.
- Xu, Z. R. (Ed.) (2004). *Criminology* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p.211). The Law Press.