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SOME ISSUES AND PROBLEMS IN
CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH IN CRIMINOLOGY

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I. INTRODUCTION

Introducing a discussion on issues and problems in criminological cross-cultural research it seems to me that we should try to answer two preliminary questions. The first question is how we do explain the rather renewed interest of sociology and criminology in cross-cultural research. The second question is then what we may expect of cross-cultural research in terms of fundamental criminology as well as in terms of applied criminology.

1. The renewed interest in cross-cultural criminological research

Looking at changes in scientific thinking it may well be that the actual interest in cross-cultural research has been affected by new lines in research based on phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, labeling-theory and what is called ethno-methodology.

"Science" says Elliot "has grown out of common-sense concerns of daily life..... and the scientific investigator in fact never seriously departs from the world of everyday life" (1).

The great inspirer of phenomenology, Alfred Schutz claims that significant behavior is based on experience and on motivation. The scientific method to establish the subjective meaning of an individual's acts then consists in understanding his motivations, objective meaning constituting an abstraction from a whole of intersubjective meanings (2).

Summarizing the leading principles of this school of thinking we might say they plead for:

- returning to "things as they appear", to every day life, to common sense knowledge
- a profound understanding of subjective meaning of human action, action influenced by the past, the present and the future
- a far-reaching relativism that accentuates personal liberty and individual responsibility.

Research methodology puts heavy emphasis on qualitative methods; the study of personal documents, letters, life-histories, participant observation. This approach clearly is much like that of cultural

anthropologists and it is worth mentioning that the same cultural relativism prevails. In his interesting study on police practices and the definition of juvenile delinquency Cicourel shows how much our language, our concepts and our confidence in official records and statistics reflect the values and norms of our organizational bureaucratic and rational culture (3). In short recent sociological and criminological thinking has emphasized that the analysis of a social phenomenon like crime is dependent on time and space. In fact a social science like criminology forms itself a cultural expression of a specific period: its knowledge is not absolute but relative and changing. It is not difficult to see this how particular approach to social science (which is shared by American and European scholars alike) has raised a heightened consciousness of cultural differences affecting widely accepted sociological and criminological theories.

Therefore it seems all the more urgent to test existing theory in other cultural settings.

There might be however another factor accounting for the new emphasis on comparative research, and that is the changing position of American sociology and criminology within the developed world. It is an undeniable fact that -after having been dominated by European scholars- criminology as a discipline has been very much influenced by American sociology. Many of the well-known theories like differential association, anomie, differential opportunity and social control, have been developed by American sociologists. Moreover, after world war II, Anglo-saxon empiricism has spread all over the world, and has become the overall accepted scientific way of conducting criminological research. These circumstances have led many researchers, outside the U.S., to adopt and apply the major American theories without much questioning on how far-reaching the theories would be. But as economic and social development -since the sixties- reach American levels in many western and non-western countries, the social sciences have also developed. Research institutes have been founded which produce in many cases studies that can certainly meet international standards in terms of scientific sophistication.

It seems to me that outside as well as inside the U.S. there is a heightened awareness and a growing interest in this evolution, which may have caused a certain consciousness and sensitivity to the relativity of theoretic models designed in one specific cultural setting.

2. Functions of cross-cultural research

From a purely scientific point of view the importance of cross-cultural research in fundamental criminology lies in the possibility of finding out what elements of criminological theory have universal relevance, and what elements do rely too heavily on specific cultural characteristics. If we want to arrive at general abstractions that hold for human society as a whole, we are forced to study these fundamentals in the different types of economic, social and cultural settings men have chosen to organize their lives. In this way we may hope, not only to rid ourselves of much that is too particularistic to be relevant, but also to achieve a much more reliable accumulation of knowledge.

But criminology is not only a pure science. Many of our societies are facing more or less serious crime problems, and want criminology to help them solve these problems. In this respect also criminology can be very useful.

One of the reasons is that in our world geographical mobility is so great and contacts between nations are so frequent, that changes in criminal policy in one country very often have immediate effects on other countries. For example the Dutch liberal policy in so-called victim-less crimes like pornography, abortion and marihuana use, caused considerable emotion in many of our neighbouring-countries: in some instances this has led to a more tolerant attitude in these matters, in some other instances to a more hardened attitude. In both cases, however, scientific knowledge as to the effects of either policy is curiously lacking.

There seems indeed a need for comparative research into effects of specific policies with respect to comparable problems.

Implicit in this argument is the consideration -for reasons that cannot be developed here- that many of the essential problems policy makers meet present similar features.

Cross-cultural research, by spelling out the conditions under which problems as well as applied solutions vary, may make invaluable contributions to a better understanding of both the problems and the effects of particular solutions.

Let me just present one example of a clear need for cross-cultural research.

In most industrialized, urbanized societies juvenile delinquency rates increase: but the number of minors involved in the juvenile justice system do not increase in every country. In fact some countries present a considerable decrease in numbers of youngsters processed through the system during the last decade. The decrease shows a definite change in policy, in which both police and prosecutor unite in delaying as long as possible any official action. The policy is based on a certain number of assumptions:

1. all youngsters do commit a certain number of delinquent acts
2. the fact that some youngsters come in contact with judicial authorities is a matter of chance
3. judicial intervention has a labelling, and thus a delinquency-career promoting effect
4. the less intervention there is, the better the chances for re-establishing law-abiding behavior.

Obviously not all countries follow this pattern. Some do abstain from judicial intervention, but have developed other forms of social, medical or educational intervention. Others claim that it is still the prerogative of juvenile court to handle these matters. I feel that cross-cultural research into the different ways delinquent juveniles are handled would enable us to answer some particular important questions such as: does non-or least-intervention reduce delinquent behavior and/or recidivism; would processing delinquent youngsters through non-judicial channels reduce recidivism; and how do these policies compare with traditional juvenile court procedures. Of course these questions are stated in a simplified, too general way, and concrete research would meet with considerable problems concerning respective definitions of delinquency, categories of children processed through the system, and particularities in the way the different systems operate. Nonetheless I want to underline in this introduction the need we have for this type of cross-cultural research.

3. What is cross-cultural research

Although it is our aim to specify and spell out the characteristics of what may be considered as cross-cultural research, it seems useful to introduce some of the more simple and implicit ways in which researchers have tried to relate their study to studies done in different cultures. At a very simple level the researcher compares his results with those found in another part of the world. Even this is not always done: it is a remarkable fact that American academi&s rarely

mention any comparable research outside the U.S. The same is true for the French. On the other hand the Scandinavians, the English the Dutch and the German -as they are heavily influenced by Anglo-saxon social science- tend to be well informed on the research being done in the U.S. On a second level there is a testing of some part of existing theory, some theoretical principles or concepts. This is fairly often done but methodology used is not always very convincing: sometimes researchers are satisfied in just referring to some aspect of existing theory when this seems to fit their data; sometimes the concepts are tested in a very loose way, with the methods that are available at the moment.

A better design is the replication study in which a study conducted in one country is repeated in another country. As Mannheim points out, one can use a same or similar methodology on different material, or one can use different techniques on different material (4).

Finally, the best research design to my sense is the use of one and same design applied at the same time in different cultures by researchers and assistants of comparable educational level. In part IV of this paper I will suggest a more extensive outline of what I would define as real cross-cultural research.

II. THE CONTRIBUTION OF CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

It is an obvious fact that as far as our knowledge on different cultures is concerned, we owe a great deal to cultural anthropology. Many passionate debate in social and human sciences has been decisively affected by the contribution of cultural anthropology. I would like in this respect to review shortly two famous issues: the relationship of biological factors with sex-roles definitions, and Bowlby's theory on maternal deprivation.

1. Biological factors and sex-roles

Basing conclusions in terms of social behavior on visible characteristics like the shape of ones head or the building of ones body, as well as on non-visible characteristics like brain-contents or hormonal activity is nothing new. It has been done with respect to all kinds of behavior men have considered as deviant or different: criminality, mental illness, alcoholism, homosexuality, race, color and sex. Limiting ourselves to studies on sex-roles we should note a significant difference in outlook among students of sex-roles. Those who claim that sex-roles are roated in biological differences, base their claims most often on experimental psychological or ethological studies on rats, mice or apes (5). Those who claim sex-roles are primarily culturally ascribed roles base their conclusions on sociological and cultural-anthropological studies. In most studies a distinction is made between intelligence,perceptive and analytic abilities on the one hand, and personality differences on the other.

The majority of studies on sex-differences in I.Q. perceptive abilities and the like have been conducted in western societies and so we won't discuss them here. But differences in temperament and personality between the sexes have been thoroughly studied by cultural anthropologists. Their most important contribution lies in the fact that they have confronted us with our restricted ethnocentrism and naivety, making us think that our organization of the family and men-women relationship is the only possible one, and so must be based on "nature". Although specific biological differences cannot and should not be denied, the central issue is of course what significance these differences have for the organization of society, that is what social consequences we attach to them.

In this field cultural anthropology has learned in many lessons. A name that should be mentioned in this respect is Margaret Mead: the importance of her study "Sex and temperament in three primitive societies" can hardly be overestimated (7). Simplifying her findings for the case of brevity, one could say that in one of the observed societies she found practically no differentiation in sex-roles: both sexes had an equally important role in the upbringing of the children and the ideal adult had a friendly, warm, caring and rather passive nature (which is our ideal for a "real" woman). In another society Mead noticed an accentuation of -what we would consider- "masculine" characteristics- like independence, aggressivity and initiative in both sexes. In the third one she found a kind of reversal of our traditional sex-roles, the women having an important social, economic, and leading role while the men concentrated on the fine arts, wore ornaments and developed behavior-tendencies often characterized as feminine: easily hurt, inconsistent, capricious. Mead's study has been followed by a host of other studies: they all have in common that they relate sex-roles definitions to differing socialization practices.

Studies of cultural anthropologists do not invalidate studies of experimental psychologists on animals. The latter have however two related shortcomings: first they jump all too easily from observed behavior in animals to conclusions on human behavior; and second they tend to underestimate the important fact that human behavior is learned behavior. Cultural transmission and indoctrinations of values and norms are a powerful instrument to guarantee a culture's survival. Cultural anthropology has learned us that these norms and values may vary considerably: so our ideas about what is "natural" behavior are not so obvious as we thought they were.

2. The theory of maternal deprivation

In 1952 John Bowlby developed -in a report for the W.H.O.- a theory based on his clinical research on 40 young thieves in a psychiatric clinic. Bowlby claimed that a lack of maternal care and affection during the first 5 years of a child's life would lead to mental disturbances and delinquent behavior (8). His work had a tremendous influence in the western world and has constituted a justification for

linking women's role to the home and discouraging them to take jobs outside. Moreover the role of the mother as an educator was heavily emphasized as opposed to the fathers role, and when children got into trouble it was felt that the major responsibility was the mother's. Here again comparative cultural research has seriously amended Bowlby's theory. First cultural anthropologists have noted considerable variations in nature and amount of care and attention women pay to their young children. Care and attention generally depend on the tasks of women as providers of economic goods and food in their respective societies, as well as on the help they can dispose of in caring for the young child (9). Rarely do we meet the exclusive mother-child relationship we know in our society. Often father and mother share most responsibilities in educating the child.

As far as studies in juvenile delinquency are concerned, Hirschi noted that the critical variable in this case was not the fact that the mother was working, but the lack of adequate supervision (10).

This was borne out by a study on hidden delinquency I have conducted in Belgium: the fact that the mother held a job -which was the case of 50% of the mothers in a representative sample of 15-18 years youngsters- did not discriminate between those that did and those that did not report delinquent acts. The reason is simply that working mothers is an accepted phenomenon in Belgian society and adequate measures have been taken to take care of the children (school-lunches, homework-classes, and the like) (11).

Cultural anthropologists have noted that many societies acknowledge the importance of the father for the child's development. Malinowski observed -in studying Australian Aborigines- that when the father died before the birth of his child, the child would be killed by the mother; it was felt that the father's presence was absolutely indispensable for the child, so to let it live without his presence was quite unthinkable (12). Again with respect to juvenile delinquency, other researchers have emphasized the importance of the father especially as far as a boy's delinquent behavior is concerned. In England this was done by Andry: 54% of his delinquents against only 7% of his control-boys declared that their father should give them more affection. Andry showed that in the genesis of delinquent behavior the role of the father was more important than the role of the mother (13). I arrived

at the same conclusions in Belgium, although I would like to add that in general parental socialization practices and attitudes are of course not unrelated: in most families there is considerable interaction in this respect between the father and the mother. Summarizing my argument, I would say that cultural anthropology has been of great value in enlightening a number of issues, that were taken for granted in our society. Cultural anthropologists have helped us to discriminate between what holds for human societies in general, and what is design, choice and relevance for particular societies only. By doing so, they have amended, clarified and ameliorated many of our scientific theories.

III. CROSS-CULTURAL CRIMINOLOGY RESEARCH: SOME FINDINGS

Turning now to criminology, cross-cultural research certainly has made important contributions. It has led to the realization that crime and deviance are not the same phenomena all over the world. It has focused attention to the fact that the criminal justice system is not operating in the same way in every country; and finally it has led to the conclusion that crime cannot be explained by the same processes everywhere. We will review briefly these three points.

1. Pluralism in definition of criminality and deviance

In this section we refer to different definitions of crime given by societies or communities (the way researchers define crime and deviance is quite another matter). Perhaps we should start stressing that there is of course considerable agreement in most societies on what constitutes serious crime. Thus murder, violent assault, and theft of personal property are defined as crime in practically all societies. But here we are interested in differences not in similarities. A first type of differentials relate to what is sometimes called "victimless crime", that is acts that infringe on our norms of sexual morality and decent behavior. These norms have been slowly changing, but the direction and pace of change is not the same everywhere and so discrepancies arise between countries in definitions on what may be permitted and what should be punished. Thus homosexuality between consenting adults is still an offense in some countries and not so in others (up until this day homosexuals can be put in prison in some states of the U.S). The same is true for abortion: a crime in Belgium, abortion is no longer prosecuted in the Netherlands, and has been taken out of the penal law in France. Large differences exist in public views and tolerance with respect to this act. Comparable differences can be shown concerning other sexual offenses like pornography, exhibitionism or voyeurism. In the Netherlands, convictions for indecency declined by 69% in the 1964-1976 period, reflecting the more tolerant attitude towards all kinds of sexual behavior.

Another example is drug use. One could say that in some of the countries where large proportions of juveniles have adopted the use of marijuana,

these societies have developed a greater tolerance to the use after some time of adaptation.

In some cases this tolerance has led to a distinction between "ordinary" drugs and drugs "with unacceptable risks". In the Netherlands marijuana use and the possession of minimal quantities of the drug (30 gr.) are no longer considered as criminal offenses but as misdemeanors. But in other countries the same behavior may lead to several years of imprisonment. Let us recall in this respect that the labeling-school in particular has conducted many interesting studies of the ways people are defined as criminals or deviants and what effects this has on their self-perception and further behavior (14).

Another field where we meet much variation in definitions is juvenile delinquency. Some interesting data are given by LePoole in his comparative study on "Persons in need of supervision" of five Western European countries. (15). In the first place so-called "status-offenses" in the U.S., are not considered offenses in France, the Netherlands and West-Germany. Although in West Germany for example, juveniles are not allowed to smoke in public, the parents are held responsible. The same is true with respect to truancy in the Netherlands. In these 3 countries child protection measures for non-criminal misbehavior are authorized by criteria comparable to the U.S. proceedings in dependency and neglect cases. The criteria used refer to a "state of danger". In the Netherlands the juvenile court may order "supervision" when a child is "threatened by moral or physical ruin", in France "assistance in upbringing" is ordered when a minor's health, security, or morality are endangered or if his chances of receiving a proper upbringing are seriously jeopardized". The German code speaks about "threatening the mental or physical welfare of the child". The English and Swedish statutes are different in that they make a distinction between children who are the victims of misbehaving parents and children who behave themselves. Swedens legislation is most comparative to the U.S. with respect to status-offenders: children processed for non-criminal conduct are treated in the same way as children having committed crimes. What is however alike in all countries discussed is the extreme vagueness of the criteria applied: the authorities have considerable discretion in evaluating whether the facts indicate a state of physical or moral danger" of the child, or whether he should be labeled a delinquent.

Finally, cultural anthropologists have learned us that cultures, as well as sub-cultures, have their own definition of crime and sometimes the two will conflict. This process has been described by Sellin (16) and of course the U.S. have probably been more often confronted with this problem than any other country. An interesting example is given by Nader who describes the opposition between local law and national law in Sardinia. The example refers to cattle theft in Sardinia, an act that is viewed as an offense by the state law. But to Sardinian shepherds cattle theft is not regarded as a crime but as "movement of something from one place to another", and thus is the source of a dispute that should be settled amicably (17). It seems that the basis of this attitude lies in the element of distribution as a necessity in a system where scarcity is a determining factor. Another example is the definition of blood-revenge -the vendetta- as non-criminal in cultures in South-Italy or Latin-America. A final example is the definition of rape. In societies whose legal system is based on common law, rape is unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman by force and without her consent. A definition adopted in many American states views rape as the act of sexual intercourse with a woman other than the offender's wife, committed without her lawful consent. In primitive societies the concept of rape may take quite a variety of forms: some use rape as a sanction against unfaithful wives, others consider it as an interclan crime, or an extension of normal sexual contact in the winning of a bride from an adjunct tribe (18). We should mention also the definition of Brownmiller who defines rape -not as a sexual offense- but as a crime of violence, basing her definition on an extensive study of all accessible sources on rape (19).

The argument here -illustrated by some examples- is that there are similarities and disparities in the attitudes of different cultures towards crime. Researchers should be careful not to confuse the two, and specially not to project their own views of crime on other societies.

2. Differences in procedural justice

We all know that there exist differences in the way persons are processed through the various criminal justice systems. Differences in the organization of justice, such as the use of the prosecutorial system in some countries and not in others; differences in the use of various forms of punishment: long term imprisonment versus short term sentences, or capital punishment versus life-long sentences.

I would like to highlight the issue by taking again an example from the field of juvenile delinquency, and more specifically a comparison of the ways in which some countries try to handle "persons in need of supervision", or "status-offenders". Referring to the comparative study on five Western European countries (15) it appears that in some of the countries (e.g. Sweden) jurisdiction in these matters is with Child Welfare Boards (local administrative agencies) whereas in the continental countries these cases are handled by a specialized childrens judge (the Netherlands and France) or by a family-court (West-Germany). An important remark here is that the leading principle of action in all the countries is "the protection in the best interest of the child". This principle has in most countries led to a weakening of the procedural position of the child. Recently -and perhaps most vehemently in the U.S. (cf. the Gault-case)- there has been a critical reaction with respect to this situation, and slowly more safeguards for due process are introduced (the hearing of the child, the presence of a counsel). There exist however substantial differences between countries: in the Netherlands, the juvenile has hardly any rights during proceedings, in West-Germany both the parents and the juvenile must be heard, in France they both have a right to be represented by counsel. In the United Kingdom juvenile proceedings are very much like adult proceedings. Also in the Netherlands, the juvenile has no right to appeal at all, whereas in West-Germany he can not introduce appeal under the age of fourteen years; only in France has the juvenile himself an unqualified right to appeal. What are the measures applied in cases where children are "threatened by physical or moral danger?".

In the Netherlands, France and West-Germany measures imposed are "supervision" and "assistance in upbringing" (assistance éducative; Erziehungsbeistand). But there are differences in the organization of

the measures. Both in West-Germany and the Netherlands the court may appoint a "family-guardian" who gives the parents directives concerning the raising and care of the child in question, and helps and counsels the child in whatever problems there may be.

In France either an individual or an agency may be appointed to help and counsel the family. All the countries provide for the possibility of placing the juvenile outside his home (foster-family or institution) whenever the desired objectives are not reached.

Concluding this section it is interesting to note that contrary to the tendency in the U.S. to separate proceedings and treatment of juvenile delinquents and status-offenders, the trend in many European countries is to differentiate less rather than more among various categories of offenders. Basic leading principles here might be the desire to avoid stigmatization, as well as the feeling that these categories of offenders are not that different. Moreover it seems to me that the differences in proceedings and treatment of juvenile misbehavior, between the U.S. and some Western European countries as noted by LePoole, denote differing cultural values. In the U.S. much emphasis is put on due process, that is on a certain idea of justice and equal rights.

In Europe more emphasis is given (and perhaps more money and more provisions) to protecting and educating, and this value orientation entails more discretion and more measures imposed "for the best interest of the child". One of the results of cross-cultural research may be the discovering of different procedures reflecting differing cultural options in handling and treating crime and criminals.

IV. CROSS-CULTURAL CRIMINOLOGY RESEARCH: TESTING OF THEORY

If we define cross-cultural research as the simultaneous testing of criminological theory in different cultures, then the number of empirical studies is very small indeed. If we are satisfied with reviewing studies that have tried to test some -mostly American- theory or basic concepts in other countries, the number of studies is growing but still rather limited.

Yet we will discuss several of these empirical studies because they certainly give us valuable insights, as well as some suggestions for new avenues of research.

1. Anomie theory

One might -somewhat disrespectfully- say that if Durkheim is the grandfather, Merton is the father of anomie theory such as it has been applied in criminology (20). As I have mentioned earlier, after world war II social science and thus criminology, has been dominated by the United States and so it is no wonder that both anomie theory and its empirical testing were mostly an American matter. Cole and Zuckerman made an inventory of empirical and theoretical studies on anomie in 1964 (21).

Of 102 enumerated theoretical studies, 11 were written by non-Americans, including Durkheim's study on "De la division du travail social" from 1893. Out of 86 inventorized empirical studies, 10 were conducted in or implied other cultures than the American one. Merton's article on Social Structure and Anomie, has been written in 1938, the first American study on Anomie dates from 1941. The first study on a culture setting outside the U.S. is one by Rosenthal on social change in a Jewish community in Poland and took place after world war II in 1954.

Reviewing the studies on different countries, a majority is conducted by American scholars using as research data mostly official statistics, secondary sources and historical documents. Three studies also made use of qualitative data coming from field research, and two were based on questionnaire-surveys. Although the use that has been made of official documents is quite understandable, the method has its weakness -as we will see in the next session- especially with regard to verification in one culture of hypotheses developed in another culture.

What are the subjects selected for study in other countries? Summarizing briefly the problems as stated in the inventory we do get the following: the relation of Socio-economic status with success-values and with occupational aspirations; social change; social correlates of war, mental hospitalization, illegitimacy, and suicide; social control and deviant behavior.

With respect to research results I will review only those studies that are relevant to criminology.

One historical study on deviant behavior in China between 1600 and 1900, concluded that passing competitive examination for becoming a government official was a goal for all social strata, but as legitimate means to achieve this goal were not available to the lower classes deviant adaptations were more likely (22). In a study on crime homicide, suicide and crimes against property in Ceylon, data were provided by official records and interviews. Major findings supporting anomie theory were: 1) high crime rates in population segments reporting frustrations; 2) downward mobility is associated with high deviance rates; 3) high rates of frustration are accompanied by breakdown of traditional means of social control (23). Cressey and Krassowski compared social control in American prisons and in Russian labor camps and came to the -not altogether unexpected- conclusion that administrative practices, designed to prevent inmate organization, create anomie, which allows for effective control (24).

Finally, a study on suicide among different African tribes, based on official statistics as well as a field study, resulted in the following conclusions: 1) Anomic suicide is most prevalent in four specific African groups; 2) suicide is related to strains in the social structure and the inability of individuals to function in operating institutions; 3) male suicide is associated with status loss and conflicting norms; female suicide is associated with the instability of marriage (25).

Commenting on the rather meager results of this review, it should be kept in mind that at the time anomie theory was most influential, the level of empirical research in criminology was rather low in almost all countries except the U.S. This may be one of the reasons that account for the small number of studies implying countries other than the U.S.

2. Differential association

One problem of some sociological or psychological theories is, that because of their plausibility or simplicity, they rapidly become common property and are thoroughly assimilated. Thus their application by researchers becomes quite implicit and seems to need no further testing. This is the case for several of Frensd's hypotheses and it could also be true for Sutherland's theory of differential association. Reviewing for instance the literature on gang delinquency in different countries, it is surprising to note how often some of these hypotheses are accepted and used as an evidence needing no further proof. More surprising still, is that in many studies part of the theory is implicit without any mention to its specific character or its author. This makes it of course very difficult to discover clear cut cross-cultural testing of the theory. I will however present three examples of criminological studies in which differential association is explicitly tested. The first one has been done by Clinard who studied the relation of crime to the degree of urbanism. Urbanism was defined by impersonal social relationships, extensive geographical mobility and differential association. The research was a replication in Sweden, of an earlier study conducted in Iowa in 1940 by Clinard and its first replication in 1950 by Eastman (26). The replication was a real one, in that the methods applied in the earlier studies were closely followed. Interviews were conducted with 101 property offenders in detention, in the age-range of 17-29 years. The hypothesis related to differential association stated: "As urbanism is characterized by cultural heterogeneity criminal offenders tend to build up and pass on a cultural organization outside the traditional norms. As urbanism increases, networks of criminal relationships increase.....". The hypothesis was confirmed in all three studies, and there was a great similarity in findings. Moreover analysis of the boys joining a delinquent group at an early age, showed a progressive increase from farm to village to city, in the percentage of boys joining a delinquent group. The second study is no replication, but a testing of the theory, again in Sweden, conducted by Friday (27). The research implied the interviewing of a sample of first offenders of 15-20 years in the Stockholm area, as well as a control-group. Friday used a scale, developed by Voss, that proved adequate in discriminating between deviant and

control samples for differential association. In his Swedish study he found that over 50% of the deviant sample reported high associations with deviant patterns while only 12% reported low associations; in the control sample percentages were nearly exact opposite.

Finally I have myself tested the theory in a research on self-reported delinquency in Belgium. In doing so I tried to circumvent the problem of the "chicken and the egg" that always comes up when one studies recorded criminality, that is the problem of what comes first: differential association or being processed through the criminal justice system. 400 youngsters aged 15-18 years, constituting a representative sample of that age group in a large Belgian city were interviewed. The hypothesis was partly confirmed, in that youngsters reporting many offenses also had more friends that had been in contact with the police. In fact we found a Pearson correlation of +.45 between the number of friends who had contacts with the police and delinquent behavior. We also found that delinquent friends approve and support delinquent behavior and thus reduce attachment to conventional values. But other factors discriminated between youngsters with, and youngsters without delinquent friends. Those with delinquent friends also had poorer relations with their parents and were less committed to school. So it appears that weaker integration in conventional society leads to selecting the same kind of marginal youngsters as friends, who in turn reinforce deviant values and reduce barriers against delinquency (11).

3. Differential opportunity

Differential opportunity theory as stated by Cloward and Ohlin has known an enormous success in the United States (28). I am not certain the theory has been quite as popular in other countries, and more to the point, I don't know many studies having explicitly tried to test it outside the U.S.

In an earlier study I conducted in Belgium on young male property delinquents that had been adjudicated, I have looked on some of its concepts: the discrepancy between aspirations and expectations of the boys, economic and cultural barriers, and the presence of specialized gangs (29). None of the concepts were applicable in Belgian

society, except the cultural barriers: maintaining social class constant, parents of the control-boys had far more positive attitudes towards education and were more often pushing their sons into studying, than did parents of delinquents. One of the major reasons for the fact that economic barriers could not be found might be the absence of ghetto life conditions as they exist in the U.S. as well as the extended social security system that prevail in most European countries. Friday made an interesting distinction in his study of differential opportunity in Sweden (27): he distinguished between occupational opportunity and the more general economic opportunity, claiming that Swedish offenders were responding to peer influences and to their economic inability to compete for status rewards that are relevant to the youth themselves. This finding is of special interest in the light of the role of the peer-group that appeared to be so important in both our studies. Studying the interaction between the two variables, Friday concludes that the Swedish data suggest that serious youth deviation is best explained by a combination of both differential economic perception and differential association.

4. Social control or social integration

The body of social control- or social integration-theory has been developed by a number of researchers like Nye, Matza, Reckless and Hirschi (30).

Speaking in general terms, the concept of social integration includes four important criteria on which most social control theorists agree.

- close ties with significant others
- desire to conform, to commit oneself to conventional systems
- adequate functioning in relevant social sub-systems
- adoption of the general value pattern and social norms and respect for legal norms.

The theory states as its main hypothesis that the more a person is integrated in conventional society, the less he will be inclined to show delinquent behavior.

Although again most of the theorizing and research has been conducted in the U.S. we dispose of a few studies conducted in different cultures, which offer quite interesting perspectives as far as this theory is concerned. One of them has been conducted in the city of Kampala (Uganda). Two urban slums, one showing a high crime rate and the other a low crime rate, have been compared with respect to cultural, communicative, functional and normative integration (31).

Referring to our four criteria outlined above, this study found in the low crime area less mobility, more tribal homogeneity, more visiting of relatives more close friends from similar cultural background, more stable family relationships, and less individual isolation than in the high crime area. Although disapprobation of theft was the same in both areas, resident's perception of local criminality was much higher in the high crime area. Interestingly enough the important factor differentiating between the two local communities was the internal integration and cohesiveness and not the integration of the community within larger society. Males in the high crime area were both better educated and had higher occupations than males in the low crime area, whereas participation in larger urban, civic or political organizations did not show any difference. However, participation in local community organizations did differentiate between the two localities. The study suggests that internal relations and integration within the local community are more important with respect to norm-respecting behavior than integration into the larger society.

Comparative research is of course particularly useful in determining how forces of social integration and social control operate in different cultures and in this respect the social change processes in a country like Israel teach us interesting lessons.

One such study was done on crime patterns in the so-called new towns (32). The towns housed a majority of immigrants who came to Israel after 1948, and were located mainly in development areas. In these towns rates of juvenile delinquency were very much higher than in other types of settlement. Data were based on official published documents of 16 development towns. Despite the limitations of this rather crude material, analysis showed that among a total of 10 socioeconomic variables, four variables accounted for 66.3% of the variance in explaining delinquency: the extent of unemployment, the quality of elementary education, year of founding, and the proportion of natives born in the town.

Many of the immigrants came from Moslem countries, and became unemployed, underemployed or held low-status jobs. The authors stress the disintegrative effects of unemployment on the fathers' status, the functioning of the family and thus on the effective control over the behavior of the children.

Deficiency of education was measured by classroom overcrowding, a factor affecting the social control function of the school.

A significant factor was the year of founding of the towns: in the newer towns (founded after 1953) delinquency rates were considerably higher than in the older ones (founded between 1948 and 1953). Here again there had been a massive immigration wave from underdeveloped countries. This implied a larger proportion of youngsters, less family control and less informal control. Moreover the higher the proportion of native born immigrants, the higher the crime-rates, thus supporting Sellin's culture-conflict theory. Finally, the farther away a new town was located from big cities, the lower the recidivism-rates. The authors suggest an explanation that confirm Clinard's findings: the more isolated the community, the more socially cohesive the more integrated, and the more social control there is. Social integration theory also has recently been tested by Dylan. Dizon in the Philippines (33) and by myself in Belgium (11).

Dizon interviewed 600 youngsters in two cities (Mamilla and Bacolod) testing the effect of role relationships of adolescents as integrating factors on delinquency. Dizon found that three of the (five) variables constituting a so-called "intimacy"-factor, i.e. number of activities, frequency of interaction, and duration of interaction were moderately related to delinquent activity. He also found that close attachment with peers was related to delinquency, a relationship that was increased when the friends had delinquent activities.

It is interesting to note that Dizon's findings are very similar to those I found in the Belgian situation. Using several measures of integration it appeared that the less youngsters were integrated in the family, the school and work situation the higher they scored on frequency and seriousness of self-reported offenses: Youngsters with delinquent friends reported more as well as more serious offenses than those without such friends. In the Philippines peer attachment had a significant inverse relationship with adult attachment. In the same vein I have stated that a lack of social integration in such important sub-systems as the family and the school seemed to lead to attachment to other marginals, who support and reinforce deviant norms. It seems to me that social integration theory lends itself very well to cross-cultural research as it merely looks at the integration process of

youngsters in any culture, without specifying the contents of specific values and norms.

Concluding this section, one can not say much about the applicability of the theories, I have discussed here, in other cultures. Although some of them seem more promising than others, it is clear that there should be much more testing, with methods that will enable us to make more rigorous comparisons possible.

V. SOME PROBLEMS IN THE APPLICATION OF CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH

Agreeing on the necessity and usefulness of cross-cultural research, unfortunately does not solve the many problems where the actual research is concerned. Let us review some of the more salient questions that have been noted by different authors.

1. Problems of conceptualization and operationalization

When Clinard conducted his replication study in Sweden (26), he had to modify the word "arrests" because in Sweden the proceedings were not handled by the police and the courts, but by a special youth board. The same was true for the word "gang" which had a different connotation in Swedish. Friday met similar problems in his study of Stockholm youth when he found no equivalent term for "area" expressing the neighbourhood structure and organization. The concept simply did not have any meaning to the boys who always referred to the entire city in stead of their own living area. The same problems rose with respect to concepts as "organized crime", "police corruption", and "ghetto constraints", which had as a consequence to be dropped from the study (34). When researchers want to apply their instruments in other cultures they all meet the same problems of equivalence of indicators and equivalence of meaning, and often they have great difficulties in solving them. Levinson states that a rigorous cross-cultural study should control at least the following problems: unit definitions, sampling, regional variations, data paucity, untrustworthy data, validity, reliability and group significance (35).

2. Problems related to differences in legal procedures, and classification of crime

Several studies mentioned in this paper stressed the difficulties that arise in comparing countries with different legal provision and procedures. In some countries local law is slowly supplanted and suppressed by a system of more formal law causing specific conflicts that should be studied before any comparison of legal process can be made (17). But even among countries in Europe and the U.S. vast differences exist in statutory frameworks concerning such things as limitation on termination of parental rights, status offense jurisdiction, institutions that process juveniles (special boards, commissions or juvenile court), initiating of proceedings, rights of parties during proceedings, and disposition of offenders (15). It is quite clear that this situation

makes it extremely difficult to use official documents as a basis for comparison. This is all the more true for the comparison of crime statistics. Not only do countries differ in police and court organization, meaning of the same legal terms, but it is impossible to control for inadequacies and lack of uniformity in the collection and presentation of crime statistics (36). Great efforts have been deployed by an international group of experts (Economic and Social Council of the U.N.) to:

- prepare a standard classification of offenses and collection of criminal statistics with respect to criminal homicide, aggravated assault, robbery and burglary
- elaborate minimum standard for the collection, analysis and publication of criminal statistics.

After analysing 86 penal codes of 77 countries, it was concluded that the task was practically impossible. Vetere and Newman cite Interpol's comparative police statistics but they note serious deficiencies: lack of reliability, discontinuity in information, differences in definition of societal offenses.

The fact that crime statistics may cover such different data on referrals, arrests, court proceedings, convictions and prison population, makes them hard to use by either scientists or policy makers. This situation has led to the development of other types of studies such as self-report studies, victimization surveys, surveys on fear of crime and insecurity-feelings, evaluation of the police. The authors conclude that we may gain more insight in the complex interaction between criminality and the social structure if we include in our future analysis all sectors of the system of crime control, as well as social and economic variables like population structure, social class, urbanization, education, health, per capita income, unemployment. Trend-data as in the case of regularly repeated victimization studies, and the use of multiple socio-economic indicators may enhance the possibility to make comparative studies among different countries.

3. Problems related to differential operational definitions of crime

The point I want to stress here is the variety of definitions of what constitutes crime by researchers. Many researchers adopt legalistic definitions of crime in their own study, thus making comparisons among studies very hard indeed. This problems is quite apparent in many

studies that deal with hidden delinquency. Trying to compare my findings in Belgium with those that had been reported in other countries I found this to be impossible. The extent of hidden delinquency among youngsters depend of course on the researchers definition of delinquency. When Gold studied hidden delinquency in Flint, he included in his definition status-offenses, like truancy, running away from home, incorrigibility, and behavior such as physical violence against parents, sexual intercourse alcohol use, whereas I did include only acts that would have been considered as offenses if committed by an adult. Comparisons were also made hard because of different research populations: Christie and Anttila used army recruits (39), Buikhuisen took university students (40), Elmhorn and Gold interviewed younger children (38;41). And what if a researcher wants to study the incidence of rape in different cultures? Chappell noted the wide varieties that exist among primitive societies in the concept of rape, ranging from the use of group rape as a sanction against unfaithful wives to the absence of any notion of rape (37). As in Western societies rape is defined as the act of sexual intercourse with a women by force and without her consent, anal or oral acts of intercourse as well as homosexual assaults are excluded from this definition.

A rather obvious solution to this type of problems lies in a different approach by the researcher. Instead of adopting uncritically legal definitions, he should derive them logically from a conceptual framework rooted in criminological theory.

4. Problems in executing the research

Problems may also arise when we want to apply our own methodology or instruments in other cultures. I see essentially two problems. If we choose to use for instance a well-structured instrument so we can easily quantify results, our ethnocentricity may blind us to differences in meaning of concepts and operational indices, which will then impair validity. If we choose for open ended interviews or observation, the question of validity also looms large.

The same is true for interviewers or observers. Do we conduct the research ourselves or do we use local interviewers. In the latter case differential meanings of concepts and operational definitions add up to differences in perceptions and interpretation by interviewers, making our instrument less and less valid, and the interpretation of results

more and more hazardous.

The second problem arises when, having used a structured quantifiable instrument in the first place, we find ourselves unable to do so in a different cultural setting, and as a consequence are forced to make all kinds of adaptations to the local situation. This seems a weak design indeed, and I would express some doubts as to the question, whether these studies are at all comparable.

Finally, for reasons I have exposed, it is quite difficult, if not impossible to rely on official data for comparison of crime rates, arrests or convictions. Other methods must then be found to get a baseline of more reliable data.

5. Access to countries and local academics

In reviewing some of the social and political problems related to cross-cultural research Friday points out that in developing countries the local government as well as the local professional may benefit from the study. The first because of increased finances and possible usefulness of research results; the latter because of the prestige and possible research-techniques he may acquire (34).

He then goes on to argue that these benefits do not prevail in the developed and richer countries. His example of Sweden is confirmed by my own country. Most of the developed countries have by now their own experienced social research units. Some of them (Scandinavia, England, Netherlands) make extensive use of social research in the planning and implementation of research results in social policy. These governments do not see much use in hiring foreign researchers to do what their own researchers probably can do better. There also will be considerable resistance to let foreigners consult governmental documents, court files or police records. From the side of academics other problems may arise. In many of these countries sociology and criminology researchers begin to compete with American scholars in terms of methodological sophistication and scientific standards. They feel they have nothing to gain but much to lose in letting a foreigner conduct research in their country, publish the results and get the academic rewards, which all could be theirs.

To this we may add the difficulty for the foreign researcher in finding competent assistants, interviewers or observers, and train them adequately. Finally he may meet considerable resistance of respondents, who might

perceive the research as irrelevant or too exotic, and refuse to cooperate x).

Concluding this section it is only fair to say that cross-cultural research presents many problems that are hard to solve. May be an unattainable ideal for many, some will try their hand at it, and, in that process, develop new solutions. Let me offer a few suggestions as to how I would like such a study to be conducted.

x) Conducting his study among Dutch police-officers in 1976, Th. Ferdinand could not get the collaboration of one big city department because of these reasons.

VI. SUGGESTIONS FOR A CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH MODEL.

1. Several project-directors

The situation in which a researcher visits another country and tries to replicate a study he has been doing in his own country, does not seem ideal, unless the researcher in question is going to live in the country he wants to study. The best formula seems to be a partnership of two or more project directors, one for every country participating in the study. Moreover the project directors should be comparable in terms of scientific level and methodological knowledge. These are important pre-conditions for several reasons. First it means that all directors are equally involved in the study and so academic rewards are shared. Second the project directors would have a strategic position in introducing the study in their respective countries. Many of the resistances met by foreign researchers in introducing their study can thus be avoided. Having a stake in realizing the study, each project director will use all his influence to get the necessary collaboration. A third important reason is of course the know-how of each project-director of its own culture and local condition.

2. A common research design

Cross-cultural research means in the first place testing some criminological theory in different cultural settings. This implies that the project-directors agree, not only on which theory they would want to test, but also on the specific ways in which they will conduct the research. It is an essential requirement that theoretical concepts, operational definitions and methodology are one and the same, so that the only variation introduced will be the culture differentials. This sounds simple enough, but is of course hard to realize. Recalling the differences in legal definitions, legal procedures and the processing of offenders through the criminal justice system, it is clear that this phase of the research will be difficult and time-consuming.

3. The methodology used

In view of the specific problems characterizing cross-cultural research, I would propose some sort of neo-positivistic methodology. This means researchers may use statistics, structured interview schedules, in short all kinds of data that are as unambiguous as possible and can be easily quantified. The point I want to make is not that of my personal bias, but the realization that using qualitative data, like for instance participant observation, will make exact comparisons extremely difficult. Qualitative data always imply interpretation of meaning: how is one to control the differences in perceptions and interpretation resulting from cultural differentiation?

In the case of structured instruments, mutual agreement among researchers as well as the pre-testing of the instrument, can offer some guarantees of comparability. In the case of qualitative methods this becomes much more difficult, and the validity of the study would certainly suffer.

4. Execution of the research

It obviously seems advisable to use as interviewers -or observers- in a given culture, members of that same culture. I would even recommend to use in all participant countries the same type of interviewers, for instance students, social workers or professional interviewers. In this way one would avoid having student interviewers in one country, and professional ones in another. The point is that in considerably differing cultures, using different categories of interviewers might again mean loss of reliability and validity of the study. In fact I would extend the argument to all personnel implied in the study: those who train the interviewers, who do the coding of results, who do the programming, and who make the first analysis.

5. Analysis and interpretation

At this moment the project-leaders should again operate together. It seems essential that the same type of computer techniques, tests and frame of analysis should be used for each sub-study, in order to make optimal comparisons possible. Only then will the research lead to meaningful interpretations and conclusions.

In short: the essence of the proposed model lies in the consideration that differences in culture are so encompassing and pervasive that we should do our utmost to eliminate or reduce all other possible sources of variation that could diminish the validity of our findings. If we succeed in this endeavor, cross-cultural research will prove to be one of the most powerful tools in advancing fundamental as well as applied criminology.

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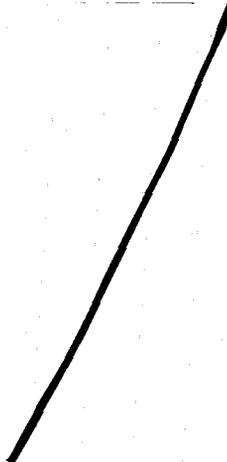
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