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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THEORIES OF GANG DELINQUENCY: A REVIEW AND A REVISION

by

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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THEORIES OF GANG DELINQUENCY: A REVIEW AND A REVISION submitted by James A. Vantour in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the empirical literature on subcultural delinquency with a view to developing a more realistic description of the phenomenon than that which is presented in the classical delinquent subculture theories.

It notes the need for a reassessment of subcultural delinquency since there is: a lack of clarity in the literature regarding the meaning of "subculture" and the fact that the term is used interchangeably with "gang:" contradictory arguments in the theoretical formulations; and, more significantly, a lack of support for such formulations in the results of empirical research.

The study examines various dimensions of the gang delinquent's illegal behaviour and analyzes the nature of the collectivity including types of participants and the nature and patterns of the interaction which are characteristic of the collectivity.

Provided with empirical evidence on these matters, the major foci of analysis are:

1. The question of the participant's commitment to the collectivity and to delinquent values, contrasting the empirical findings with the emphasis in the theoretical literature on the notion of "contraculture."
2. The question of the cohesiveness of the collectivity.

There is little evidence to support the notion of a cohesive collectivity and the participants' commitment to delinquent values. As a result, the concept of a "subculture of delinquency" is proposed as a more adequate description of the phenomenon than "contraculture."

The processes by which youth come to participate in the subculture of delinquency, commit delinquent acts, and cease their participation are examined.

The conceptual framework developed questions the emphasis in the literature on strain or class frustration as crucial to the commission of illegal acts and emphasizes instead peer interaction.

The study urges researchers to reevaluate lower class delinquency in the light of a new conceptual framework and also consider its utility as a vehicle by which other types of delinquency may be examined. It stresses the need for further research.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine certain aspects of what has traditionally been referred to as "subcultural" delinquency, generally considered to be most prevalent in the lower class neighborhoods of urban areas.

Sociologists concerned with the problem of delinquency have long recognized that most delinquent behaviour is peer-based,[1] and the term "gang" has been used extensively in the literature to depict at least a part of this phenomenon.[2] Dale Hardman, in a historical review of gang research,[3] suggests that the period between 1900 and 1930 represented the pioneering era on adolescent gangs and was exemplified by Frederic Thrasher's classic, The Gang, published in 1927.[4] Since then, according to Hardman, four additional periods can be identified in gang research.[5]

Recent years, however, have been characterized by a focus on the concept of "subculture" which has assumed a place of considerable prominence in the delinquency literature. In fact, it is possible to delineate the analysis of the delinquent subculture for separate consideration.

It is generally felt that the subcultural period began in the early 1950's, as David Bordua suggests:

> It is not clear when such terms as delinquent patterns, delinquent traditions, and the like became theoretically formalized under the label "subculture." It is clear, however, that the first major theorist to develop a theory of delinquent subculture was Cohen, in his now classic book, Delinquent Boys. Since that time several other treatments of gang delinquency, broadly or specifically in the subcultural vein, have appeared.[6]

David Downes notes the shift in concepts as well:

> Since 1955, when Albert Cohen first employed the concept of the subculture in relation to certain forms of juvenile delinquency, the term "delinquent subculture" had become imbedded in criminological vocabulary.[7]

If the concept of "subculture" is considered in a historical perspective, two distinct periods in its use in delinquency are evident. The first was an age of theorizing in the 1950's[8] which was followed by a decade of empirical research.[9]

A PERIOD OF THEORIZING

This period, as noted, received its impetus from Albert K. Cohen's Delinquent Boys in 1955[10] and was followed by Walter Miller's "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency,[11] in 1958, and Delinquency and Opportunity by Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin in 1960.[12] These constitute the dominant formulations of the contemporary period.

Don C. Gibbons points out that "A massive collection of argument and counterargument has grown out of Cohen's initial insights,"[13] and debate continues as to the comparative merits of each of the major arguments.

The result of these contradictions in the theoretical literature was various empirical studies designed to investigate the claims made by the above theorists. The delinquency literature, then, contains many studies that use as a basis the concept of the delinquent subculture. Most of the researchers have attempted to follow up the contentions of the major proponents of the subcultural notion.

Cohen accounted for the content of the subculture by explaining its origins. Cloward and Ohlin emphasized different types of social structures which give rise to specialized kinds of delinquent adaptations. Miller saw subcultural delinquency originating in the structure of lower class life itself as opposed to the Cohen and the Cloward and Ohlin formulations which focused on the lower class youth's conflicts with the middle class value system.

These notions - the nature and variations of delinquent subcultures, the origins of the phenomenon, the distinctively unique value system of its members, and the organizational and behavioural characteristics of the subcultures - are heavily emphasized in all delinquency texts. This occurs despite a two-fold problem:

1. Although the explanatory arguments in the original formulations detail the origin and content of the subculture, they do not consider behavioural and organizational dimensions. Comments on these factors in secondary sources appear to be simply inferred from the original formulations.

Malcolm Klein suggests that:

> Although the literature on gang delinquency contains many references to the size and structure of delinquent gangs, most of these are impressionistic at best...[14]

Leonard Savitz shares this concern, commenting that

> The degree of formal organization necessary, the minimum (and maximum?) number of members required (Can there be a two-person gang?), and the degree of control that must be exercised over the individual members of the group are simply not dealt with.[15]

2. More important, the basic unit of analysis - the subculture - is poorly defined.

That the term has not been adequately defined is attested to by a number of theorists,[16] including Wolfgang and Ferracuti who state that the subcultural theorists "do not address themselves to the difficult problem of defining the meaning of subculture more precisely."[17] The confusion in the literature over its meaning is "as if accelerated use of the concept has caught us unawares,"[18] or as David Downes suggests,

> the novelty of applying 'subculture' to certain forms of delinquency obscured the difficulties in the way of using the concept at all.[19]

The confusion over the meaning of the term has been enhanced by the tendency to equate the term with "gang."[20] David Downes points out that "Cohen implicitly equates gang-life with the 'delinquent subculture'.[21] That this confusion exists is evident too from the Cloward-Ohlin introduction wherein they suggest that "This book is about delinquent gangs, or subcultures..."[22]

To further add to the lack of clarity, Savitz suggests that for the concept "gang" as the concept "subculture,"

> there is as yet no commonly used definition... nor any general consensus in the field on what constitutes a gang.[23]

He goes on to say:

> All too often, what is found is an implicit assumption that we all somehow know what a gang is and that there is no need to try to define it.[24]

The theoretical formulations, despite this major shortcoming, did represent useful heuristic devices in that they generated further analysis of the group delinquency phenomenon. One must ask, then, what progress has been made in the understanding of the area since the original theoretical formulations? What do the empirical studies reveal about the explanations of the fifties?

A DECADE OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The period of theorizing was followed by a decade of empirical research in which one of the dominant thrusts was an attempt to test the subcultural explanations.

Although students of delinquency have not been overwhelmed with data from empirical investigations, there is enough evidence to cause one to critically reflect on these explanations. What has the study of delinquency gained from this body of data?

Hirschi and Selvin note

> a free-floating quality of delinquency theory: that it is relatively unaffected by the results of research. This is not to say that delinquency theory is too abstract, but rather that it is high time for researchers to become more aggressive in spelling out the implications of their findings for current theories.[25]

Gunnar Myrdal pointed to the complexity of this problem, however, by suggesting that

> In out present situation the task is not, as it is sometimes assumed, the relatively easy one of filling "empty boxes" of theory with the content of empirical knowledge about reality, for our theoretical boxes are empty primarily because they are not built to hold reality. We need new theories which, however abstract, are more realistic in the sense that they are more adequate to the fact.[26]

Bearing on this point and specifically related to subcultural theories, David Arnold suggests:

> Sociologists, like all other members of society, tend to reify their concepts. Once we decided that imposing the concept "subculture" on reality helps us to understand that reality, we risk forgetting that the concept began as an artificial construct.[27]

Short makes a similar observation in a discussion of the Cloward-Ohlin formulation:

> It may be, too, that the specialized adaptations delineated by Cloward and Ohlin should be regarded as "ideal types" isolated for theoretical and heuristic purposes, rather than as descriptions of reality.[28]

That this is the case is evident from the following statement by Cloward and Ohlin:

> At any one point in time, however, the extent to which the norms of the delinquent subculture control behaviour will vary from one member to another. Accordingly, descriptions of these subcultures must be stated in terms of the fully indoctrinated member rather than the average member. Only in this way can the distinctiveness of delinquent styles of life be made clear.[29]

Arnold shares Cohen's concern about the Cloward-Ohlin work as indicated by his reply to their statement:

> What distinctiveness? One imposed by the conceptual framework of the sociologist? ... Cloward and Ohlin are discussing sociological description, and for this goal their proposal does have some merit.[30]

For these reasons, the empirical data collected to date often does not, as will be shown, fit the "empty boxes" of theory characteristic of the literature of subcultural delinquency. Although researchers appear reluctant to spell out the implications of their work, their evidence seems to suggest a need for a new explanation, one presenting a somewhat different picture of subcultural delinquency than that presented by the subcultural explanations of the fifties.

David Downes asserts that

> studies which have...applied the concept (subculture) in research have produced relatively 'thin' supportive material and some data which appear at odds with the concept of the delinquent subculture itself.[31]

The systematic study and organization of relevant research material available will provide a more promising starting point for future inquiries in that the emerging picture should be more realistic than the present theories indicate. Although we have seen little in the way of a pay-off for our research efforts to date, the systematic analysis of the empirical studies, taken collectively, should be fruitful in that there may be similarities in findings in various studies thus adding support to the conclusion of any one study or to the development of more adequate formulations.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop a more realistic picture of the phenomenon traditionally known as subcultural delinquency and thereby arrive at a more adequate definition of the term "delinquent subculture" than presently exists, and to distinguish it from the term "gang" with which it has been used synonymously.

Only some of the many possible factors that could be studied in this context will be considered. The focus will be on those basic factors that have generally been assumed or taken for granted, based on theoretical explan-

ations of Cohen and Cloward and Ohlin.

James Short suggests that

> The answer to why gang delinquency exists - in its predatory, violent, and retreatist forms - resolves into questions concerning the nature of the groups in which it is found, of the individuals comprising them, and of interaction within them.[32]

LaMar Empey emphasizes this point as well:

> What is not well established is a consensus regarding the nature of delinquent groups - the cohesiveness, the structural qualities, their subcultural characteristics.[33]

The author accepts Malcolm Klein's suggestion that one should

> back-track in order to establish the relationship between delinquency and companionship, taking first things first...[34]

If these basic factors that have been more or less taken for granted are considered first, then it is possible to work toward a more useful definition of the collective nature of delinquent behaviour.

The following issues will be considered:

1. The behaviour dimensions of gang delinquency including an analysis of the kinds of behaviour that individual gang members engage in; the frequency with which they engage in actual acts of delinquency; the offence behaviour of gangs as a unit; and the stability patterns over time.
2. The collective nature of the delinquent act.

3. The character of the delinquent act; specifically, the degree to which delinquent acts are planned and calculated.
4. The nature of the gang including the "types" of members based on degree and frequency of interaction.
5. The nature of the interaction that characterizes the gang.

By examining the nature, frequency, and degree of interaction, and the degree and frequency of involvement in delinquent acts, two further issues may be considered:

6. The nature of the member's commitment to the gang, and,
7. The cohesiveness of the gang.

The general notion of subculture implies a cohesive unit, one with a distinctive set of values to which individual members have a strong sense of commitment.

The goal, then, is to develop a more realistic description of subcultural delinquency derived from empirical studies which will provide a more promising avenue for future research and thus, hopefully, a greater payoff in attempts to understand the "subcultural" phenomenon.

Three notes of caution are necessary. First, generally investigations conducted in the lower classes of the urban areas are considered since it is in these areas that the delinquent subculture or gang is said to flourish,[35]

and it is in these areas that the major research studies have been done.

Secondly, it is necessary to comment on the methodological adequacy of the empirical studies used. It is not being claimed that because a study is used here it meets rigorous criteria of validity and reliability. Although no attempt will be made to evaluate the methodology of individual studies, a few general comments are in order.

In studies citing official reports of offence behaviour, the exact number of offences per individual are less important than the profiles indicating the types of offences which are prevalent.

In other studies having to do with types of gang members and their degree of participation, the method generally used is that of simple enumeration by detached workers and is reported in percentages or systematic descriptions. These will be analyzed in terms of the patterns of behaviour implied or identified.

Agreement among different researchers lends support to the reliability of any one study regardless of the methods employed. The findings of the studies used here are not considered to be conclusive evidence that certain factors do or do not exist. Rather, the consistency of results is used to generate reasonable and alternative explanations.

of the phenomenon in question. Contradictions between reports will be discussed throughout the dissertation.

Thirdly, there exists a problem in terminology. As noted, the terms "subculture" and "gang" lack clarity and are often used interchangeably. In considering the research reports on the subject, this dissertation will work with the terms used in the original reports. In the analysis of the several reports, the neutral term "collectivity" will be used in order to avoid the ambiguous and varied terminology that already exists. A consideration of terminology is a vital aspect of this dissertation.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Clifford R. Shaw, Henry D. McKay, Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., and Harvey W. Zorbaugh, Delinquency Areas, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929; Edwin H. Sutherland, Principles of Criminology, Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Company, 1939. See the following for additional bibliographical material: Thomas G. Eynon and Walter C. Reckless, "Companionship at Delinquency Onset," British Journal of Criminology, XIII (October, 1961), pp. 162-170; LaMar T. Empey, "Delinquency Theory and Recent Research," Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, IV (1967) pp. 28-42.

2. See David J. Bordua, "A Critique of Sociological Interpretations of Gang Delinquency," in The Sociology of Crime and Delinquency, Marvin E. Wolfgang, Leonard Savitz, and Norman Johnston (Ed.), New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 1962, pp. 289-301; David O. Arnold, The Sociology of Subcultures, Berkeley: Glendessary Press, 1970; Frederic M. Thrasher, The Gang, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927.

3. Dale G. Hardman, "Historical Perspectives of Gang Research," Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, IV (1967) pp. 5-27.

4. Thrasher, The Gang.

5. In addition to the pioneer studies (1900-1930) Hardman lists: the depression studies, emphasizing social causality (1930-1943); the war years, emphasizing factor studies (1940-1950); descriptive studies (1942-1962); a decade of theory (1950-1960). See Hardman, "Historical Perspectives of Gang Research," p. 5.

6. David J. Bordua, "Sociological Perspectives," in Social Deviancy Among Youth, William F. Wattenberg (Ed.) The National Society for the Study of Education, 1966. p. 87.

7. David M. Downes, The Delinquent Solution, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1966. p. 1.

8. See Hardman, "Historical Perspectives of Gang Research," p. 5; Lewis Yablonsky, The Violent Gang, Baltimore: Penguin Books Inc, 1962, p. 114.

9. See James F. Short, Jr., "Introduction," Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, IV (1967) p. 4; Don C. Gibbons, Delinquent Behaviour, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970, p. 114.

10. Albert K. Cohen, Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang, New York: Free Press, 1955.

11. Walter B. Miller, "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency," Journal of Social Issues, 14, No. 3 (1958), pp. 5-19.

12. Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd E. Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity: A Theory of Delinquent Gangs, New York: Free Press, 1960.

13. Don C. Gibbons, Delinquent Behaviour, p. 114.

14. Malcolm W. Klein, "Internal Structures and Age Distributions in Four Delinquent Negro Gangs," Paper presented at the annual meetings of the California State Psychological Association, Los Angeles, December, 1964, p. 1.

15. Leonard Savitz, Dilemmas in Criminology, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1967, p. 60.

16. David M. Downes, The Delinquent Solution, pp. 2, 13; J. Milton Yinger, "Contraculture and Subculture," American Sociological Review, 25, No. 5 (October, 1960), p. 625; Malcolm W. Klein, "On the Group Context of Delinquency," Sociology and Social Research, 54, No. 1, (October, 1969) p. 69; Donald R. Cressey and David A. Ward, Delinquency, Crime, and Social Process, New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1969, p. 637.

17. Marvin E. Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti, The Subculture of Violence: Towards an Integrated Theory in Criminology, London: Tavistock Publications Limited, 1967, p. 99.

18. Arnold, The Sociology of Subcultures, p. 3.

19. Downes, The Delinquent Solution, p. 2.

20. James F. Short, Jr. emphasizes the need to distinguish between the two terms. See "Introduction," Gang Delinquency and Delinquent Subcultures, James F. Short, Jr. (Ed.) New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Incorporated, 1968, p. 9. See also Paul Lerman, "Gangs, Networks, and Subcultural Delinquency," American Journal of Sociology, 73, (July, 1967) p. 64.

21. Downes, The Delinquent Solution, p. 12.

22. Cloward and Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity, p. 1.

23. Savitz, Dilemmas in Criminology, p. 60.

24. Ibid., p. 60.

25. Travis Hirschi and Hanan Selvin, Delinquency Research: An Appraisal of Analytic Methods, New York: Free Press, 1967, p. 183.

26. Gunnar Myrdal, "Value and Social Theory," A Selection of Essays on Methodology, Paul Streeten (Ed.) New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958, p. 236.

27. Arnold, The Sociology of Subcultures, p. 38.

28. James F. Short, "Introduction to the Abridged Edition," in Thrasher, The Gang, p. xxxiii.

29. Cloward and Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity, p. 22.

30. Arnold, The Sociology of Subcultures, p. 87.

31. Downes, The Delinquent Solution, p. 84.

32. Short, "Introduction," Gang Delinquency and Delinquent Subcultures, p. 9.

33. Empey, "Delinquency Theory and Recent Research," p. 33.

34. Klein, "On the Group Context of Delinquency," p. 69.

35. See, for example, Cohen, Delinquent Boys, p. 13.

CHAPTER II

BEHAVIOURAL DIMENSIONS OF GANG DELINQUENCY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines behavioural dimensions of subcultural or gang delinquency: it attempts to determine through published research literature, what kinds of delinquent acts gang members and, indeed, gangs as a unit, engage in. In addition, it is an attempt to determine if the offence behaviour of gang members is characterized by stability or versatility.

Speculative and theoretical literature on the behavioural dimensions of gang delinquency is common; much more so than actual empirical studies. The specialized criminal, conflict and retreatist adaptations expressed by Cloward and Ohlin are perhaps the most oft-cited examples of what gang members do. The assumption, based on the Cloward-Ohlin formulation, is that there are relatively specialized gangs with some degree of stability in their pattern of delinquent activity.

The empirical studies that do address themselves to the question of offence behaviour rarely specify that their unit of analysis represents a particular specialized adapt-

ation. In fact, the authors rarely indicate what the terms "gang" or "subculture" mean to them. Nevertheless, they are studying collectivities that are generally recognized by the public, police, and various helping agencies as "gangs."

Since the studies cited in this chapter have been conducted in areas where, according to all theoretical literature, the gang ought to be most prevalent and in its "purest" form, we assume that the unit under consideration will in fact be an identifiable collectivity as opposed to a random selection of delinquent youth in a given area, although it is doubtful that it will approximate the Cloward-Ohlin "ideal type." We are acknowledging, then, the existence of delinquent collectivities for purposes of considering offence behaviour, and will consider the question of the nature of that collectivity in the following chapter.

OFFENCE BEHAVIOUR OF DELINQUENT GANG MEMBERS

Malcolm Klein reports offence figures for 576 Negro male gang members in Los Angeles.[1] His findings represent partial results of a five year field research project and are based on official police charges against gang members. All members were affiliated with

> traditional ("area," "vertical") gang clusters, each consisting of several age-graded sub-groups which had existed for from ten to thirty-five years.[2]

thus distinguishing this type of collectivity from a more transient or spontaneous type and thereby focusing on the type approximating the description most often presented in the literature. The offence distribution, as shown in Table I, suggests that the members of the study gangs display a diversity of offence behaviour rather than specialization.

TABLE I

OFFICIAL OFFENCE BEHAVIOUR OF NEGRO MALE GANG MEMBERS IN LOS ANGELES

Offence	Percentage of Toal Number of Delinquent Acts
thefts of various kinds (mostly petty)	26%
juvenile status offences	17
auto thefts	14
assaults	13
use of drugs and alcohol	10
miscellaneous	20

Source: Malcolm W. Klein, "Impressions of Juvenile Gang Members," Adolescence, 3, No. 9, (Spring, 1968) p. 74.

Gerald Robin's figures on twenty-seven known delinquent male Negro gangs in Philadelphia reveal a similar pattern.[3] (See Table 2) The gangs included 918 persons, aged eleven to twenty-five, 711 of whom had police records. (It is notable that 22% of gang members did not have police records.) These police records were used as the

source of data on offence behaviour. Since 53 per cent of the gang members were past the age of eighteen years, the data available was not collected on a juvenile universe but on a universe of individuals who had once belonged to juvenile gangs.

TABLE 2

OFFICIAL OFFENCE BEHAVIOUR OF NEGRO MALE GANG MEMBERS IN PHILADELPHIA

Offence	Percentage of Total Number of Delinquent Acts
violently person-oriented	13.4%
property-oriented	25.0
general disorderly conduct	37.0
distinctively juvenile	18.0
others	7.0

Source: Gerald D. Robin, "Gang Member Delinquency in Philadelphia," Juvenile Gangs in Context, Malcolm W. Klein (Ed.), Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1967. p. 19.

Similarities between Tables 1 and 2 are evident. Both imply a diversity of offences on the part of gang members,[4] as well as the fact that approximately two-thirds of the offences were of a minor nature.

Walter Miller reports on an extensive study of youth gangs in the mid-fifties in Midcity, a slum district of about 100,000 persons.[5] He obtained information on one hundred and fifty corner gangs including about 4,500 males and females between the ages of twelve and twenty. Detailed study focused on twenty-one gangs with about 700 members chosen primarily because of their reputations as the

"toughest." Data was derived from field records based on daily contact for about two years per gang. Seven of the gangs were dubbed "intensive-observation" gangs and had a total membership of about 205. The findings presented are based on the experience of the seven intensive-observation gangs (including two female gangs) along with the experiences of fourteen male gangs (293 members) including the five male intensive-observation gangs. Official criminal records were used for the fourteen gangs in addition to field-recorded behaviour (actions and sentiments of the seven intensive-observation gangs related to assault) and field-recorded crimes (illegal acts of assault and property damage engaged in by the members of the seven intensive study gangs).

Miller reports that the number of "arrestable" incidents of theft was more than twice the number for assaults. These two offences were the most frequent. For the age period fifteen to eighteen, 37 per cent of all known illegal actions and 54 per cent of "major" offences involved a form of theft. These figures for theft approximate those presented by Klein and Robin.

It is interesting to note that whereas Klein and Robin do not hypothesize as to the nature or orientation of the delinquent collectivities being studied, Miller did choose his on their reputation as the "toughest," implying

a predominance of violence-oriented behaviour which, according to his figures, is not the case. The evidence at this point seems to indicate that theft is the predominant delinquent activity although this does not rule out the possibility that Miller's gangs were still "tougher" than any others in Midcity.

Another study - one of the most comprehensive ever undertaken - was conducted in the city of Chicago by James Short, Jr. and Fred Strodtbeck.[6] It was directed toward seeking out and analysing three different types of gangs representing three types of behavioural specializations commonly referred to in the delinquency literature: conflict, criminal and retreatist.[7] They report that they were unsuccessful in locating a criminal (theft-oriented) gang and, after one year of searching, could locate only one retreatist (drug-oriented) gang.[8] They did examine conflict gangs and unspecialized gangs, with a total of 598 members, through detailed records of street workers. The examination was based on sixty-nine behavioural areas.[9] In seeking out clusters on the sixty-nine items, five factors were extracted which suggested that although the evidence pointed to

> the existence of a general delinquency trait... there was ample evidence from the factor analysis that somewhat specialized adaptations also existed among our subjects.[10]

The five factors are I) conflict; II) stable corner activities; III) stable sex pattern; IV) retreatist;

V) authority protest. Table 3 indicates the predominant activities for each of the five factors.

TABLE 3

ITEMS AND LOADINGS UTILIZED FOR SCORING OF FIVE FACTORS

Factor I	
Individual fighting	79
Group fighting	76
Concealed weapons	67
Assault	67
Factor II	
Individual sports	71
Team sports	68
Social activities	60
Gambling	48
Factor III	
Sexual intercourse	-77
Petting	-67
Signifying	-53
Work experience	-36
Factor IV	
Narcotics	-56
Pot	-55
Homosexuality	-53
Common-law marriage	-48
Attempted suicide	-36
Pimping	-27
Factor V	
Auto theft	-69
Driving without license	-65
Runaway	-44

Source: James F. Short, Jr. and Fred L. Strodtbeck, Group Process and Gang Delinquency, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965. p. 92, Table 4.6.

It is meaningful to compare the data in Table 3 with that of Table 4 which contains the ten most common items which are not relatively pure on a given factor. These items, along with their factor loadings, are shown in Table 4.

The factor structure indicates that conflict and retreatism are relatively distinct emphases suggesting specialized adaptations but this is not the case with criminal (theft-oriented) behaviour. Its variance is spread over all factors moreso than either conflict or retreatist-oriented behaviour.

Criminal behaviour appears to be relatively common to most of the five factors.[11] Also, on the basis of their observational data, in addition to the factor analysis, Short and Strodtbeck suggest that there is not a clear separation between conflict and criminal emphases. The observational data suggests, however, that criminal activities may represent cliques within conflict gangs.[12] In summary, the authors indicate that

> The evidence presented here argues for the existence of types of behaviour which are common to all gangs. It has been suggested that these items may constitute a "parent-delinquent subculture", out of which the more specialized delinquent adaptations emerge.[13]

TABLE 4

LOADINGS OF TEN NON-SCORED ITEMS ON EACH OF FIVE FACTORS

Behaviour	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV	Factor V
Domestic chores....	31(9.6)*	36(13.0)	-17(2.9)	11(1.2)	02 (.0)
Theft.....	44(19.4)	32(10.2)	03(.1)	-22(4.8)	-53 (28.1)
Alcohol.....	36(13.0)	06(.4)	-39(15.2)	-26(6.8)	-49 (24.0)
Public nuisance....	43(18.5)	34(11.6)	-05(.3)	-10(1.0)	-58 (33.6)
Robbery.....	51(26.0)	09(.8)	-04(.2)	-35(12.3)	-33 (10.9)
Hanging.....	07(.5)	40(16.0)	-44(19.4)	03(.1)	-25 (6.3)
Joy riding.....	09(.8)	45(20.3)	-10(1.0)	-01(.0)	-41 (16.8)
Gang bang.....	32(10.2)	08(.6)	-08(.6)	-28(7.8)	-32 (10.2)
Statutory rape.....	40(16.0)	01(.0)	-68(46.2)	-18(3.2)	-09 (.8)
Truancy.....	26(6.8)	43(18.5)	04(.2)	09(.8)	-39 (15.2)
x.....	(12.1)	(9.1)	(8.6)	(3.8)	(14.6)

Data: Short, James F., Jr., and Fred L. Strodtbeck, Group Process and Gang Delinquency (The University of Chicago Press, 1965) p. 92, Table 4.7.

*Proportion of variance placed in parentheses.

Their data is speculative at this point, however, since it is not sensitive to changing adaptations over time, a point to be considered in the following pages.

The evidence presented suggests that the offence behaviour of delinquent gangs is generally characterized by versatility, with a relatively high incidence of theft behaviour. The gangs studied by Klein and Robin are gangs without a specialization and with considerable involvement in various kinds of offences. Miller's gangs, although chosen on the basis of their reputations as the "toughest", also demonstrate versatility in offence behaviour.

Short and Strodtbeck emphasize the existence of a parent delinquent subculture (characterized by versatility) and hypothesize that specializations may emerge such as the conflict and retreatist (drug use) orientations and theft in cliques. They do indicate the lack of distinction between conflict and criminal (theft) orientations but do suggest that the theft clique may be a sub-group within the conflict gang.

This suggestion of a progression from a diversified "parent-delinquent subculture" to a more specialized adaptation, or adaptations, speculative though it is, is worth further consideration. At this point in the discussion, the data do not indicate whether a particular

gang member or clique specializes or demonstrates, as Robin calls it, a "stability pattern,"[14] within a diversified gang, nor does it indicate whether, in fact, gangs as a unit may change their orientation through time. Before we suggest, then, that delinquent gangs are characterized by versatility, it is necessary to turn to a consideration of these issues.

STABILITY PATTERNS OF GANG MEMBERS

In addition to determining the offence behaviour of gang members in Philadelphia, Robin attempted to determine stability patterns for individual gang members, testing for three categories of offences: offences against person, offences against property, and disorderly conduct. He determined a pattern of delinquency ratio: "the largest number of charges within a category divided by the total number of charges,"[15] for those having at least five police contacts. Robin's criteria dictate that a specialized pattern of delinquency is not recognized unless the offender has at least three-fourths of his police contacts in one category.

Of the 395 offenders who qualified by having at least five police contacts, only 79 (twenty per cent) were above the .75 criterion, considered by Robin to be "a generous pattern ratio."[16] If this .75 criterion is

adjusted so that a higher percentage of offences within a category is considered necessary for establishing a pattern of delinquency, the figures presented in Table 5 are evident.

TABLE 5

STABILITY PATTERNS OF INDIVIDUAL NEGRO GANG MEMBERS IN PHILADELPHIA

Percentage of Charges Within a Category	Number of Gang Members (N = 395)
75	79
80	59
90	24
100	16

Source: Gerald D. Robin, "Gang Member Delinquency in Philadelphia," Juvenile Gangs in Context, Malcolm Klein (Ed.), Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967. p. 21.

Robin concludes that stability patterns do not exist in significant proportions and that the majority of delinquents engage in all three categories of delinquency.

Klein does not present supportive data in his study but does indicate that, on the basis of his observations, "A clear pattern of offences is not the usual finding for any individual boy,"[17] thus lending some support to Robin's data.

This evidence does not contradict the previously mentioned data of Short and Strodtbeck who report that gang members go through phases. They, too, emphasize a

diversity of offences but imply that this is most likely the case at the earlier stages of an individual's delinquent career. The criminal cliques within conflict gangs are seen as emerging from the larger collectivity[18] which itself has emerged from a "parent-delinquent subculture." This is not discernible from their statistical data since it is not sensitive to changes over time but their observational data leads them to suggest that these patterns may indeed be the case.

In discussing the collectivity scoring highest on "retreatism", they note that it was also the highest scoring white group on conflict and the highest group on "authority protest."

> We know, however, that this group has not been involved in conflict at least as long as we have observed them. Their conflict score results from knowledge of prior conflict activities by this group...during the last two years (they) had turned completely from conflict to embrace drug use and other kicks...their sequence of delinquency adaptation could be characterized as beginning with parent delinquent subcultural involvement to which were added, successively, conflict and then retreatism.[19]

They suggest, too, that data from a large unspecialized street corner group indicated the presence of cliques within its body. A clique of eight boys participating in "rationally directed theft activities,"[20] were active members in the larger group, never hanging together as a clique on the street but meeting privately to pursue their interests. "Only in their pattern of theft activities were they a clique."[21]

There is additional data on some of the points suggested by Short and Strodtbeck which merit attention.

On the basis of observational data on two New York City gangs,[22] Lewis Yablonsky rejects the notion, as Short and Strodtbeck do, of three unique gangs each with its own behavioural specialization, suggesting that the "'retreatist sub-culture' can...not be rationally regarded as a category of gang,"[23] as addiction is an individualistic activity and one with "few group implications."[24]

Yablonsky's discussion does suggest that the collective nature of the retreatist adaptation is a point to consider. Perhaps, more appropriately, it is a matter of clarifying the use of the terms "gang" and "subculture," an issue to be undertaken in this dissertation. Regardless, his comments do not rule out the possibility that addiction is a later stage in a process beginning with the parent delinquent subculture as he indicates that many adolescents become addicts when the violent gang no longer serves their needs.

Yablonsky's "delinquent gang" is:

> dominated by delinquent patterns of activities... stealing or assault with material profit as the essential objective...,[25]

and is described as a "tight clique" whose members participate in other types of gangs as well, a point very similar to Short and Strodtbeck's.

A third type depicted by Yablonsky is the violent gang focusing on gang-war escapades but with delinquent (theft oriented) cliques within its membership. Violence, however, is the focus of the gang and all other activities are on the periphery.

Irving Spergel, in a study of pre-adolescent Negro boys in three Chicago neighborhoods, attempted to determine patterns of illegal behaviour by considering measures of individual behaviour as an index of evidence of a delinquent subculture.[26] He considered mainly Negro boys, aged eight to twelve, and this, combined with an earlier study in the same neighborhood of teenagers and young adults,[27] reveals some patterns of delinquent adaptations.

Due to the small sample size of one neighborhood, he uses, for comparison, a middle-lower class neighborhood (East Woodlawn) and a lower-lower class community (North Lawndale). The researcher conducted 131 interviews using an interview schedule of seventy-two items. The distribution of types of offences for children aged eight to twelve years based on interview responses and police arrest statistics is shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6

DISTRIBUTION OF TYPE OF OFFENCE OF CHILDREN
8-12 YEARS

Neighborhood	Assaultive		Theft	
	Police Arrest	Interview Data	Police Arrest	Interview Data
East Woodlawn (MLC)	34 (31.5%)	10 (71.45)	74 (68.5%)	4 (28.6%)
North Lawndale (LLC)	22 (25.6%)	100 (75.8%)	64 (74.4%)	32(24.2%)

Source: Irving Spergel, "Deviant Patterns and Opportunities of Pre-Adolescent Negro Boys in Three Chicago Neighborhoods," Juvenile Gangs in Context, Malcolm W. Klein (Ed.), Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967. p. 43.

There is a discrepancy between interview data and police arrests in that, in both areas, the interview data reveals a greater percentage of assault-oriented behaviour than the police statistics. The police data indicates that the predominant pattern of delinquency was theft, the interviewed subjects identified violence. The police data, however, represents arrests for the entire neighborhoods; the interview data reports the acts of only those who were interviewed. The discrepancy may also be explained by the fact that the subjects might demonstrate "toughness" verbally rather than through their actions.

Regardless of which figures are used, patterns of delinquent behaviour are similar for the youth in both neighborhoods. Table 7 indicates the police arrest data for three age categories of children for the same two neighborhoods.

There are no differences in patterns of behaviour between the two neighborhoods for the under fifteen category. Differences do become evident at the age of fifteen and the patterns of behaviour in the two neighborhoods are significantly different for the sixteen year olds. The East Woodlawn youth split their delinquent activities between assault and theft whereas in North Lawndale, the males sixteen to nineteen were arrested for relatively more acts of violence then were teenagers in the middle-lower class neighborhood."[28]

Spergel claims that these differences continue at least through young adulthood. The North Lawndale picture appears to support the previously discussed notion of a "parent-delinquent subculture" from which specializations emerge.

TABLE 7

DISTRIBUTION OF TYPE OF OFFENCE OF CHILDREN UNDER 15 YEARS, 15 YEARS, 16 YEARS

Neighborhood and age	Type of Offence Assaultive	Theft	Total
East Woodlawn (MCL)			
Under 15	51 (27.0%)	138 (73.05)	189 (100%)
15	24 (42.9%)	32 (57.1%)	56 (100%)
16	27 (44.3%)	34 (55.7%)	61 (100%)
North Lawndale (LLC)			
Under 15	22 (34.9%)	41 (65.1%)	63 (100%)
15	19 (65.5%)	10 (34.5%)	29 (100%)
16	22 (81.4%)	5 (18.6%)	27 (100%)

Source: Irving Spergel, "Deviant Patterns and Opportunities of Pre-Adolescent Negro Boys in Three Chicago Neighborhoods," Juvenile Gangs in Context, Malcolm W. Klein (Ed.), Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1967. p. 44.

SUMMARY

When the time dimension is taken into consideration, the following points are supported by the data presented:

1. The offence behaviour of delinquent gangs is characterized by versatility.
2. Few gang members demonstrate stable offence patterns.

It might be argued, then, that "gang" delinquency, to use the researcher's term, is not as specialized as it has sometimes been pictured. Nevertheless, the data do suggest periods of specialization in the delinquent career.

However, even in cases where specialties do emerge, such as the theft clique, members continue to show a diversity of offence behaviour while remaining members of the larger collectivity from which their sub-group emerged.

We have also gained some insight into the nature of delinquent gangs, a point to be considered further in the following chapter when the member's affiliation with the collectivity is discussed. Tentatively, one may suggest that the gang member seems to move from a non-specialized "parent-delinquent subculture", the nature of which will be clarified later, to one or more relatively specialized adaptations, or at least to a new adaptation that has within it specialized sub-groups. This movement does not appear to be at the expense of total withdrawal from the larger collectivity.

These tentative suggestions lead to further questions. How delinquent are gang members? What percentage of gang members actually engage in delinquent behaviour? What can one say about the collective nature of the delinquent acts? For a consideration of these issues, we turn to an analysis of the nature and structure of the juvenile collectivity.

FOOTNOTES

1. Malcolm W. Klein, "Impressions of Juvenile Gang Members," Adolescence, 3, No. 9, (Spring, 1968) pp. 53-78.

2. Ibid., p. 53.

3. Gerald D. Robin, "Gang Member Delinquency in Philadelphia," Juvenile Gangs in Context, Malcolm W. Klein (Ed.), Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967. pp. 15-24.

4. For a similar picture of offence behaviour, see Walter B. Miller, Hildred Geertz, and Henry S. G. Cutter, "Aggression in a Boys' Street-Corner Group," Gang Delinquency and Delinquent Subcultures, James F. Short, Jr., (Ed.) New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Incorporated, 1968. p. 54. On a comparative note, see Edmund W. Vaz, "Juvenile Gang Delinquency in Paris," Juvenile Delinquency: A Book of Readings, Rose Giallombardo (Ed.) New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1966. pp. 309-318. Vaz reports that Parisian gang boys engage in a wide variety of delinquent acts, the majority of which are property offences and with a general picture similar to the one above.

5. Walter B. Miller, "Violent Crime in City Gangs," Delinquency, Crime and Social Process, Donald R. Cressey and David A. Ward (Editors). New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Incorporated, 1969. pp. 688-708.

6. James F. Short, Jr., and Fred L. Strodtbeck, Group Process and Gang Delinquency, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965.

7. For comparative purposes, see Vaz, "Juvenile Gang Delinquency in Paris." He reports that there is no evidence of pronounced subcultural types in Paris. Drug and conflict-oriented gangs are notably absent. For a report of the difficulty in finding good examples of gangs in London, see Peter Scott, "Gangs and Delinquent Groups in London," Juvenile Delinquency: A Book of Readings, pp. 319-334. Downes, The Delinquent Solution, reports that gangs of the varieties outlined above do not exist in England. p. 134.

9. Short and Strodtbeck, Group Process and Gang Delinquency, pp. 82-83.

10. Ibid., p. 87.

11. The term "criminal" behaviour or "criminal subculture," as used by Cloward and Ohlin in Delinquency and Opportunity, p. 1, refers to "a type of gang which is devoted to theft, extortion, and other illegal means of securing an income."

12. Short and Strodtbeck, Group Process and Gang Delinquency, p. 98.

13. Ibid., p. 99.

14. Robin, "Gang Member Delinquency in Philadelphia," p. 20.

15. Ibid., p. 20.

16. Ibid., p. 21.

17. Klein, "Impressions of Juvenile Gang Members," p. 75.

18. Short and Strodtbeck, Group Process and Gang Delinquency, p. 98.

19. Ibid., p. 100.

20. Ibid., p. 98.

21. Ibid., p. 98.

22. Yablonsky, The Violent Gang.

23. Ibid., p. 142.

24. Ibid., p. 142.

25. Ibid., p. 143.

26. Irving Spergel, "Deviant Patterns and Opportunities of Pre-Adolescent Negro Boys in Three Chicago Neighborhoods," Juvenile Gangs in Context, Malcolm W. Klein (Ed.), Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967. pp. 38-54.

27. Irving Spergel, "Male Young Adult Criminality, Deviant Values and Differential Opportunities in Two Lower Class Negro Neighborhoods," Social Problems, X, No. 3, (Winter, 1963), pp. 237-250.

28. Spergel, "Deviant Patterns and Opportunities of Pre-Adolescent Negro Boys in Three Chicago Neighborhoods," p. 44.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF THE JUVENILE COLLECTIVITY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines available evidence on the nature and structure of the juvenile collectivity. The following represent focal points of the chapter:

1. The nature of the collectivity including "types" of members.
2. The nature of the interaction among the members of the collectivity.
3. The collective nature of the delinquent act.
4. The character of the delinquent act.

The terms "subculture" and "gang" both imply that the delinquent collectivity is a relatively cohesive unit with considerable interaction among members.[1] It will be left to the available empirical studies to provide a more definitive picture than that which has been relied on in the past.

By considering the collective or group nature of the delinquent act, delinquency as a peer-based phenomenon is not being denied. Most studies investigating the group nature of delinquent acts indicate that this includes between

sixty and ninety per cent of the total number of acts.[2] What has not been determined is the size of the collectivity to which they refer nor whether in fact the collectivity represents a gang because clearly, collective involvement in delinquency does not necessarily imply "gang" delinquency.

The last question having to do with the character of the delinquent act investigates the circumstances which either compel or attract the individual to delinquent behaviour. Is the offence behaviour planned or deliberate, or is it situational?

NATURE OF COLLECTIVITY AND DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT OF MEMBERS

Yablonsky focuses on the "violent gang" and devotes considerable attention to the nature of the organization. He suggests that participation, which indicates the degree of emotional involvement, may be core or marginal.[3]

The core members are those at the center of the gang structure; the leaders, the most dedicated, the most involved. To them, "the gang constitutes their primary world."[4]

The marginal members or

> second-level gang 'members' can be divided into three essential categories: gang 'people' who exist in actuality and 'join' to work out temporary violent needs; the continuous violence seekers; and gang people who exist in the phantasies and distorted conceptions dreamed up by core members in their efforts to reassure themselves of strength and power.[5]

Yablonsky suggests that members of the delinquent gang, or "tight clique," which was discussed earlier, may also be members of the larger violent gang but their participation in the violent gang is generally peripheral.

As a result of his investigation of Los Angeles gangs, Malcolm Klein, in various articles,[6] presents a fairly elaborate and detailed description of the nature of the gang structure.

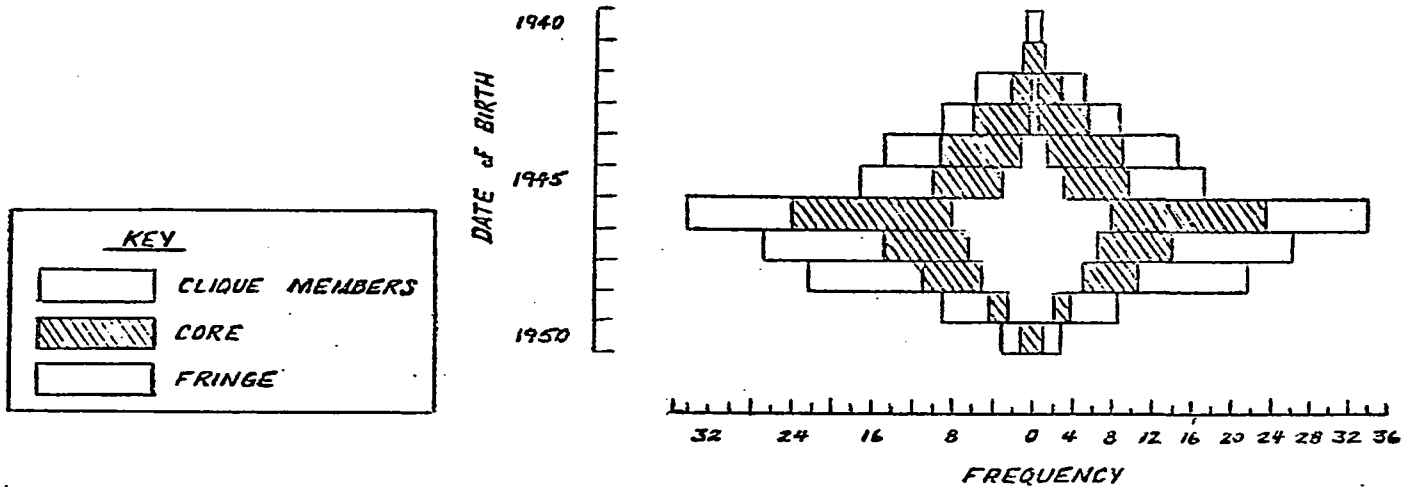
Klein determined four "gang clusters", each of which may consist of a number of subgroups based on age and sex characteristics. The total population excluding boys for whom birthdates were lacking, and all girls, was 345.

Some 165 boys were designated by detached workers as core members, and 125 as fringe members.[7] In addition to the core-fringe distinction, Klein added an additional category: clique membership. Some 58 members of discernible cliques were determined by pseudo-sociometric data taken from contact reports.[8] Some 95% of the clique members were also core members. The following diagram is a generalized picture of the gang structure, combining the data from all four gang clusters and dividing by four:[9]

In another study, Klein and Crawford[10] looked at member interaction in order to measure group cohesiveness. They used detached workers as observers, and were given an account of all members seen by workers in a given day over

FIGURE 1

GENERALIZED GANG STRUCTURE : "THE TURNIP"



Source: Malcolm W. Klein, "Internal Structures and Age Distributions in Four Delinquent Negro Gangs," Paper presented at the annual meetings of the the California State Psychological Association, Los Angeles, December, 1964, p. 8.

a six month period. They determined for any given gang member how often he was seen by the worker and also with which members he was seen most frequently.

From a model of contact data for one gang (32 members) they present an analysis of individual interaction patterns.

There were a total of 808 mutual contacts but one of the most interesting aspects of this matrix is the number of empty cells. Some 68% of the cells are empty indicating that no contact had occurred between the two individuals concerned. The authors suggest that this lack of contact may have been due to age differentials since the ages did range from 12 to the early twenties and friendship patterns were related to age. The lack of contact may also have been due, they suggest, to the inclusion of a number of fringe members in the gang. The figure of 68% remains a meaningful one, however, since fringe members were, in fact, members of the gang. Also, if the study of interaction patterns were limited to members falling within a specific age range one might question whether there would be enough members left to make the concept of "gang" a meaningful one. Regardless, the assumption remains that the gang members counted their membership at 32.

Of further significance is the fact that 24% of the cells with at least one contact were single contact cells. This combined with the earlier figure for empty cells indicates the percentage of empty cells and single cells as 75%.

Klein has attempted to elaborate on this core-fringe distinction. By using detached workers as judges and the same clusters of delinquent gangs, he reports two major factors as distinguishing between the two types of gang members: a Deficient Aggressive Factor, and a Group Involvement Factor.[11]

> The Deficient Aggressive Factor
>
> reveals a relationship between delinquency or aggressiveness and personal deficiency. The Group Involvement Factor...does not include any acting out behaviour items. Thus, to judge from the workers' use of these items, delinquency is more related to individual characteristics than to group characteristics.[12]

The Group Involvement Factor is substantiated by the fact that "clique membership, as determined by frequency of mutual contacts, is almost entirely restricted to the core members of gangs,"[13] a point to be discussed further in detail.

> We also know that participation in group activities such as club meetings and outings is higher for core than fringe members.[14]

Thus, Klein concludes that the Group Involvement Factor is validated by independent sources on its capacity to differentiate core from fringe members.

TABLE 8

INTRAGROUP COMPANIONSHIP PATTERNS FOR
ONE GANG OVER A SIX-MONTH PERIOD

Group Members

Group Members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	
1		2	0	12	1	5	0	0	4	0	0	0	17	0	18	1	2	0	5	0	4	17	5	0	1	9	0	0	5	0	0	0	108
2	2		0	3	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	4	2	2	0	2	0	2	0	6	4	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	39
3	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
4	12	3	c		1	9	3	0	11	1	0	0	18	0	11	1	7	0	4	0	2	16	6	0	1	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	114
5	1	0	0	1		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	14	21	1	1	0	5	0	10	1	66
6	5	2	0	9	0		0	0	6	2	0	0	7	0	7	0	4	0	4	0	2	11	6	0	0	5	0	0	4	0	0	0	74
7	0	0	0	3	1	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	10
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	7
9	4	2	0	11	0	6	0	1		1	0	0	18	0	14	0	3	0	6	0	2	15	5	0	0	9	0	0	5	0	0	0	102
10	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1		0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
12	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
13	17	4	0	18	3	7	0	2	18	2	1	3		2	37	1	5	0	5	0	6	40	6	0	1	11	1	0	5	0	4	3	202
14	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2		0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
15	18	2	0	11	1	7	0	1	14	0	1	0	37	0		1	3	0	5	0	4	34	5	0	0	12	1	0	4	0	0	0	162
16	1	0	0	1	5	0	0	c	0	0	0	0	1	0	1		0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	3	6	23
17	2	2	0	7	0	4	3	0	3	1	0	0	5	0	3	0		0	3	0	2	10	2	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	5	0	57
18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
19	5	2	0	4	0	4	0	0	6	1	0	0	5	0	5	0	3	1		0	2	6	4	0	0	5	0	0	4	0	0	0	57
20	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
21	4	6	0	2	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	6	2	4	0	2	0	2	0		4	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	44
22	17	4	c	16	1	11	0	1	15	0	1	2	40	2	34	1	10	0	6	0	4		6	0	1	11	1	0	5	0	0	0	189
23	5	2	0	6	0	6	0	0	5	0	0	0	6	0	5	0	2	0	4	0	2	6		0	0	5	0	0	4	0	0	0	58
24	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
25	1	0	0	1	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2		1	0	0	0	0	3	0	33
26	9	2	0	7	1	5	0	0	9	0	0	0	11	0	12	1	3	0	5	0	2	11	5	0	1		0	0	4	0	0	0	88
27	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		1	0	0	13	0	19
28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	c	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		0	0	0	0	1
29	5	2	0	0	5	4	0	1	5	0	0	0	5	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	5	4	0	0	4	0	0		0	0	0	52
30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1	0	1
31	0	0	0	0	10	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	3	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	13	0	0	1		2	45
32	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2		12
																																	1616

Source: Malcolm W. Klein and Lois Y. Crawford, "Groups, Gangs, and Cohesiveness," Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, January, 1967. p. 71, Table 1.

The delinquency aspect of the Deficient Aggressive Factor is validated by reports on official delinquency of gang members.[15] These indicators, as well as those related to gang involvement, are summarized in Table 9.

TABLE 9

VALIDATING COMPARISONS OF CORE AND FRINGE INVOLVEMENTS

Behavioural Index	Comparison
1. Attendance at gang meetings:	
a. average number of boys	Core, 2½ times as many as Fringe
b. average number of meetings per boy	Core, 1 3é4 móre than Fringe
2. Number of recorded offences.	Core, 37% more than Fringe
3. Proportion, assaultive/ all offences	Core, 35% greater than Fringe
4. Time lapse between offences	Core, 15% shorter time period
5. Date of first offence (career onset)	Core, five months earlier
6. Date of last offence (career termination)	Core nine months later

Source: Malcolm W. Klein, "Factors Related to Juvenile Gang Membership Patterns," Sociology and Social Research, Vol. 51, Number 1, p. 60, Table IV.

Klein cautions that the difference between core and fringe on assaultive offences helps to validate the "aggressive" component of the Deficient Aggressive Factor but that the "deficiency" component must await further data.

Klein concludes that

> so far as can be determined, the present findings represent the first empirical description upon which more refined analyses of gang membership structure may be built.[16]

Klein's work indicates that a gang member's position in the core-marginal dichotomy is a function of the two factors: the Deficiency-Aggressive factor, and the Group Involvement factor as illustrated in Table 9.

Walter Miller's studies are concerned with the percentage of gang members actually engaging in delinquent behaviour and may substantiate Klein's findings.

Miller found that 32% of the males in his study groups "were known to have engaged in illegal acts of assault,"[17] and that "heavy participants" constituted only four per cent of all gang members. Two-thirds of the male gang members were not involved in assaultive crimes over a two year period and 88% did not appear in court during that time. Despite the gangs' reputation as the "toughest", assault was clearly not a dominant form of activity nor was it one in which most members participated even minimally.

It was suggested earlier that theft offences far outnumbered assault offences. Nevertheless, in the two year study period, 50% of the gang members were not known

to have stolen. Miller does report that two-thirds of the males who stole once, stole more than once; perhaps a further indication of a specialized sub-group within the larger collectivity. Miller concludes:

> It is noteworthy that even for the most common form of Midcity gang crime, about half of male group members were not known to have participated...[18]

We turn now to a consideration of the clique within the larger collectivity.

Short and Strodtbeck describe a clique within a larger collectivity and a number of points mentioned earlier merit repeating here.

First, the boys participated actively in the larger collectivity.

Secondly, they behaved as a clique only when engaged in the behaviour for which they were organized. (in this case, theft)

Thirdly, the latter point suggests that their efforts were rationally determined and planned.

Lewis Yablonsky[19] presents a similar picture. His "tight clique" is one primarily organized to carry out various illegal acts, all other types of interaction (such as social) being of a secondary nature. He describes the clique as cohesive and characterized by intimate cooperation.

Klein's research on Los Angeles gangs presents a more detailed picture.

Based on the judgements of detached workers involved with the four gang clusters (345 male members),

> About one member in six appeared often enough and with sufficient consistency of companions to fall into one of the several cliques within a cluster...[20]

Using the same model of intragroup companionship patterns discussed above[21] for the 32 members of a cluster, they determined five indexes of clique cohesion.

A clique member is arbitrarily defined as a member of the cluster who has had at least 10 contacts with one other member.

The percentage of members in cliques is 44% or 14. To measure clique cohesiveness, they determined the percentage of clique members having at least 50% of their contacts within their own clique. Their result includes all 14 clique members (100%), the individual figures ranging from 58% to 100%.

The authors then determined an "Average within-clique over all-contacts ratio"[22], which is calculated at 77%.

Lastly, the percentage of clique members with core status, as previously indicated, is 95%.

Klein and Crawford conclude that

> The potential importance of such indexes is that the clique members clearly constitute friendship groups within a much larger and amorphous collection of individuals ... natural friendship groups.[23]

This point is debatable, in that the authors have not measured "friendship" but, rather, interaction. Suggestions cited earlier indicate that the cliques may be "business" rather than "pleasure" groups. That is, they may be organized to pursue delinquent activities rather than social ones. It may be that they are both but this is not evident from Klein and Crawford's analysis and, therefore, their conclusion seems somewhat unwarranted.

THE NATURE OF THE INTERACTION

The question of the manner in which members of the collectivity interact with one another has been extensively investigated. Walter Miller[24] recorded actions and sentiments related to 60 behavioural areas. Assault-oriented behaviour ranked ninth. There were 1,600 actions and sentiments identified relating to assault behaviour, 3% of the total of 54,000 actions and sentiments. His evidence suggests that

> A substantial portion of this behaviour however, took the form of words rather than deeds; for example, while the total number of assault-oriented actions and sentiments was over two and a half times as great as those relating to theft, the actual number of "arrestable" incidents of assault was less than half the number of theft incidents. This finding is concordant with others which depict the area of assaultive behaviour as one characterized by considerably more smoke than fire.[25]

Additionally, he suggests that the expressed sentiments related to assaultive behaviour were one and a half times greater than actual actions. In all other forms of behaviour, actions outnumbered sentiments.

Further, Miller analysed behaviour related to individual assaults and collective assaults.

> With regard to individual assault, the number of actions and the number of sentiments were approximately equal (181 actions, 187 sentiments); in the case of collective assault, in contrast, there was almost twice as much talk as action (239 sentiments, 124 actions)... Behaviour opposing disapproved assault showed an interesting pattern; specific actions aimed to inhibit or forestall collective assault were over twice as common as actions opposing individual assault. Gang members thus appeared to be considerably more reluctant to engage in collective than in individual fighting.[26]

Miller concludes that collective assault

> was dangerous and frightening, with uncontrolled escalation a predictable risk, while much of the latter (individual assault) involved relatively mild set-to's between peers within the "controlled" context of gang interaction.[27]

Miller, Geertz, and Cutter[28] studied aggression in one street-corner group, the Junior Outlaws, the core group of which consisted of 18 white boys, aged 14 to 16. They were part of a larger cluster of about 100 persons. The Junior Outlaws, considered by the authors to be "representative" on a delinquency scale - neither highly delinquent nor negligibly delinquent - were studied by a trained social worker for a period of two and a half years. The authors recorded "every instance of an overtly aggressive

act or sequence of acts.[29]

The authors note first that

> One of the most striking and clear-cut findings of the study was that most of the aggressive actions performed by members of the Junior Outlaws were directed at one another. Seventy per cent of the aggressive actions of all types, from good-natured ribbing to outright physical attack, were directed at fellow group members.[30]

This figure differs considerably from Miller's but the term "aggressive act" as used here is a much more inclusive term. Miller notes 88 incidents of aggressive behaviour ("field-recorded offences"), 6 of which were directed toward members of the gang. As will be shown below, Miller, Geertz and Cutter have noted both the form and intensity of the aggressive act.

Of 1,395 recorded aggressive acts, 7% or 95 acts were physical attacks on persons or property, and in no instance was a weapon used.

Only 7 of the 95 acts were described by the recorder as aggression involving genuine anger, and all were directed at fellow gang members. In the other 88 cases, the emotional state was considered to range from "no evident charge" to "mild anger or irritation."[31]

The authors suggest that

> A picture begins to emerge of a type of group in which aggression assumed a very narrow range of expression: narrow in choice of targets, narrow in form, and also limited in intensity.[32]

Table 10 indicates the forms of verbal aggression.

TABLE 10

FORMS OF VERBAL AGGRESSION (N=1,294)

Category	Percentages of acts
Derogation, devaluation	42.2
Direct hostile statement	23.2
Hostile command	8.5
Joking, kidding, teasing	8.3
Threat of physical aggression	6.0
Hostile interrogation	5.7
Defensive reaction	5.3
Irony, sarcasm	.8
Total	100.0

Data: Walter B. Miller, Hildred Geertz, and Henry S. G. Cutter, "Aggression in a Boys' Street-Corner Group," Gang Delinquency and Delinquent Subcultures, James F. Short Jr., (Ed.) New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Incorporated, 1968. p. 59, Table 2.

The authors conclude that the low level of emotion accompanying the greater percentage of these aggressive acts suggests that "aggression was much more related to their roles as corner-street group members, reflecting pressures to conform to group norms..."[33] and, like Miller, they suggest that

> The front of bravery and toughness assumed by the corner boy conceals considerable fear and caution, and 'safe' targets for aggression are welcome.[34]

There is other supportive documentation for this line of argument. Klein notes that violence in the Los Angeles gangs did not represent a way of life but it was a predominant "myth system,"[35] and Yablonsky notes that in New York gangs "Interaction within the collectivity and toward the outer community is hostile and aggressive..."[36]

Further, Short and Strodtbeck note in Chicago gangs the

> underlying tone of aggression which characterizes so much of the interaction within the gang. There is a threat which hangs over even the closest of friendships that one may have to prove oneself against one's friend, perhaps as a result of forces within the gang but extraneous to the friendship. Status within the gang is subject to challenge from many quarters...[37]

Walter Miller carries his analysis one step further by considering the gang fight. He reports:

> The Midcity study conceptualized a fully developed gang fight as involving four stages: initial provocation, initial attack, strategy-planning and mobilization, and counterattack. During the study period, members of the intensive-observation gangs participated in situations involving some combination of these stages fifteen times... only one of these situations eventuated in full scale conflict; in the other fourteen, one or both sides found a way to avoid open battle.[38]

In conclusion, he suggests

> A major objective of gang members was to put themselves in the posture of fighting without actually having to fight.[39]

Clearly, he is discussing the gang fight. But on the basis of the evidence presented above, one might hypothesize that the same holds true in the more general sense. Members are attempting to gain or maintain status by demonstrating the desirable gang qualities such as toughness by participating in what Miller describes as "ritualistic behaviour,"[40] or, in other words, verbal aggression, as opposed to actual physical encounters either with themselves or outsiders.

THE COLLECTIVE NATURE OF THE DELINQUENT ACT

There is a scarcity of literature available on the collective nature of the delinquent act. Nevertheless, a study in New York City's Lower East Side casts some light on the collective nature of delinquency in metropolitan areas.[41] since this area is "regarded by many as a hot bed of gang activity."[42] The subjects of Lerman's study are youths residing in randomly selected households in the area. They are not designated as gang members but simply as delinquent boys who live in an area characterized by considerable gang activity.

Table 11 indicates the actor's perception of the type of social unit to which he belongs. Only in the 14-15 year age group is there an indication that the "regular group" is the dominant pattern of interaction and this

tapers off for the 16-19 year age bracket. It is interesting that the movement away from the regular group pattern in the 16-19 group seems to be toward the loner. Otherwise, the pair or triad is the most prevalent response. This means that most boys do not perceive themselves as being members of a "regular group."

Tables 12 and 13 represent the other two measures of interaction employed by Lerman.

TABLE 11

RESPONSES TO "WHO DO YOU USUALLY GO AROUND WITH?" BY AGE (N=276)

Usual Interaction Pattern	Age			
	10-11	12-13	14-15	16-19
Self*.....	12%	12%	11%	24%
One or two others....	57	56	42	46
Regular group.....	31	32	47	30
N.....	67	84	62	63

*Includes 4 DK (don't know) and NA (no answer) boys.

Source: Paul Lerman, "Gangs, Networks, and Subcultural Delinquency," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 73 (July, 1967) p. 67, Table 1.

TABLE 12

PERCENTAGE OF BOYS WHO RESPONDED THAT THEIR SOCIAL UNIT HAD A NAME, BY AGE (N=276)

Age	Group Has Name
10-11..... N=67	1%
12-13..... N=84	5%
14-15..... N=62	8%
16-19..... N=63	10%

Source: Paul Lerman, "Gangs, Networks, and Subcultural Delinquency," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 73 (July, 1967), p. 67, Table 2.

TABLE 13

FREQUENCY OF INTERACTION WITH PEERS BY AGE (N=232)*

Amount of Leisure Time Usually Spent With Friends	Age 10-11	12-13	14-15	16-19
All.....	22%	8%	9%	6%
Most.....	33	43	47	34
Some.....	45	49	43	60
N.....	58	74	53	47

* Excludes 40 "self" boys and 4 DK and NA boys

Source: Paul Lerman, "Gangs, Networks, and Subcultural Delinquency," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 73 (July, 1967) p. 67, Table 3.

Table 12 indicates that groups are almost as nameless as pairs and triads. This suggests that the group as a social unit may be a relatively informal one. Table 13, indicating the frequency of interaction with peers, supports the previous results in that the boys in the 16-19 age group tend to move away from collective interaction. Generally, the pair or triad is the favorite form of association except at the 14-15 age bracket, and the percentage of youth who spend all their time with their peers is quite small. The amount of time spent with peers tapers off for the 16-19 age group which is consistent with the findings in Table 11.

Besides questions pertaining to their everyday interaction patterns, the boys were asked "Whether most of the illegal acts they reported had been done alone, with one or two others, or with a regular group."[43] The results are shown in Table 14.

The evidence suggests that the majority of boys in all age groups engage in illegal activities alone. It must be remembered, however, that the subjects of the study were not chosen on the basis of participation in gangs, but rather on the basis of the fact that they lived in an area characterized by gang activity.

TABLE 14

INTERACTION PATTERNS OF DEVIANCE
BY AGE (N=276)

Interaction Pattern of Deviance	Age			
	10-11	12-13	14-15	16-19
Self.....	55%	51%	61%	65%
Pair or Triad.....	25	32	19	22
Regular group.....	0	6	6	6
DK, NA, or DNA*.....	19	11	13	6
N.....	67	84	62	63

*"Don't know," "No answer," or "Does not apply."

Source: Paul Lerman, "Gangs, Networks, and Subcultural Delinquency," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 73 (July, 1967) p. 70, Table 7.

Lerman distinguishes between subcultural dimensions and social dimensions of collective delinquency, the former being measured by shared symbols (values, argot); the latter being measured by "interaction," or contact. He argues that the literature does not distinguish between the two.[44] Therefore, if youth are classified according to a subcultural typology, a somewhat different picture than that found in Table 14 emerges. (See Table 15)

In Table 15, for subjects rated "High to Very High" on the subcultural typology, the pair or triad is the favored mode of participation.

TABLE 15

RELATIONSHIP OF SUBCULTURAL TYPOLOGY AND INTERACTION PATTERN OF DEVIANCE (N=276)

Interaction Pattern of Deviance	Subcultural Typology*			
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High to Very High
Self.....	73%	59%	55%	38%
Pair or Triad.....	14	21	29	43
Regular group.....	1	3	3	13
DK, NA, or DNA.....	11	16	13	6
N.....	70	91	62	53

Source: Paul Lerman, "Gangs, Networks, and Subcultural Delinquency," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 73 (July, 1967) p. 70, Table 8.

* A combined index of argot and shared values differentiating youth who share consonant symbols from those who do not.

Lerman summarizes:

> These findings lend further support to the contention of this paper and earlier studies that subcultural delinquency is a form of shared, collective deviance. However, in supporting the view that the pair or triad, not the group or gang, is the social unit most frequently used by subcultural boys in their deviance, the results of this study contradict the conclusions of earlier studies that peer-based deviance is predominantly gang delinquency.[45]

It is clear that the "regular group" is rarely the unit for delinquent activities, among the youths studied

by Lerman. This finding is somewhat similar to that of Miller who reports that of all the thefts committed by gang members in his study groups over a two year period, 40 per cent were committed by single individuals.[46]

THE CHARACTER OF THE DELINQUENT ACT

When the somewhat loose organization of the delinquent gang and the nature of the interaction among members is considered, the question of the character of the delinquent act arises. There is a scarcity of comment in the literature on this point, but the little that does exist appears to give some support to the hypothesis that emerges from the preceding pages: planned and rational delinquent activity is unlikely for two reasons. First, the lack of organization - the peripheral involvement of many members and the limited contact between many members of the collectivity - and secondly, due to the nature of the interaction - the hostility and aggression among members.

A few authors suggest that the delinquent behaviour of gang members is episodic and situational in character. Yablonsky, for example, defines the behaviour of "near-group" members as "essentially emotion-motivated within loosely defined boundaries."[47] The near group is characterized by

> limited consensus among participants...as to its functions or goals... And interaction within the collectivity and toward the outer community is hostile and aggressive, with spontaneous bursts of violence to achieve impulsively felt goals.[48]

Of the gangs he studied in Los Angeles, Klein says

> that, with some exceptions, gang members are not "junior criminals." Much of their illegal behaviour is spontaneous or impulsive reaction to situational circumstances rather than planned exploits.[49]

These views seem to be consistent with the data presented and evaluated previously but obviously must remain conjecture in view of the limited research material available in the literature.

A possible exception to this view is the type of clique which has been described by Short and Strodtbeck and Yablonsky as business-like.[50]

SUMMARY

The following summary statements can be made about the nature and structure of the juvenile collectivity. They are derived from the data presented in this chapter.

1. The Nature of the Collectivity.
   - A. The collectivity is composed of core and marginal members. The distinguishing factor is the degree of group involvement.
   - B. Cliques, a further category determined by "contact" reports, consist of some members of the larger collectivity who are generally

together solely for purposes of carrying out illegal activities.

The data in this chapter, combined with that of the first chapter, suggest that:

C. The delinquent gang is not a specialized group but has within its collectivity specialized sub-groups. There is a progression of an individual member from a non-specialized "parent-delinquent sub-culture" to one or more relatively specialized adaptations, but not at the expense of total withdrawal from the larger collectivity.

D. About one half of the members, in the study groups considered, were not known to have participated in delinquent behaviour.

E. In a very large percentage of cases, there was no observed contact (interaction) with other members of the collectivity.

F. Generally, the pair or triad is the most favored form of association except for the 14-15 year old age group who "usually go around with" a larger "regular group."

II. Nature of the Interaction.

A. Most of the aggression demonstrated by members of the delinquent collectivity was

directed toward other members of the collectivity.

B. Interaction among members of the collectivity is often characterized by aggression.

C. Most of the aggression is expressed through words rather than deeds and may be termed "ritualistic behaviour" reflecting pressures to conform to group norms. It assumes a narrow range of expression in terms of target, form, and intensity, thus suggesting that a member attempts to appear to conform to the norm by having others believe he is prepared to engage in an act of physical aggression.

III. Collective Nature of the Delinquent Act

It is necessary to proceed with caution here since there are only very limited data available on this point. Nevertheless, two points, which emerge from Lerman's work, are worthy of consideration:

A. The favored mode of collective involvement in delinquent activities for boys rated high on the subcultural dimension (and therefore more likely to be involved in collective delinquency) is the pair or triad.

B. Whereas it was reported earlier that 60 to 90 per cent of delinquent acts were of a group nature,[51] on the basis of Lerman and Miller's work, it may be suggested that perhaps that figure is closer to 60 per cent.

IV. Character of the Delinquent Act.

Again, there are limited data available here. Nevertheless, that which has been considered leads one to speculate that:

A. Most delinquent behaviour is emotion-based, episodic, and situational in character.

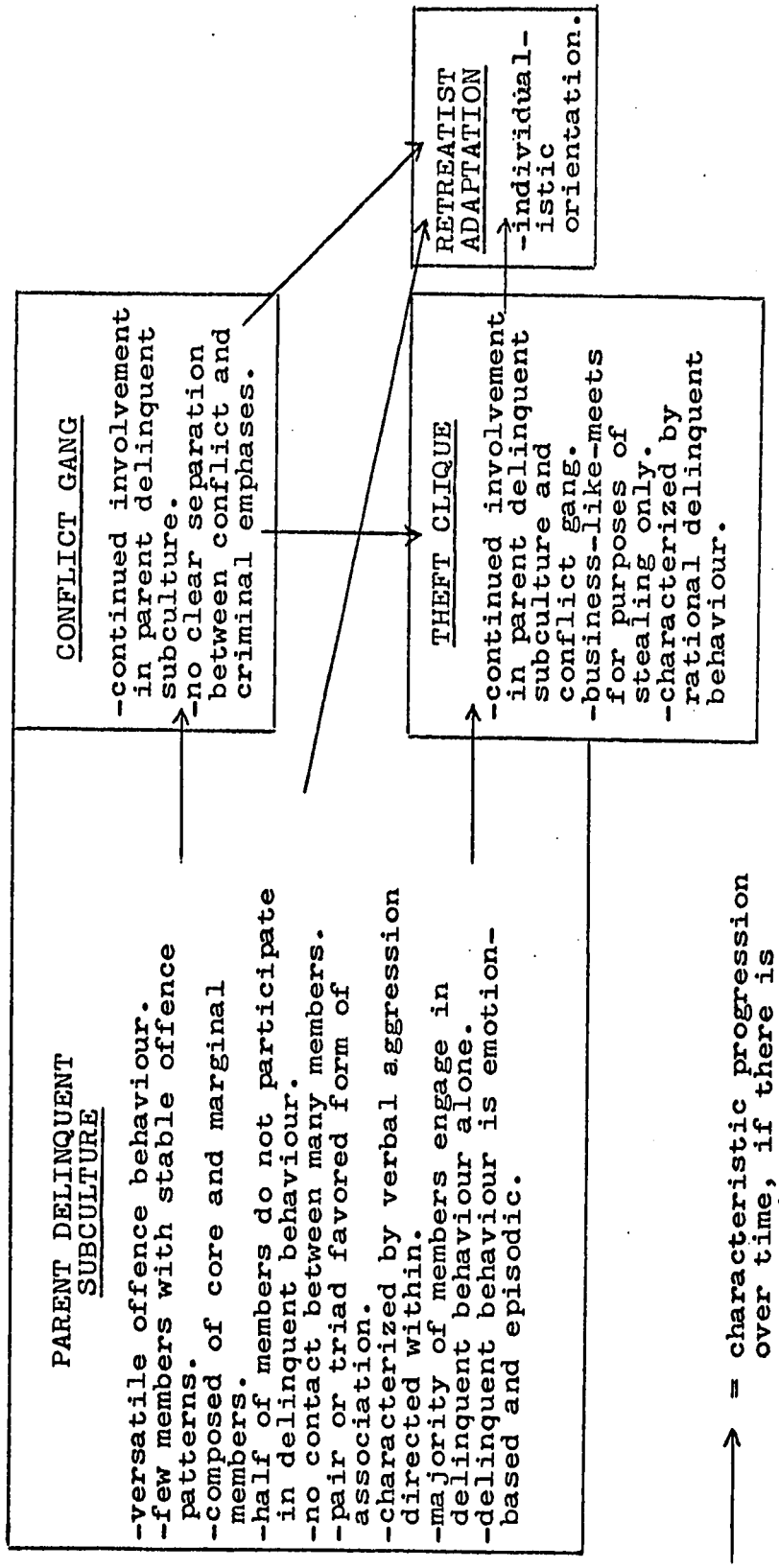
B. The specialized clique within the larger collectivity is characterized by business-like behaviour.

It was suggested earlier that collective involvement in delinquency does not necessarily mean that this behaviour is gang behaviour. This statement may be reiterated here in view of the above summary comments. Further analysis on commitment to delinquent values and the cohesiveness of the collectivity is necessary prior to a more definitive statement on this issue.

Figure 2 graphically presents a summary of the data reviewed in the first three chapters. It illustrates types of delinquent adaptations as well as what appear to be characteristic progressions over time beginning with participation in the parent-delinquent subculture.

FIGURE 2

SUMMARY OF DATA REVIEWED



FOOTNOTES

1. See, for example, Cohen, Delinquent Boys, p. 67.

2. See Empey, "Delinquency Theory and Recent Research," p. 32, and his subsequent footnote for further references.

3. This core-marginal distinction is an almost universal classification of gang members used by street-gang workers, according to Malcolm W. Klein, "Factors Related to Juvenile Gang Membership Patterns," Sociology and Social Research, 51, No. 1, (October, 1966), p. 50.

4. Yablonsky, The Violent Gang, p. 201.

5. Ibid., p. 203.

6. Malcolm W. Klein and Lois Y. Crawford, "Groups, Gangs, and Cohesiveness," Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, (January, 1967). Malcolm W. Klein, "Gang Cohesiveness, Delinquency, and a Street-Work Program," Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, (July, 1969); Klein, "Factors Related to Juvenile Gang Membership Patterns;" Klein, "Internal Structures and Age Distributions in Four Delinquent Negro Gangs."

7. The discrepancy between the sum of these two figures and the total number of members is due to the fact that many boys were not classified by the detached workers.

8. See Klein, "Internal Structures and Age Distributions in Four Delinquent Negro Gangs," p. 3. Core and fringe membership was determined by detached workers judgments. Clique membership was determined by the pseudo-sociometric analysis based on contact reports submitted each day by the workers.

9. Ibid., pp. 3-6, for a discussion of the extent to which the generalized picture coincides with the picture for an average gang.

10. Klein and Crawford, "Groups, Gangs, and Cohesiveness."

11. Klein, "Factors Related to Juvenile Gang Membership Patterns."

12. Ibid., p. 56.

13. Ibid., p. 59.

14. Ibid., p. 59.

15. Ibid., p. 59.

16. Ibid., p. 61.

17. Miller, "Violent Crimes in City Gangs," p. 699.

18. Walter B. Miller, "Theft Behaviour in City Gangs," Juvenile Gangs in Context, Malcolm W. Klein (Ed.) Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967. p. 33.

19. Yablonsky, The Violent Gang.

20. Klein, "Gang Cohesiveness, Delinquency, and a Street-Work Program," p. 139.

21. Supra, pp. 40-42.

22. Klein and Crawford, "Groups, Gangs and Cohesiveness," p. 73.

23. Ibid., p. 73.

24. Miller, "Violent Crimes in City Gangs,"

25. Ibid., p. 693.

26. Ibid., p. 694.

27. Ibid., p. 694.

28. Miller, Geertz, and Cutter, "Aggression in a Boys' Street-Corner Group."

29. Ibid., p. 55.

30. Ibid., p. 56.

31. Ibid., p. 58.

32. Ibid., p. 58.

33. Ibid., p. 75.

34. Ibid., p. 77.

35. Klein, "Impressions of Juvenile Gang Members," p. 65.

36. Yablonsky, The Violent Gang, p. 225.

37. Short and Strodtbeck, Group Process and Gang Delinquency, p. 233.

38. Miller, "Violent Crimes in City Gangs," p. 705.

39. Ibid., p. 705.

40. Ibid., p. 705.

41. Paul Lerman, "Gangs, Networks, and Subcultural Delinquency," American Journal of Sociology, 73 (July, 1967).

42. Short, "Introduction," Gang Delinquency and Delinquent Subcultures, p. 10.

43. Lerman, "Gangs, Networks, and Subcultural Delinquency," p. 70.

44. Ibid., pp. 63-66.

45. Ibid., p. 71.

46. Miller, "Theft Behaviour in City Gangs," p. 33.

47. Yablonsky, The Violent Gang, p. 224.

48. Ibid., p. 225.

49. Klein, "Impressions of Juvenile Gang Members," p. 75.

50. Supra, p. 46.

51. Supra, p. 37.

CHAPTER IV

COMMITMENT AND COHESION

INTRODUCTION

One can visualize the delinquent collectivity as a rather hostile milieu, given the data presented on the nature, structure and behavioural characteristics of the collectivity. It is a milieu in which pairs, triads and cliques predominate and in which some "members" - many of the marginal ones - do not interact to any extent with other members. It is a milieu in which only some of the members are involved in delinquent behaviour and few are "heavy" participants, and in which interaction appears to be characterized by considerable aggression between members. It is likely, too, that there may be a lack of direction and planning regarding group activities and in the commission of offences.

This evidence does not appear to be congruent with the views of Cloward and Ohlin who define a delinquent subculture as

> one in which certain forms of delinquent activity are essential requirements for the performance of the dominant roles supported by the subculture.[1]

In addition, they suggest that

> acts of delinquency that reflect subcultural support are likely to recur with great frequency. In the delinquent subculture, habitual delinquent behaviour is defined as prerequisite for acceptance and status in the group.[2]

In answering these questions, one moves closer to determining what the collectivity represents: a gang, a subculture? Are they synonymous? Or may the collectivity be seen as something other than these? How ought these concepts be defined to be most clear and useful? In order to explore these questions, it is necessary to consider the views of the prominant contemporary theorists on the subject, beginning with a consideration of their various usages of the term "subculture." Such an analysis is appropriate at this time since a body of data has been built up on the behaviour, nature and structure of the collectivity and it may be used in evaluating the theoretical statements discussed in this chapter.

USES OF THE CONCEPT "SUBCULTURE"

One may begin the analysis of the subculture concept by considering Milton Yinger's views on the various definitions of the term. He focuses on two usages,[9] suggesting first that the term has been used as

> an ad hoc concept whenever a writer wishes to emphasize the normative aspects of behaviour that differed from some general standard.[10]

He suggests as examples ethnic enclaves or regions. This may well be the view of lower class delinquency presented by Walter Miller.[11] In rejecting the notion that the values of the delinquent gang stand in opposition to middle class values, Miller suggests that

> The dominant component of motivation underlying these (law-violating) acts consist in a directed attempt by the actor to adhere to forms of behaviour, and to achieve standards of value as they are defined within that community.[12]

He adds

> In the case of "gang" delinquency, the cultural system which exerts the most direct influence on behaviour is that of the lower-class community itself - a long established, distinctively patterned tradition with an integrity of its own - rather than a so-called "delinquent subculture" which has arisen through contact with middle class culture and is oriented to the deliberate violation of middle class norms.[13]

Yinger claims that there is, in addition to the situation described above, one in which the norms arise as a result of a conflict, or of frustrating circumstances, between the larger society and a smaller group within it. These new norms can become the inverse of the "middle class" values.

> I suggest the use of the term contraculture wherever the normative system of a group contains, as a primary element, a theme of conflict with the values of the total society, where personality variables are directly involved in the development and maintenance of the group's values, and wherever its norms can be understood only by reference to the relationships of the group to a surrounding dominant culture.[14]

To illustrate his point, Yinger makes reference to A. K. Cohen's Delinquent Boys suggesting that Cohen's discussion of the delinquent subculture would have been more meaningful had he used the term "contraculture."

According to Cohen, the values of the delinquent subculture are oppositional. The lower class youth are confronted with the evaluations of others and thus encounter status problems since many of those evaluating them are in middle class authority and prestige positions. These youths are handicapped in their ability to achieve and thus solve the problem of status deprivation through the formation of a delinquent subculture which Cohen describes as a technique of adjustment to the status problem. The adjustment is reached through effective interaction with others experiencing the same problem. Cohen describes the process that takes place as one of "reaction formation" - an attack against the middle class and an inversion of middle class values. Rather than indifference, the youths react with hostility, thus accounting for his description of the delinquent subculture as negativistic, malicious, and nonutilitarian. The delinquent response, then, is characterized by

> the explicit and wholesale repudiation of middle-class standards and the adoption of their very antithesis.[15]

Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin, in their equally well-known book, Delinquency and Opportunity, claim that the lower class youth does not aspire to middle class goals but simply aspires to a higher position in terms of lower class criteria, therefore placing the emphasis on the unjust distribution of opportunities. The lower class boys

> who are therefore presumably insensitive to the middle-class measuring rod...respond to the limitation of opportunity by directing hostility against the social order rather than against themselves.[16]

The views of Cohen and Cloward and Ohlin are not dissimilar since according to both explanations the blame is attached to the system and the youth withdraws his commitment from the established norms. Both explanations may be described as "oppositional," depicting, as Yinger calls it, a "contraculture." In fact, all these views (Miller included) may be classed as oppositional if we assume that the values of the lower class do differ from those of the middle class.[17] The Cohen-Cloward and Ohlin approach implies greater commitment to a deviant way of life whereas the Miller argument implies commitment to a major and prevalent set of lower class values that, though not necessarily deviant, differ from middle class values.

COMMITMENT

Although the concept of subculture or gang lacks precise definition, it appears that the advocates of such

an approach do suggest, at least implicitly, that youth have a commitment to "delinquent" values.

Howard S. Becker, in considering the ways in which sociologists have used the concept of commitment, defines it as "consistent lines of activity" or "consistent behaviour."[18] David Matza, in Delinquency and Drift, quotes William Kornhauser who defines commitment as to "become more or less unavailable for other lines of action."[19]

Cohen's emphasis on group solidarity is illustrative of the notion of commitment.[20] Cloward and Ohlin assume commitment as a prerequisite for the delinquent subculture by suggesting:

> To the extent that members waver in their allegiance to delinquent norms, the subculture comes to lack stability and validity as a way of life.[21]

The idea of commitment leads to the question of the content of the delinquent collectivity; that is, the nature of the behaviour that members engage in, and the nature of the group that necessarily results from adherence to a unique value system. Is it, in fact, a cohesive group?

One must consider, then, the empirical data bearing on first, the question of the existence of different lower class values and, secondly and more important given its emphasis in the literature,[22] the question of commitment to a delinquent value system and thirdly, the question of

the rejection of middle class values through some process such as "reaction-formation."

The Question of a Lower Class Value System

John P. Clark and Eugene P. Wenninger studied goal orientations and illegal behaviour among public school students in four different types of communities (including a lower-class urban sample from a crowded, mainly Negro area in Chicago). They report that:

> unless those in the lower socio-economic classes occur in sufficient quantity to develop a "culture" of their own which will provide them relative "immunity" from the middle and upper social classes, they appear to adopt the goal orientations of higher classes...These findings aid the establishment of limits of Miller's "lower class culture."[23]

In another report on the same research project, they suggest that

> The pattern of illegal behaviour within small communities or within "status areas" of a large metropolitan center is determined by the predominant class of that area. Social class differentiation within these areas is apparently not related to the incidence of illegal behaviour. This suggests that there are community-wide norms which are related to illegal behaviour and to which juveniles adhere regardless of their social class origins.[24]

Clark and Wenninger suggest, then, that if Miller's relationship between "focal concerns," or values, of the lower class culture and delinquency actually exists, the lower class persons living in status areas not predominantly

lower class do not participate in the lower class culture. If their numbers are few, they have been culturally assimilated by the predominant class. Similarly, middle class youths in lower class status areas are just as likely to take on deviant patterns of behaviour as are the lower class persons. They claim that

> This suggests either the great power of prevailing norms within a "status area" or a limitation of social class, as it is presently measured, as a significant variable in the determination of illegal behaviour.[25]

More important than social status, then, is the location of the lower class youth in a geographical area.

This conclusion is substantiated by Albert J. Reiss, Jr. and Lewis Rhodes in their study of 9,238 white youths twelve years of age and over, in Davidson County, Tennessee. The focus of their work was on

> the more precise description of patterned variation in delinquency rates by social class categories and structures.[26]

They conclude

> it is clear that there is no simple relationship between ascribed social status and delinquency. Both the status structure of an area and the extent to which delinquency occurs as a cultural tradition affect the delinquency life-chances of a boy at each ascribed status level. While the life-chances of low ascribed status boys becoming delinquent are greater than those of high status ones, a low status boy in a predominantly high status area with a low rate of delinquency has almost no chance of being classified a juvenile court delinquent.[27]

In summary, Reiss and Rhodes suggest

> that lower class status is not a necessary and sufficient set of conditions in the etiology of any type of delinquency.[28]

If we accept the above suggestions that the value system of the delinquent "gang" member is not necessarily lower class, we may turn to a consideration of the question of committment to delinquent values.

The Question of Commitment to Delinquent Values

There is considerable evidence from the data available to suggest that the commitment of delinquent boys to delinquent values is also questionable. If commitment is "consistent behaviour," as Becker suggests, then one can consider how delinquent boys behave in order to measure their commitment to a unique set of values.

Firstly, many members are not known to have participated in delinquent activities. Miller's data supports this contention. Two thirds of the male gang members were not, in a two year period, involved in assaultive crimes, and one half were not involved in theft behaviour.[29]

In addition, evidence is presented by Klein and Yablonsky that many "members" are not active participants in the general "goings-on" of gang activity.[30] Despite even occassional participation, "marginal members" cannot be seen as participating in delinquent acts and committed to a delinquent set of values.

Secondly, there is, generally, a lack of persistent involvement in delinquent acts, on the part of individual gang members. David Matza comments on "the frequency of the delinquent's conformity to both conventional and unconventional standards."[31]

> Delinquency is after all a legal status and not a person perpetually breaking laws. A delinquent is a youngster who in relative terms more warrants that legal appellation than one who is less delinquent or not at all so. He is a delinquent by and large because the shoe fits, but even so we must never imagine that he wears it very much of the time. Delinquency is a status and delinquents are incumbents who intermittently act out a role. When we focus on the incumbents rather than a status, we find that most are perfectly capable of conventional activity.[32]

Robin's data from Philadelphia substantiate this. Using a minimum of five police contacts to determine his stability patterns, he still arrives at a figure of stability that includes only 20 per cent of his subjects.[33] This means that most of the youth did not demonstrate specialized patterns of delinquency.

This does not indicate commitment since Becker points out that

> the notion of consistent lines of activity seems to imply a rejection by the actor of feasible alternatives.[34]

Thirdly, the lack of planning and the situational nature that may characterize much delinquent behaviour suggest a lack of commitment to a "delinquent life" or to a set of shared goals. Briar and Piliavin in a critique

of subcultural theories, state this point:

> Because delinquent behaviour is typically episodic, purposive, and confined to certain situations, we assume that the motives for such behaviour are frequently episodic, oriented to short-term ends, and confined to certain situations. That is, rather than considering delinquent acts as solely the product of long term motives deriving from conflicts or frustrations whose genesis is far removed from the arenas in which the illegal behaviour occurs, we assume these acts are prompted by short-term situationally induced desires experienced by all boys to obtain valued goods, to portray courage in the presence of, or be loyal to peers, to strike out at someone who is disliked, or simply to "get kicks."[35]

The notion of commitment is inconsistent with such a portrayal of the delinquent boy.

Fourthly, there is the matter of "maturational reform," at Matza calls it. If one assumes a commitment to delinquent values,

> the frequency with which delinquents more or less reform is most perplexing...Anywhere from 60 to 85 per cent do not apparently become adult violators. Moreover, this reform seems to occur irrespective of intervention of correctional agencies and irrespective of the quality of correctional service.[36]

Travis Hirschi and Briar and Piliavin reiterate this point and the latter researchers suggest that the subcultural theories of delinquency cannot explain this fact "with their assumptions on the enduring nature of delinquency-producing dispositions."[37]

Becker, too, would reject such evidence as indicative of commitment since he argues that consistent behaviour, one of the criteria of commitment, "persists over some period of time."[38]

These points on the behaviour of delinquent boys seriously question the notion that these boys are committed to delinquent values.

The Question of the Rejection of Middle Class Values

Do delinquent boys reject middle class values through a process such as "reaction-formation?"

Although Cohen emphasizes the "explicit and wholesale repudiation of middle-class standards"[39] by delinquent boys, one may argue, as Cloward and Ohlin do, that

> Most of the behaviour of delinquents conforms to conventional expectations; their violations of official norms are selective, confined to certain areas of activity and interest, ...the delinquent subculture calls for the withdrawal of sentiments supporting official norms and the tendering of allegiance to competing norms.[40]

However, Gresham Sykes and David Matza,[41] who argue that subcultural delinquency does not represent the complete rejection of middle class values, would consider that Cloward and Ohlin, despite their qualification, have still placed too much emphasis on reaction-formation.

They make the following points to suggest that the "subcultural delinquent" is not committed to a delinquent set of values, even those which Cloward and Ohlin would argue are selective and confined to certain areas of activity and interest.

They point out first that if one assumes Cohen's point of view, it would be evident that delinquents would feel no guilt or shame regarding their crimes or offences, if they had in fact repudiated middle-class values. If this were the case, the major reaction would be indignation or a sense of martyrdom.

They suggest that there is evidence that delinquents do experience genuine guilt, not simply a manipulative attempt to appease those in authority.

Sykes and Matza also point out that delinquents often demonstrate admiration and respect for law-abiding persons. Therefore, he does not totally condemn those who accept or abide by the legal rules.

The delinquent also demonstrates resentment when illegal behaviour is attributed to "significant others" in his immediate environment or to heroes in sports or entertainment.

> ...if the delinquent does hold to a set of values and norms that stand in complete opposition to those of respectable society, his norm-holding is of a peculiar sort. While supposedly thoroughly committed to the deviant system of the delinquent subculture, he would appear to recognize the moral validity of the dominant normative system in many instances.[42]

Thirdly, delinquents draw a line between those who can and cannot be victimized.

> ...the potentiality for victimization would seem to be a function of the social distance between the juvenile delinquent and others... 'don't steal from friends.'[43]

Therefore, there is a recognition of the "wrongfulness" of delinquent behaviour, when it is not directed against disvalued social groups. Their delineation of acceptable targets is similar to notions held by more conventional others.

Fourth, delinquents are not completely immune from the demands for conformity by the dominant value system. "He cannot escape the condemnation of his deviance,"[44] since he is dependent on, and surrounded by, conventional adults. These demands cannot be ignored but must be met.

In summary, Matza concludes:

> If this allegation (commitment to delinquent values) is warranted, why and by what process are these beliefs set aside at the age of remission? ...Nowhere in the accounts of the delinquent subculture do we read of crisis, reevaluation of commitment, and other normal

> concomitants of moral conversion. Thus, there is reason to doubt the dedication with which the subcultural delinquent pursues and perpetrates his misdeeds.[45]

Summary

The arguments presented stress that the delinquent does not appear to be committed to delinquent values.

The evidence suggests that:

1. He may be a "member of a delinquent collectivity without engaging in delinquent behaviour on a regular basis, if at all.
   If commitment is consistent behaviour, then the member who rarely, if ever, engages in delinquent acts, is not committed.
2. Most of the time, the delinquent is abiding by the norms of the dominant society.
   If commitment to one line of action implies that the delinquent rejects feasible alternatives, then these youths are not committed to delinquent values.
3. Delinquent behaviour may be spontaneous and episodic, a reaction to situational encounters.
   Commitment is not necessary for the existence of this type of behaviour.

4. Most delinquents do not become adult criminals. If commitment implies persistent behaviour over a relatively long period of time, then most delinquents are not committed to delinquent values.

One sees little evidence that subcultural delinquents are committed to delinquent values. This casts doubt on the notion of reaction formation since an inversion of middle class values is relatively meaningless given the definition of commitment utilized here which includes action. The behaviour is, from time to time, contrary to the values of the middle class but that does not imply commitment to delinquent values nor rejection of middle class values.

Given the idea of a lack of commitment, one may proceed to an important related question: Is the delinquent collectivity a cohesive unit? Is it one that is characterized by mutual liking or internal attraction, shared norms and, generally, solidarity? The theoretical literature suggests that it is.[46] On the basis of the evidence regarding commitment, one must reassess this notion as well.

COHESION

Prior to a discussion of the cohesiveness of the delinquent collectivity, it is necessary to note the considerable scope of the term in the literature. Klein and Crawford point out that

> Cohesiveness, nominally, has referred to mutual liking, or acceptance, attraction to group, degree of shared norms or values, and resistance to disruptive forces. Operationally, it has been measured by coordination of efforts, summated attractiveness scores, reaction to threat, choice of group over other alternatives, ratio of in-group to out-group choices or contacts, and so on.[47]

All these suggest what many have called "internal" sources of cohesion.[48] The origins of this approach are generally traced to Thrasher's work and, as Empey suggests,

> a traditional perspective has developed emphasizing the romantic quality of delinquent gangs, the free and easy life the joint commitments of members of one another.[49]

In this approach, cohesion and commitment go hand in hand, a commitment not only to others but to a collectivity with a shared set of norms and values.

We have noted the apparent lack of commitment of delinquent boys to one another, to the collectivity and to delinquent norms. An appropriate measure of cohesion that may be employed to examine the notion of internal attraction is the extent and nature of "member interaction."[50]

The Extent of Member Interaction

In considering the degree of involvement of members in gang activities (both conventional and delinquent) the general lack of consistent involvement characteristic of the collectivity was noted. Yablonsky and Klein both distinguish between core and marginal members, Klein indicating that, in his study, 165 boys were designated as core members and 125 as marginal. In addition, 58 from those two groups were seen as members of cliques.[51]

Klein and Crawford's study of cohesion in the delinquent gang is even more informative.[52] In studying the interaction patterns of one gang consisting of 32 members, they discovered that 68% of the cells, indicating observed interaction between pairs, were empty.

If, then, one of the requisites of cohesion is the willingness of members to be together simply to enjoy one another's company,[53] the evidence regarding delinquent collectivities is not indicative of such an organization simply because of the general lack of contact.

The Nature of Member Interaction

In addition, the nature of the interaction that apparently characterizes member relations has been reviewed. Miller, Geertz and Cutter noted that seventy per cent of

aggressive actions of all types were directed at group members.[54] Malcolm Klein's research indicates that

> The assault charges typically involved more intra- and inter-gang incidents than serious assaults on "innocent bystanders." Thus, the gang boy was far more of a threat to himself and his peers than to the community at large.[55]

One must, however, be cautious in the use of the term "aggression." The data in Chapter II suggest, as Miller claims, that much of the aggression is characterized by smoke rather than fire, words as opposed to deeds.[56] According to Miller, whereas in most behaviour areas, actions outnumbered sentiments, in the assaultive area there were one and a half times more sentiments than behaviour. The data presented by Miller, Geertz, and Cutter substantiate this. Only seven per cent of almost 1400 aggressive acts were physical attacks on persons or property. The rest assumed various forms of verbal aggression.[57]

Of the 95 acts of physical aggression (7% of the total) Miller, Geertz, and Cutter defined only seven as involving genuine anger. They suggest that the mode of aggression is clearly outlined by the collectivity, as is the choice of target and the degree of intensity.[58] We can hypothesize, then, that much of the aggression can be described as "ritualistic." As Miller suggests,

> A major objective of gang members was to put themselves in the posture of fighting without actually having to fight.[59]

This ritualized aggressive interaction has been termed "sounding" by David Matza:

> a daily and almost incessant activity of the delinquent company...a probing of one's depth, taking the form of insult...[60]

Short and Strodtbeck point out that gang members are constantly being challenged to prove themselves adept in pressure situations or in situations in which the group has clearly defined modes of conduct.[61] This presumably is a response to an attack on one's status and masculinity. The point is shared by Matza who says that "...most sounding is a probing of one's manliness and one's membership."[62]

The categories utilized in Table 10 in Chapter III indicate the forms of verbal aggression discovered by Miller, Geertz, and Cutter. These categories can all be interpreted under the concept "sounding."[63]

The mere prevalence of verbal aggression, and cautious physical aggression, indicates that the delinquent gang values "toughness." It would appear, however, in considering the targets, forms and intensity of aggression, that the gang members welcome, as Miller puts it, "safe targets."[64] In effect, then, the gang boys believe that their peers do possess this requisite and they, too, must provide a front of toughness. This aggression, which by and large falls

short of actual physical combat, is a method by which the individual can "demonstrate" his toughness without actually having to engage in physical combat.

Sounding is not usually seen as a characteristic of cohesive groups. Its presence in the delinquent collectivity indicates, as Yablonsky suggests, a lack of "friendship and camaradie...cooperativeness."[65] Instead we see "distrust and suspicion, not intense solidarity,"[66] which leads us to conclude the solidarity of the gang is not substantial. This statement is substantiated by many in the field. Travis Hirschi describes the notion of gangs being characterized by intimate social relations as a "romantic myth" and suggests that evidence supporting the concept of cohesion is "an assertion on the part of the investigator."[67] Paul Lerman adds that even writings which tend to reify the gang

> exhibit an awareness of 'amorphous coalitions of cliques,' of groups with loose 'ties' and limited cohesion...[69]

In view of the nature of the interaction in the delinquent collectivity, we would agree with Matza's comment that sounding eventuates "in an increase in the level of anxiety."[70]

Empey emphasizes this point in summarizing the attitudes of the major theorists on the sources of cohesion. The second theme in the literature regarding cohesion is a

deterministic one which suggests that the sources of cohesion are external, that the individual is forced into the group with others in similar situations.

> It is the role of the individual youngsters in the social structure, not his role in the street group, that is of primary significance. He is alienated before he enters the group, not because of it.[71]

If this is the case, then cohesiveness, as it has been generally used in the literature, is not according to the evidence presented here, observable.

SUMMARY

The bond that unites members of the delinquent collectivity is a rather fragile one in view of:

1. The lack of cohesion (in-group solidarity or mutual attraction) which implies:
2. A lack of strong commitment on the part of members to delinquent values and to one another.

Based on these conclusions, LaMar Empey's evaluative comment on delinquency research becomes crucial:

> the possible lack of cohesiveness in delinquent groups raises questions regarding the nature of delinquent subcultures. If delinquent groups are not cohesive and internally gratifying, can it be expected that delinquents...have either personal motivation or the organizational skills to promote and maintain a deviant subculture which is in total opposition to prevailing values?[72]

We contend here that the delinquent collectivity is not a contraculture; that it lacks the cohesive qualities generally attributed to it in the literature; and that individual members are not strongly committed to a unique set of delinquent values. It is necessary to consider, therefore, a more realistic picture of the delinquent collectivity and how it comes into existence.

FOOTNOTES

1. Cloward and Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity, p. 7.
2. Ibid., p. 10.
3. Cohen, Delinquent Boys, p. 31.
4. Ibid., p. 31.
5. Ibid., p. 28.
6. Ibid., p. 66.
7. Ibid., p. 134.
8. Cloward and Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity, p. 13.
9. J. Milton Yinger, "Contraculture and Subculture," American Sociological Review, 25, No. 5, (October, 1960) pp. 625-635. In reviewing over one hundred sources, Yinger discovered three usages of the term "subculture." The first was an anthropological reference to universal tendencies that occur in all societies. He dismisses this usage by suggesting that it is rarely considered today.
10. Ibid., p. 626.
11. Miller, "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency."
12. Ibid., p. 5.
13. Ibid., p. 5.
14. Yinger, "Contraculture and Subculture," p. 629.
15. Cohen, Delinquent Boys, p. 129.
16. Bordua, "Sociological Perspectives," p. 90.
17. This view is supported by Empey, "Delinquency Theory and Recent Research," p. 37; and David Matza, Delinquency and Drift, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1964, p. 36.
18. Howard S.Becker, "Notes on the Concept of Commitment," American Journal of Sociology, 66, (1960-61) p. 33.

19. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 28.

20. Cohen, Delinquent Boys, p. 31.

21. Cloward and Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity, p. 20.

22. Miller's "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency," is generally considered in most texts as a critique of the Cohen, Cloward and Ohlin formulations and, thus, given secondary importance.

23. John P. Clark and Eugene P. Wenninger, "Goal Orientations and Illegal Behaviour Among Juveniles," Social Forces, 42, (1963-64) p. 58.

24. John P. Clark and Eugene P. Wenninger, "Socio-economic Class and Area as Correlates of Illegal Behaviour Among Juveniles," in Juvenile Delinquency: A Book of Readings, Rose Giallombardo (Ed.) p. 192.

25. Ibid., p. 192.

26. Albert J. Reiss, Jr., and Albert Lewis Rhodes, "The Distribution of Juvenile Delinquency in the Social Class Structure," American Sociological Review, 26, (1961), p. 721.

27. Ibid., p. 729.

28. Ibid., p. 730.

29. Supra, p. 45.

30. Supra, pp. 38-39.

31. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 26.

32. Ibid., p. 26.

33. Supra, p. 25.

34. Becker, "Notes on the Concept of Commitment," p. 33.

35. Scott Briar and Irving Piliavin, "Delinquency, Situational Inducements, and Commitment to Conformity," Social Problems, 13, No. 1, (Summer, 1965) p. 36.

36. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 22.

37. Briar and Piliavin, "Delinquency, Situational Inducements and Commitments to Conformity," p. 35. See also Travis Hirschi, Causes of Delinquency, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969, p. 6.

38. Becker, "Notes on the Concept of Commitment," p. 33.

39. Cohen, Delinquent Boys, p. 129.

40. Cloward and Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity, p. 20.

41. Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza, "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency," in Juvenile Delinquency: A Book of Readings, Rose Giallombardo (Ed.)

42. Ibid., p. 130.

43. Ibid., p. 131.

44. Ibid., p. 131.

45. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 25.

46. See, for example, Cohen, Delinquent Boys, p. 31.

47. Klein and Crawford, "Groups, Gangs, and Cohesiveness," p. 69. See their ensuing footnotes for further references.

48. See Empey, "Delinquency Theory and Recent Research," p. 33; Klein and Crawford, "Groups, Gangs and Cohesiveness," pp. 65-70; Bordua, "A Critique of Sociological Interpretations of Gang Delinquency," pp. 289-301.

49. Empey, "Delinquency Theory and Recent Research," p. 33.

50. Ibid., p. 33; Klein and Crawford, "Groups, Gangs, and Cohesiveness," p. 70.

51. Supra, p. 39.

52. Supra, pp. 40-42.

53. See Empey, "Delinquency Theory and Recent Research," p. 33; and Bordua, "A Critique of Sociological Interpretations of Gang Delinquency," pp. 289-301, for comments on Thrasher's views.

54. Supra, pp. 49-52.

55. Klein, "Gang Cohesiveness, Delinquency, and a Street-Work Program," p. 141.

56. Supra, p. 48.

57. Supra, p. 50.

58. Supra, p. 51.

59. Miller, "Violent Crimes in City Gangs," p. 705.

60. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 53.

61. Short and Strodtbeck, Group Process and Gang Delinquency, p. 231.

62. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 53.

63. Supra, p. 51.

64. Supra, p. 52.

65. Yablonsky, The Violent Gang, p. 5.

66. Hirschi, Causes of Delinquency, p. 154.

67. Ibid., p. 160.

68. Lerman cites as examples: Cloward and Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity; and Albert K. Cohen and James F. Short, Jr., "Research in Delinquent Subcultures," Journal of Social Issues, XVI, (Summer, 1958).

69. Lerman, "Gangs, Networks, and Subcultural Delinquency," p. 65.

70. Matza, Delinquent Boys, p. 53.

71. Empey, "Delinquent Theory and Recent Research," p. 33.

72. Ibid., p. 714.

CHAPTER V

THE DELINQUENT COLLECTIVITY AND THE PROCESS OF BECOMING DELINQUENT

INTRODUCTION

The delinquent subculture or gang has been considered by contemporary theorists to be a cohesive contraculture consisting of delinquent values to which its members are committed. The data presented in earlier chapters indicate that the notions of cohesion and commitment do not stand the empirical test. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a more realistic picture of the collectivity on the basis of the empirical studies reviewed.

To do this, one must pursue a somewhat different line of analysis and first explain how an individual becomes a part of a collectivity such as that described in the preceding chapters. It is necessary to discuss this process prior to a description of the structure of the collectivity because, as Sykes and Matza note,

> one of the most fascinating problems about human behaviour is why men violate the laws which they believe. This is the problem that confronts us when we attempt to explain why delinquency occurs despite a greater or lesser commitment to the usages of conformity.[1]

And this is the problem with which one is confronted following an analysis of the empirical literature. Specifically:

1. The members of the delinquent collectivity are not committed to delinquent values but to those of the conventional society. Why, then, do some of them engage in acts of delinquency, violating the laws in which they believe?
2. Given an understanding of the process by which an individual becomes capable of behaving in a manner contrary to his beliefs, what is the nature of the collectivity of which he is a member?

With knowledge of the process of becoming involved, one can describe this collectivity. It has been suggested that the terms "delinquent subculture" and "gang" are inappropriate for describing this phenomenon. Also, the term "member" appears to be extremely vague, in that a boy may be a member by his peer's definition without engaging in delinquent behaviour or participating in the collectivity to any great extent.[2] Therefore, it might be argued that the term "collectivity" is inappropriate as well. The aim of the following chapters is to determine if this is the case and, if so, to suggest a more appropriate term and description of this phenomenon.

MATZA'S CONCEPTION OF DELINQUENCY

In attempting to develop a more adequate description and explanation of the phenomenon in question, a consideration of David Matza's Delinquency and Drift is appropriate here. Matza's book was written in response to positive criminology[3] in general and the subcultural literature in particular. It is addressed to many of the issues requiring analysis here and is, generally, consistent with the conclusions of the empirical studies cited above.

Matza argues that our assumptions about the delinquent are, and have been for a century, drawn from the positive school of criminology, the basic assumptions of which are:

1. Its emphasis on the criminal actor rather than the law. Attention has been directed toward the behavioural and motivational systems of delinquents and criminals rather than their relation with the law. Matza says:

> Positive criminology has come very close to ignoring the defining character of delinquents - the fact that they commit infractions - in its various explanations of delinquency.[4]

2. Its emphasis on scientific determinism. Positive criminology has rejected the free will doctrine of the classical school,

> the view that man exercised freedom, was possessed of reason, and was thus capable of choice...It substituted for the classical model an image of man as fundamentally constrained.[5]

Matza defines this kind of thinking in modern criminology as "hard determinism," and suggests that

> The difference between hard and soft determinism is that one merely directs the analyst, whereas the other makes a fundamental contention regarding the nature of human action... Determinism for the positive school of criminology was not merely a heuristic principle; it was a vision that likened man to physical and chemical particles. Every event is caused. Human freedom is illusory.[6]

3. In view of the notion of the constrained delinquent, such a person was regarded as basically different from law-abiding individuals. "Differentiation," says Matza, "is the favored method of positivist explanation."[7] He elaborates:

> From the born criminal to differential association, the explanation of delinquency has rested in the radically different circumstances experienced by delinquent and law-abiding alike.[8]

In general, Matza's argument against positive criminology and its hard determinism is that

> the consequences of hard determinism has been to push criminologists toward a distorted and misleading picture of the delinquent and his enterprise.[9]

He elaborates:

> the delinquent as portrayed in sociological theory is constrained through commitment to an ethical code which makes his misdeeds mandatory. The delinquent, according to contemporary sociological theory, is a rather normal youngster - except that he belongs to what is essentially a different though related culture. Instead of learning our precepts, he learns others. It is ironic that the

> sociological view which began as a protest against the conviction that the delinquent was something apart has managed again to thrust the delinquent outside the pale of normal social life. Such is the force of the positivist determination to find and accentuate differences.[10]

Matza argues in favor of "soft determinism," as opposed to the hard determinism of the positivist school, suggesting that human actions, although causally determined, are not without freedom. Men "vacillate between choice and constraint."[11] Therefore, he adds:

> The image of the delinquent I wish to convey is one of drift; an actor neither compelled nor committed to deeds nor freely choosing them; neither different in any simple or fundamental sense from the law-abiding, nor the same...[12]

With this in mind, he concludes his introduction by suggesting that

> the major purpose of such a theory is a description of the conditions that make delinquent drift possible and probable, and not a specification of invariant conditions of delinquency.[13]

His theory, then, is not in the positivist tradition of the prominant subcultural explanations of delinquency. He is rejecting diffentiation, constraint, and the notion of "delinquent values." Such an approach would seem to be consistent with the data gathered here on behavioural dimensions of delinquents, commitment and cohesion. The evidence presented here suggests that if subcultures and gangs do exist they are relatively rare and do not appear

to possess the characteristics attributed to them by Cloward and Ohlin and Cohen. Jackson Toby, in a review of Delinqueuncy and Opportunity, argues that "gang delinquency as defined by Cloward and Ohlin does not amount to 10 per cent of the cases handled by American juvenile courts..."[14]

If this is the case, and the data suggests that it is, then the comments of Leonard Savitz must be considered:

> It is also possible to ask what percentage of all juvenile delinquents belong to gangs or what percentage of serious delinquents belong to gangs. If those belonging to gangs constitute only a relatively small percentage, should we not be concerned with the construction of a theory of non-gang delinquency?[15]

Gang delinquency has been over-generalized. It is maintained that Matza is attempting a theory of non-gang delinquency. This is evident from the following:

> it should be obvious that not all delinquents correspond to the drifter here depicted. By hypothesis, most delinquents, although perhaps not most criminals, approximate the model. The delinquent as drifter more approximates the substantial majority of juvenile delinquents who do not become adult criminals than the minority who do...[16]

Therefore, the delinquent to be discussed in the following pages represents the majority of delinquents. It does not include "Some delinquents (who) are neurotically compulsive and some (who) in the course of their enterprise develop commitment."[17] For the most part, however, it does include the type of delinquent that Cloward and Ohlin and

Cohen attempted to describe. The empirical studies conducted in the areas where they claimed their delinquents were most predominant fail to yield the type of delinquent and gang they describe. Matza's assertions, as will be shown, do appear to be consistent with the results of the empirical studies considered. The suggestion is, then, that the Cohen, Cloward and Ohlin assessments of the nature of lower class delinquency in metropolitan areas is inaccurate and that of David Matza is more realistic.

The purpose of the dissertation remains the same: to develop a more realistic explanation of the phenomenon traditionally known as subcultural delinquency; that is, lower class metropolitan area delinquency. By regarding this behaviour as something other than gang behaviour, however, it is hoped that the theory will have greater explanatory power than the subcultural theories; that is, that it will account for more delinquency than simply that which has been termed "gang" delinquency.

That Matza's book is a worthy point of departure is evident from the comments of Robert A. Nisbet who states that Delinquency and Drift "could well become one of the most important single works in the history of American Sociology."[18] Its relevance is in its discussion of the difficulties of the contemporary study of deviance, difficulties stemming from the fact that many sociologists are unable to forego the hard determinism which describes juvenile deviance as the product of environmental factors

over which the youth has no power to resist, no freedom of choice.

David Downes states that Matza's book "contains a wealth of original and critical theorisation as to how and why boys 'drift' into delinquency."[19]

In view of the above, the content of Matza's work is discussed in detail.

Drift

Matza begins his argument by commenting on the notion of commitment, suggesting that

> The delinquency is casually, intermittently, and transiently immersed in a pattern of illegal action. His investment of affect in the delinquent enterprise is sufficient so as to allow an eliciting of prestige and satisfaction but not so large as to "become more or less unavailable for other lines of action." In point of fact, the delinquent is available even during the period of optimum involvement for many lines of legal and conventional action. Not only is he available but a moment's reflection tells us that, concomitant with his illegal involvement, he actively participates in a wide variety of conventional activity.[20]

Matza's comment represents merely a summary of the discussion contained here on the notion of commitment. He goes on to say, however, that

> If commitment implies, as it does, rendering oneself presently and in the future unavailable for other lines of action, then the delinquent is uncommitted. He is committed to neither delinquent nor conventional enterprise.[21]

Our discussion of commitment concluded that the delinquent was not committed to a delinquent set of values. This implies that he is committed to the conventional order. If, however, one accepts Matza's definition of commitment, then one must suggest, like Matza, that the delinquent is in limbo, released from moral constraint, and thus is free to drift. "Drift" is the basic tenet of Matza's thesis and is defined as follows:

> Drift stands midway between freedom and control. Its basis is an area of the social structure in which control has been loosened, coupled with the abortiveness of adolescent endeavor to organize an autonomous subculture, and thus an independent source of control, around legal action. The delinquent <u>transiently</u> exists in limbo between convention and crime, responding in turn to the demands of each, flirting now with one, now with the other, but postponing commitment, evading decision. Thus, he drifts between criminal and conventional activity.[22]

Matza asks, given this understanding of the notion of commitment: "does the subculture of delinquency require delinquency or merely tolerate it?"[23] Or, put another way,

> If the issue is to be a real or empirical one, the question must be: can a member remain in the subculture of delinquency, the world of public delinquency, and through proper extenuation refrain from delinquencies. I suggest the answer is yes, and that the existence and character of these extenuating circumstances inform us of the substance of

> the subculture of delinquency. They indicate in a dramatic and forcible way the intrusion of conventional values, and thus the accomodating rather than the oppositional character of the subculture.[24]

The evidence presented here does suggest that the individual can remain in the subculture but refrain from involvement in delinquent activities.[25]

Circumstances Which Exempt Youths from Delinquent Acts

The question remains, then, what are the extenuating circumstances to which Matza refers? To answer the initial question, Matza claims that we must look at the posture of delinquents in a variety of circumstances:[26]

1. The Situation of Apprehension

The situation of apprehension would not result in shame or guilt if the offending juvenile, and the subculture were oppositional, or committed to delinquency. In fact, the delinquent expresses wrongful indignation coupled with contriteness or defensive explanations, or apology. "Radical justification," according to Matza, "is characteristic of oppositional subcultures, whereas apology characterizes more accomodating subcultures."[27]

2. The Situation of Imputation.

The delinquent both resents the imputation of misdeeds to himself and to others who matter to him.

> If the subculture of delinquency were committed to delinquency, if it were oppositional, then imputations of delinquency might be true or false but in any case complimentary and hardly capable of eliciting resentment.[28]

3. The Choice of Victims.

Delinquents do select victims. Those most generally exempt from victimization are family and peers. In making such an exemption, the delinquent is demonstrating his adherence to conventional values.

4. The Juvenile Situation.

Certain elements of the adolescent world make it unlikely that the contraculture could develop. The juvenile's life is surrounded by adults. He is in a situation of "permeation and exposure."[29]

> The subculture of delinquency does reflect the partial insulation from conventional agents. But the same subculture also reflects the permeation of conventional agents resulting from the juvenile's predicament of encirclement.[30]

5. The Situation of Interview.

In the interview situation, Matza discovered that approval or disapproval of offence behaviour reflect the seriousness of the offence. He concluded that generally the delinquents seem to lack commitment to the misdeeds of their subculture.

6. The Situation of Company.

In the situation of company, the delinquent reveals his adherence to the contraculture, and "comes closer to being an oppositional delinquent in the situation of company than in other situations..."[31] Matza argues, however, that the delinquent still falls short.

> An ideology of delinquency in the sense of a coherent viewpoint is implicit in delinquent action, but this ideology is not known to delinquents...they infer ideology from each other. This is the primary relevance of the situation of company. It is that context in which the subculture of delinquency is mutually inferred... It is cued. Each member of the company infers the subculture from the cues of others.[32]

Matza argues that each delinquent suffers from masculinity anxiety and membership anxiety. There results, then, limited discussion and a limited amount of common knowledge and therefore the need for inference on the part of the individual. He must assume that the other is committed to delinquency. This assumption by each member in the situation of company results in what Matza calls "shared misunderstandings."[33] The evidence considered to date indicate that the delinquent portrays himself as possessing those qualities which he believes to be desireable to the group: agression and "toughness." The notion of "sounding" seems to cover much of this behaviour.[34]

Matza argues, however, that the fact that the majority of delinquents do not become adult criminals suggests that there is a way out of this situation for

the delinquent through the evaluation of delinquency:

> The serious evaluation of delinquency does attain publicity but not in the situations of company thus far described. There are two situations of company, one crescive and mundane, the other contrived and esoteric, in which the public evaluation of delinquency may occur. Publicity and its implicit potential for correcting possible misconceptions and misunderstandings is commonly a preface to the drift out of delinquency.[35]

Matza suggests that this evaluation of delinquency is most likely to occur in pairs of friends since they need not perform the sounding ritual since there is no audience. Therefore, public evaluation, although possible, "is not probable until the anxieties which sounding reflect as well as aggravate subside."[36] Both masculinity and membership anxiety must be reduced. Matza elaborates:

> Masculinity anxiety is somewhat reduced when someone becomes a man rather than being a mere aspirant. Boys are less driven to prove manhood unconventionally through deeds or misdeeds when with the passing of time they may effortlessly exhibit the conventional signposts of manhood - physical appearance, the completion of school, job, marriage, and perhaps even children.[37]

The reduction of membership anxiety coincides with the reduction of masculinity anxiety:

> The approach of adulthood is marked by the addition of new affiliations. One is less anxious about membership in the company of peers because there are new alternative affiliations. There were always alternatives but the new ones are more tenable since they are adult...Work, marriage, and other

> conventional adult statuses may be considered stupid or "square" but they are obviously not kid stuff. To that extent they invite affiliation. Their very existence serves to reduce the membership anxiety inherent in the subculture of juvenile delinquency.[38]

Briar and Piliavin share this view. They attempt to explain the "eventual conventionalization of many delinquent boys" by

> viewing the central processess of social control as "commitment by conformity." By this term we mean not only fear of the material deprivations and punishments which might result from being discovered as an offender but also apprehension about the deleterious consequences of such a discovery on one's attempts to maintain a consistent self image, to sustain valued relationships, and to preserve current and future statuses and activities. A youth with stray commitments to conformity is less likely to engage in deviant acts than is one for whom these commitments are minimal...[39]

Matza summarizes:

> The key to the analysis of the subculture of delinquency may be found in its considerable integration into the wider society and not in its slight differentiation.[40]

The mechanisms of integration are expressed by two concepts: neutralization and subterranean convergence.

Neutralization and Subterranean Convergence

Matza explains how an individual may violate a norm without actually rejecting it. He suggests that

> Criminal law is especially susceptible of neutralization because the conditions of applicability, and thus inapplicability, are explicitly stated. Rarely, if ever, are they categorically imperative.[41]

The law, then, in specifying conditions of applicability, is inviting neutralization, which is the evasion rather than the rejection of a norm.[42] The subcultural delinquent does extend the conditions of inapplicability "but in so doing he extends them along the same general lines already indicated in legal principles."[43]

In addition to the neutralization "link" with the conventional society, Matza points out that

> The continued existence of the subculture is facilitated and perhaps even dependent on support and reinforcement from conventional sources. The subculture is buttressed by beliefs that flourish in influential sectors of the normative order.[44]

This subculture is a "subterranean tradition in American life."[45] This tradition is deviant, or at least publicly denounced, but is considered in a somewhat ambivalent manner in the "privacy of contemplation and in intimate publics,"[46] of conventional persons.

Taking into consideration the delinquent's involvement in the conventional society, Matza suggests in summary that

> Episodically, he is released from the moral bind of conventional order. This temporary though recurrent release from the bind of convention has been taken for compulsion or commitment. It is, instead, almost the opposite. During release the delinquent is not constrained to commit offense: rather he is free to drift into delinquency.[47]

Matza adds that the fact that the individual is released from the conventional order does not guarantee the commission of a delinquent act. It simply makes possible the act by removing restraints. One point is clear in Matza's argument: the impetus to commit the act is not compulsion or commitment. It is will,[48] which to be activated requires that two conditions be met: preparation and desperation, neither of which will occur outside drift.

Preparation and Desperation

According to Matza, preparation

> serves to activate the will to crime on mundane occasions...(and) may provide the impetus for the repitition of old infractions...[49]

Preparations refers to learning from experience that an illegal act can be committed and thus may be done. The individual must also learn that the offense is relatively easy to do.

Recognizing both a moral and technical element in the possibility of an infraction,[50] Matza focuses on technical feasibility which refers to

> the learned capacity to manage the action, or behavioural component of delinquency, on the one hand, and the counteraction, or apprehensive component, on the other.[51]

The will to repeat an old offence is not likely to occur if the individual has failed in the past or disappointed the behavioural expectations of his peers. The sounding element in delinquency may deter the inept violator.[52]

The apprehensive component, as well, may be enough to deter certain juveniles from committing delinquent acts. They simply fear the consequences.[53] Matza points out that this does not mean that delinquent acts are rationally planned with a view toward possible consequences. If the juvenile does not have a strong fear of the authorities, based on past experiences, then he is more likely to proceed. How does one overcome this possible fear?

There is, according to Matza, a prevalent belief in the subculture in the "technical incompetence of officials."[54] They realize that the chances of detection are minimal and that, in the event of action by the police, the prevailing mood of the juvenile court will result in a concern for their welfare rather than a desire to punish them. That is, the consequences of counteraction are not perceived as severe.

In discussing the concept of desperation, Matza points out that:

> drift is not likely to culminate in new or previously unexperienced infraction unless the will to crime receives massive activation. Such activation may be provided by a feeling of desperation.[55]

The sources of desperation are many but one - the mood of fatalism - is particularly important because it

> neutralizes the legal bind since it renders subcultural adherents irresponsible: it elicits or is itself provoked by the situation of company...(and) it provides a sense of desperation.[56]

The mood of fatalism refers to the feeling that the individual has no control over his circumstances, that one is being pushed about by forces beyond his control. The fatalistic mood does not always bring a sense of desperation. If fatalism means the lack of control over one's destiny, then one who succumbs to this mood is not demonstrating the qualities desireable to the delinquent company: manliness. Because of the implications of the mood of fatalism - the inability to demonstrate control over one's self and circumstances, a quality desireable to the delinquent company - the delinquent is more likely to experience desperation. An infraction is the surest way to restore one's self image and gain the respect of one's peers.[57]

Summary

Some evidence exists that casts light on what Matza claims is open to empirical investigation. Insofar as the delinquent collectivity does not represent a contra-culture, possessing a unique value system which stands in opposition to that of the conventional culture, the author supports Matza's contention that the delinquent does drift; that he is uncommitted. Since there is no unique value system, and since the interaction in the delinquent company is characterized by "sounding" it is doubtful that the unit is a cohesive one. The lack of commitment and cohesion allows the individual to participate to the degree that he wishes without having to commit illegal acts. The evidence does suggest varying degrees of participation in the collectivity and involvement in delinquent behaviour. This supports Matza's contention that the collectivity does not require delinquent behaviour but merely tolerates it.

Prior to considering Matza's alternative formulation of the subcultural notion, it is necessary to consider his comments critically since, as will be shown, there appear to be contradictions between his work and the empirical evidence discussed and, indeed, contradictions exist within his own work.

A CRITIQUE OF THE PROCESS OF BECOMING DELINQUENT

It has been noted that Matza places considerable emphasis on the notion of "sounding" or testing in street interaction; but he does not use it to explain the actual commission of delinquent acts. When sounding is considered with respect to the delinquent act it appears to contradict, as will be shown, two basic notions in his work, namely the techniques of neutralization, and the concept of preparation.

In addition, it may be possible to expand on Matza's analysis of the process by which the delinquent ceases to commit delinquent acts and becomes a law-abiding adult. Matza indicates that there are "manifold and complex reasons for the drift out of delinquency,"[58] but specifies only "maturational reform" or what he calls the "evaluation of delinquency." Are there not other avenues to conformity open to the delinquent? Indeed, some delinquents terminate their careers well in advance of any maturational process. Alternate avenues out of the subculture of delinquency must be explored.

Also, there appears to be a lack of clarity over Matza's use of the term "drift." Is drift constant and personal or it is situational? Does drift depend upon certain factors that may impinge upon the individual at a

given time? The following critique of Matza will aid in resolving the question.

With the exception of these points, we acknowledge Matza's work as having considerable merit in view of the data reviewed. The individual demonstrates adherence to both delinquent and conventional values but is uncommitted to either. He is, therefore, in limbo, free to drift. Since there is no commitment to delinquent values, and since many members do not commit delinquent acts, delinquent behaviour is tolerated but not required. Following an analysis of the concerns cited above, developing a description of the collectivity will be possible.

Sounding and the Techniques of Neutralization

The data presented appear to offer support to Matza's contention that "one's depth...is sounded almost daily... by a jury of peers."[59] But the evidence also indicates that many delinquent acts are responses to situationally induced factors. Rather than being rationally planned and calculated, the acts are spontaneous responses to a given situation. If this suggests, as we believe it does, that the youth is challenged or goaded into committing an offence, then it would seem to question the emphasis given the techniques of neutralization as operating in advance of the act as justifications or motivations or a rationale based on moral considerations.

Sykes and Matza suggest that

> techniques of neutralization are critical in lessening the effectiveness of social controls and that they lie behind a large share of delinquent behaviour.[60]

They add that "It is by learning these techniques that the juvenile becomes delinquent."[61]

At the other extreme, Matza maintains that it is in the situation of company that the delinquent comes closest to being an oppositional delinquent. This situation, according to Matza and the empirical evidence, is characterized by sounding - street interaction which results in shared misunderstandings. Caught up, then, in the atmosphere of sounding, where one's masculinity and status are at stake, does the youth consider - even have time to consider - the moral implications of his behaviour?

Matza himself suggests that

> The question of evaluation of delinquency is not put because it is almost immediately translated into a question of masculinity or membership...The serious discussion of sentiments regarding delinquency is prevented by frivolous replies whose motive is a demonstration of depth and thus a suggestion that a formal sounding is unnecessary. Thus, the delinquent in the situation of company does not consider his misdeeds.[62]

How, then, do the techniques of neutralization fit into Matza's picture of a delinquent responding to the situationally induced challenges of his peers?

There is some empirical evidence to indicate the existence of the techniques of neutralization. Richard A. Ball constructed a neutralization inventory of four situations of varying degrees of seriousness with ten neutralization items listed under each. Data was obtained from 197 high school boys and 200 residents of an institution for male juvenile delinquents in Ohio. His findings

> support Sykes and Matza's assertion that delinquents will accept the techniques of neutralization more than will nondelinquents. The data do not allow us to specify whether the excuses are accepted before, during, or after delinquency.[63]

It may be, since delinquency is episodic and situational in character, that they are not used or accepted just prior to the commission of the delinquent act. If, then, they occur in advance, they must occur well in advance of the act.

Travis Hirschi attempts to deal with this question. In discussing perspectives on delinquency, he cites Matza's Delinquency and Drift as an example of control theory which assumes that "a person is free to commit delinquent acts because his ties to the conventional order have somehow been broken."[64] Neutralization, he suggests,

> is difficult to handle within the context of a theory that adheres closely to control theory assumptions, because in the control theory there is no special motivational force to account for the neutralization.[65]

Hirschi explains:

> The concept of neutralization assumes the existence of moral obstacles to the commission of deviant acts. In order plausibly to account for a deviant act, it is necessary to generate motivation to deviance that is at least equivalent in force to the resistance provided by these moral obstacles. However, if the moral obstacles are removed, neutralization and special motivation are no longer required. We therefore follow the implicit logic of control theory and remove these moral obstacles by hypothesis. Many persons do not have an attitude of respect toward the rules of society...neutralization is unnecessary: it has already occured.[66]

To summarize, he suggests:

> In chronological order, then, a person's beliefs in the moral validity of norms are, for no teleological reason, weakened. The probability that he will commit delinquent acts is therefore increased. When and if he commits a delinquent act, we may justifiably use the weakness of his beliefs in explaining it, but no special motivation is required to explain either the weakness of his beliefs or, perhaps, his delinquent act.[67]

It seems more reasonable, as Hirschi suggests, that delinquent acts precede justifications or techniques of neutralization. He argues that it is difficult to picture a boy subscribing to the belief without having committed delinquent acts.

It remains to be asked, then, do the techniques of neutralization occur following the delinquent act? Hirschi comments:

> these considerations do not require that we reject such "neutralizing" beliefs as causes of delinquency. On the contrary, since a boy may commit delinquent acts episodically over an extended period of time, there is every reason to believe that neutralizations in some sense resulting from the earlier acts are causes of later acts. In fact, if we reject, as we do here, the idea that the delinquent develops a set of beliefs that positively require delinquent behaviour, then the development of a series of neutralizing beliefs is exactly what we mean by the "hardening" process that presumably occurs at some point in a delinquent "career."[68]

We contend, then, that the boy does not become delinquent because he has learned in advance the rationalizations that free him to commit a delinquent act. Once he has committed an act, he may employ the techniques for purposes of rationalization and may, in fact, use them prior to the commission of further acts.

We argue further that this does not mean that the individual expresses no concern whatsoever prior to the commission of his initial delinquent acts. Indeed, Matza points out that given that will exists,[69] its activation requires the existence of two factors: preparation and desperation. The relationship between these two concepts and the notion of sounding requires further analysis.

Sounding and Preparation

Preparation refers to the notion that a boy can learn from experience that he can commit an illegal act. Matza suggests implicitly that the boy has to commit an act in order to achieve this state. Given Matza's emphasis on sounding, and the supportive data, is it possible that experience can also refer to the experience of others? Can the individual be told that the act can be done and then challenged to do it? "If Johnny can do it, why can't you?" Is this not what sounding implies? It may be argued, then, that sounding may provide the impetus to try something that a boy is told can be done. Is this not what the setting is all about - a place, and circumstances, where a boy can inadvertently commit his first offence, or new offence?

Granted, Matza's "desperation" argument explains "new or previously unexperienced infractions"[70] brought about by the mood of fatalism but we suggest that there is a related cause, simply the challenge brought about through sounding. Indeed, Matza indicates that desperation, as brought on by the mood of fatalism - a push by forces over which one has little control - is provoked by street interaction, the situation of company. Matza's thoughts on the notion of desperation, then, would appear to be more in keeping with his earlier formulations on sounding.

To return to the notion of preparation, it is suggested that it contains two components: the behavioural aspect - the capacity to manage the action; and the apprehensive aspect - the awareness of the counteraction. Matza points out that sounding may deter the boy who has performed his previous delinquent acts in an inept manner. The above discussion of sounding and the techniques of neutralization implies that the boy may be goaded into a repetition of his previous delinquent act, his motive being to demonstrate to his peers that he can perform adequately and thus achieve or regain status.

The apprehensive component suggests that the boy may be deterred for reasons other than his inability to perform the act in an adequate manner. According to Matza, the boy may simply fear the consequences of his actions. If the consequences are perceived as being something less than severe, the boy will proceed with the delinquent act. This suggests, then, a tactical consideration on the part of the boy, a matter which has been explored by Herman and Julia Schwendinger.[71] They studied

> experimentally controlled delinquent and non-delinquent verbal responses to the same set of conditions; namely, instructions to imagine themselves in a debate about victimizing a person. The participants were instructed first to argue about, and then to decide to victimize particular kinds of people. The analysis focused on

> statements that might be made if an act of victimization were to be discussed and questioned...[72]

A non-institutionalized delinquent population was used. The authors conducted 39 role plays among 54 delinquent and non-delinquent boys, each role play containing at least three subjects. A total of 162 roles were performed. Some subjects were declared, in advance of the play, as Objectors, those who were asked to argue against the deviant act. Those given the responsibility of justifying the act were labelled Proponents.

The authors hypothesized that if Sykes and Matza were correct, they

> would find some moral ambivalence, or a sensitivity to a "societal generalized other"...if this sensitivity among delinquents exists, at least the delinquent Objectors would seize upon moral issues in challenging the legitimacy of the delinquent act.[73]

The Schwendingers suggest that moral issues would be indicated by statements such as "it's not fair," and "put yourself in his shoes." Their conclusions, however, indicate that

> the <u>delinquent</u> Objectors were almost entirely concerned with tactical rather than moral issues. They countered the Proponent's arguments with such tactical problems as possible defeat at the hands of the Outsider's friends, apprehension by the police, or stakes too small for the risk...[74]

The Schwendinger's study lends support to Matza's contention that there is a tactical consideration prior to the commitment of a delinquent act, at the same time

offering evidence contrary to the notion expressed in the techniques of neutralization. In addition, perhaps, it expands the boundaries of tactical considerations beyond possibility of retaliation.

It would appear more feasible to imagine a delinquent Objector's companions responding positively to his suggestion that they may be caught by the authorities or that they may be victims of a retaliatory attack by their intended victims, than to the suggestion that their intended behaviour is "not fair."

Routes to Conformity

There is some empirical support of Matza's contention that the process of "maturational reform" aids in the termination of a delinquent career.[75]

The evaluation of delinquency occurs as the delinquent matures. He no longer must prove his masculinity since it becomes readily observable as the individual assumes new roles. As this happens, alternatives to participation in the subculture of delinquency or attachments to the conventional world become available. Given less anxiety regarding both sex status and group membership, the delinquent will enter into honest exchanges with a friend which result in an awareness of "shared misunderstandings."

Other routes to conformity would seem to be possible, too; routes which in fact may lead the individual out of the subculture prior to maturation.

1. Matza describes "sounding" as "both a source of anxiety and a vehicle by which it may be temporarily alleviated."[76] (italics mine.) It may, in fact, be described as a constant source since, as Matza suggests,

> Sounding...is a probing of one's depth, taking the form of insult. One's depth is never definitively certified. It is sounded almost daily...But sounding which may or may not reflect greater initial anxiety eventuates in either case in an increase in the level of anxiety.[77]

Given the nature of the interaction in the subculture, it may be that, for some participants, coping with a constant source of anxiety is either impossible or not worth the effort. Indeed, if an individual sought camaradie in what he perceived to be a cohesive group, then his disillusionment may simply eventuate in withdrawal, particularly if he is confronted with an attractive alternative to the subculture of delinquency.

2. It is also possible that a participant may be deemed unacceptable by his peers in the subculture. The reasons for such a possibility are probably numerous. It may be that for no tangible reason they simply do not like him or perhaps because of ineptitude, his peers feel he constitutes a risk or a source of embarrassment. Regardless of the reasons, an individual who does not "measure up" may

be the recipient of a strong negative label which exceeds the boundaries of the normal sounding process, and thus may be forced to cease his participation in the subculture.

Both possibilities may operate at a time prior to "maturational reform." Thus there may be at least three possible routes to conformity: (1) maturational reform, (2) disillusionment in the subculture, (3) rejection by peers.

A Clarification of the Concept "Drift"

A precise definition of drift is not apparent in Matza's work. Travis Hirschi has argued that control theory assumes that one's beliefs in the validity of conventional norms may be weak since some persons simply do not respect the rules of society.[78] Matza shares this view in stating that

> The image of the delinquent I wish to convey is one of drift; an actor neither compelled nor committed to deeds nor freely choosing them; neither different in any simple or fundamental sense from the law-abiding, nor the same; conforming to certain traditions in American life while partially unreceptive to other more conventional traditions...[79]

It follows, then, that such a person is more likely to commit a delinquent act. However, Matza contends that during most of his life he is "distracted and restrained by convention"[80] from doing so. Therefore, the delinquent is in drift; neither compelled nor committed to deeds but usually distracted and restrained by convention.

There are times, however, when the delinquent is "released from the moral bind of conventional order (and) is free to drift into delinquency."[81] It has already been suggested that freedom to drift does not insure that a delinquent act will be undertaken. The episodic release occurs in the situation of company and it is the nature of the interaction in that setting - which includes the experience of sounding - which provides the impetus for the commission of a delinquent act; the jolt that Matza argues is necessary in order that an offence be committed.

Summary

The Matza formulation requires some significant alterations. David Bordua points out that the book deals with "the function of subcultural beliefs."[82] He adds:

> The basic function of these beliefs is to neutralize the moral bind of law - to create the condition of drift. Thus, the subculture of delinquency serves not to compel but to enable delinquency.[83]

The need of the delinquent to neutralize the moral bind of law has been called into question in this dissertation, given control theory assumptions. In addition, evidence has been presented which suggests that the neutralizing techniques do not necessarily occur in advance of the act. If the delinquent does not have to neutralize the moral bind of law, then the basic function of the subculture is

not to "create the condition of drift" but to release the individual already in drift from the distractions and restraints of convention. Here, in this setting, he is released and free to drift into delinquency.

The author has attempted to clarify apparent contradictions within Matza's own work and between Delinquency and Drift and the Sykes-Matza formulations of the techniques of neutralization. An attempt has also been made to expand the alternate avenues to conformity available to the delinquent. The result, then, is an alteration of the Matza formulation.

A summary of the revised process follows:

1. The delinquent, in a variety of situations, demonstrates his adherence to conventional values.
2. The collectivity is integrated into the wider society through the mechanisms of subterranean convergence and neutralization.
3. The collectivity tolerates rather than requires delinquency and thus is accommodating rather than oppositional in character, and "members" need not participate in delinquent behaviour.
4. The member, then, is committed to neither delinquent nor conventional endeavors but, rather, is in limbo - free to drift.

5. Freedom to drift does not insure the commission of a delinquent act although the act is possible because of the absence of restraints.
6. The techniques of neutralization may not be necessary to free the individual to commit his first act. They probably are employed to justify further acts.

This represents a change in the Matza formulation in that it is assumed that the removal of restraints occurs well in advance of the act and techniques of neutralization may not be necessary immediately prior to the commission of the offence.

7. Tactical considerations are employed taking into account the chances of being apprehended and the chances of retaliation.
8. Sounding - common behaviour in the situation of company - accounts for the commission of a first offence by an individual, an offence which may be termed situationally induced.

Both of Matza's notions of preparation and desperation have been subsumed under the concept of sounding. Whereas Matza argued that preparation referred to learning from experience that an act could be committed, we have expanded that, through our understanding of "sounding", to include the challenge by others who have committed the act in question. Also, where Matza argues that sounding may deter

a boy from repeating an act that he failed at in the past, it is argued that, in fact, sounding may force him to do it again to prove himself and maintain or regain his status in the collectivity.

To Matza's desperation argument is added the argument that in addition to the mood of fatalism, there is still the everpresent challenging or sounding.

Matza argues that most delinquents cease to engage in delinquent behaviour as a result of a process which he calls the "evaluation of delinquency" which occurs coincidental with maturational reform. Other routes have been suggested as possibilities: (1) withdrawal as a result of disillusionment, (2) forced withdrawal as a result of rejection by peers.

This description of the process by which an individual may become delinquent is in part based on the Matza formulation which in some respects represents an adequate summary of the empirical literature. The Matza explanation has been altered to the extent that the data reviewed dictates.

The process by which an individual becomes a part of a delinquent collectivity has been discussed. With this understanding, it is possible to define the nature of that collectivity and therefore refine the concept of the "delinquent subculture." The matter of "membership"

in such a collectivity has been called into question and may also be clarified.

In addition, if the notions of commitment and cohesion are not supported by the empirical data, then it may be that explanations regarding the origins of the delinquent subculture with their emphasis on delinquent values, do not answer the question as to why boys actually engage in illegal behaviour. This matter, too, is considered in the following chapter.

Chapter VI, then, is a statement of a conceptual framework which has been developed in the light of the data and theoretical comments considered.

FOOTNOTES

1. Sykes and Matza, "Techniques of Neutralization," p. 251.
2. Supra, pp. 38-48.
3. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 1.
4. Ibid., p. 4.
5. Ibid., p. 5.
6. Ibid., p. 5.
7. Ibid., p. 11.
8. Ibid., p. 12.
9. Ibid., p. 5.
10. Ibid., p. 18.
11. Ibid., p. 7.
12. Ibid., p. 28.
13. Ibid., p. 29.
14. Jackson Toby, "Book Reviews: Delinquency and Opportunity," British Journal of Sociology, 12, (1961) p. 284.
15. Savitz, Dilemmas in Criminology, p. 60.
16. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 29.
17. Ibid., p. 29.
18. Robert A. Nisbet, The Social Bond, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970. p. 298.
19. Downes, The Delinquent Solution, p.
20. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 28.
21. Ibid., p. 28.
22. Ibid., p. 28.

23. The fact that Matza uses the term "subculture of delinquency" instead of "delinquent subculture" is noted. This distinction will be discussed in detail in a following chapter.

24. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 40.

25. Supra, p. 45.

26. The points mentioned here are similar to those expressed by Sykes and Matza, Supra, 80-82. It is necessary to discuss them since Matza's terminology differs from the Sykes and Matza article and to maintain the flow of thought.

27. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 42.

28. Ibid., p. 43.

29. Ibid., p. 46.

30. Ibid., p. 47.

31. Ibid., p. 51.

32. Ibid., p. 52.

33. Ibid., pp. 53-59.

34. Supra, pp. 48-53.

35. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 55.

36. Ibid., p. 55.

37. Ibid., p. 55.

38. Ibid., p. 55.

39. Briar and Piliavin, "Delinquency, Situational Inducements, and Commitment to Conformity," p. 39.

40. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 60.

41. Ibid., p. 60.

42. For an elaboration of the techniques of neutralization, see Matza, p. 61 and the ensuing discussion. See also Sykes and Matza, 1957.

43. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 61.

44. Ibid., p. 62.

45. Ibid., p. 63.

46. Ibid., p. 64. See also David Matza and Gresham M. Sykes, "Juvenile Delinquency and Subterranean Values," American Sociological Review, 26 (October, 1961). They list as delinquent values: the search for excitement, a disdain for work, and aggression. These are similar to the values of Vablen's "gentleman of leisure" and the private values of members of the conventional society today.

47. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 69.

48. It is important to recognize Matza's qualification of the term "will." He says: "A conception of will is unenlightening primarily because it has traditionally served to beg the question...We may refrain from begging the question by looking behind the conception of a will to crime, and inquire into the conditions that possibly activate it." But in considering these conditions, "we need not search for the whole explanation of crime." We only want to know "what activates the will to crime when juveniles have already been unbounded from the compunction to behave lawfully. Thus, the conception of will need not carry the whole burden of explanation, as it came close to doing in classical criminology. Instead, it may represent the missing element needed in social control theory by which the potential for delinquency implicit in drift can be realized." Ibid., p. 183.

49. Ibid., p. 183.

50. The moral feasibility is "precisely what is taken care of by neutralization and subsequent drift." Ibid., 184.

51. Ibid., p. 185.

52. Matza does point out, however, that although the inept violator may be deterred from further offences, he is not necessarily excluded from the subculture.

53. See Gary F. Jensen, "'Crime Doesn't Pay': Correlates of a Shared Misunderstanding," Social Problems, 17. No. 2 (Fall, 1969) pp. 189-201, for support of Matza's claim.

54. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 186.

55. Ibid., p. 188.

56. Ibid., p. 188.

57. If the reward is seen as an accomplishment or outstanding performance, then an infraction is viewed as a more desireable route than, say, athletics because the chances of losing, thus reinforcing the mood of fatalism, are greater in athletics. In stealing, the delinquent may get away or he may be apprehended but in either case he has, according to Matza, made things happen, even if it is just the counteraction of officials, "no mean accomplishment," as Matza puts it. Ibid., p. 190.

58. Ibid., p. 54.

59. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 53.

60. Sykes and Matza, "Techniques of Neutralization," p. 254.

61. Ibid., p. 252.

62. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 54.

63. Richard A. Ball, "An Empirical Exploration of Neutralization Theory," in Approaches to Deviance: Theories, Concepts, and Research Findings, Mark Lefton, James K. Skipper, Jr., and Charles H. McCaghy (Ed.) New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968. p. 262.

64. Hirschi, Causes of Delinquency, p. 3. For a summary discussion of control theory and other perspectives, see pages 3-15.

65. Ibid., p. 24.

66. Ibid., p. 25.

67. Ibid., p. 26.

68. Ibid., p. 208.

69. From the above discussion, it is apparent that the author disagrees with Matza's explanation as to the factors freeing the individual from the conventional order. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that such a process does take place.

70. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 188.

71. Herman and Julia Schwendinger, "Delinquent Stereotypes of Probable Victims," in Juvenile Gangs in Context, Malcolm W. Klein (Ed.) pp. 91-105.

72. Ibid., p. 92.

73. Ibid., p. 94.

74. Ibid., p. 94.

75. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 22.

76. Ibid., p. 54. Emphasis mine.

77. Ibid., p. 53.

78. Hirschi, Causes of Delinquency, p. 25.

79. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 28.

80. Ibid., p. 69.

81. Ibid., p. 69.

82. Bordua, "Sociological Perspectives," p. 92.

83. Ibid., p. 93.

CHAPTER VI

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: THE SUBCULTURE OF DELINQUENCY

INTRODUCTION

In analysing the empirical studies on what the researchers have called "subcultures" and/or "gangs," considerable insight has been gained into the involvement of "members" in delinquent behaviour and the nature and extent of their associations with one another. The popular terms, subculture and gang, have been used here as they are used by the researchers in their reports. It was noted that these terms were inadequately defined and, to add to the confusion, used interchangeably. For purposes of present clarity, apart from reporting the findings of others, the relatively neutral term, collectivity, has been used simply for purposes of consistency and not for any theoretical implications it may have.

It is appropriate now to evaluate these terms in the light of the preceding pages and either refine them as necessary or reject them in lieu of more realistic and useful terminology for the phenomenon in question.

SUBCULTURE AND GANG

It has been shown that the delinquent subculture is in fact considered by its proponents to be a contra-culture. David Matza reiterates the views of the major proponents of the delinquent subculture:

> Juveniles may for a variety of reasons become adherents of the delinquent subculture, but once connected their delinquencies are explained as expressions of the peculiar standards which reign in that part of the world. Their behaviour is determined by subculture as ours is by conventional culture. The precepts of the delinquent subculture are the immediate cause... of delinquent acts. All that intervenes between subcultural precept and delinquent act are the standard mechanisms of learning, conformity to reference group, and the seeking of status and reputation within that reference group.[1]

The relationship between the conventional culture and the delinquent subculture is explained in much the same way in the major delinquency theories. The values of the delinquent subculture stand in opposition to those of the conventional society and thus it "inexorably leads it adherents to the breaking of laws."[2]

We have seen evidence on the other hand, that the values of the collectivity are not oppositional and that, in fact, delinquents do demonstrate their adherence to conventional values. Furthermore, the notion that members

of a subculture must break laws must be rejected, since it has been shown that many do not. Those who do break laws do not do so with any degree of regularity.

Little evidence is available to support the notion of a contraculture[3] and therefore the term subculture, as it has been used in the literature, is rejected here. That is, it is not considered to be an appropriate label for the phenomenon under investigation.

The term "gang" has not been clearly defined in the literature and has been used synonymously with "subculture" to imply a cohesive structure consisting of members committed to delinquent values. Since it is difficult in a review of the delinquency literature to distinguish between this term and "subculture," "gang", too, is rejected.

COLLECTIVITY

When the data on collective involvement with peers and in delinquent activities is reviewed, it is noted that a considerable number of individuals are marginal participants and that the favored form of association is the pair or the triad. It is also noted that a strong cohesive bond between individuals is not evident.[4] Given this evidence and the explanation of the process by which individuals become delinquent, the concept of

"collectivity" appears to be of questionable utility since it does suggest collective involvement and, as a result, may imply a cohesive group. It, too, is therefore rejected.

If these three terms - contraculture, gang and collectivity - are rejected, then the notion of "membership" becomes meaningless. To speak of "members" implies that there is a collective and continuous involvement of individuals and the data suggests that this does not appear to be the case.

An individual is in limbo between convention and delinquency. He is free to drift. The assumption in the literature and in the initial stages of this dissertation has been that he drifts toward some sort of group solution, which constitutes an end-product of the process of drift. Undoubtedly, this is the case for some delinquents, particularly perhaps those who become adult criminals. It is not the case, however, for the majority. It has been argued here that when an individual, free to drift, does commit a delinquent act he is simply responding to what he perceives as the demands of the situation of company. His periodic participation in the situation of company may represent the extent of his involvements. He need not proceed to a further stage of greater commitment or involvement.

It is necessary, then, to turn to a consideration of the context in which delinquency occurs: - the situation of company - in order to develop a more adequate term.

THE SUBCULTURE OF DELINQUENCY

Matza argues that "There is a subculture of delinquency, but it is not a delinquent subculture."[5] He describes the subculture of delinquency as

> a setting in which the commission of delinquency is common knowledge among a group of juveniles...The exact number is unimportant. What is important is publicity. Delinquency committed by lone offenders or by partners and cliques who hold a monopoly of knowledge regarding their delinquency is not subcultural. Subcultural delinquency is delinquency that is public within the confines of more or less provincial groupings. The defining characteristic is publicity: everything else is in the nature of hypothesis...[5]

In keeping with his notion of drift, Matza maintains that the subculture of delinquency consists of norms representing both the conventional and delinquent worlds. Its objectives may be achieved both through delinquent and alternative routes in that delinquency is allowed but not demanded. He says:

> The members of a subculture of delinquency must break laws, not by definition but by hypothesizing that their subculture is a delinquent subculture.[7]

Matza describes the subculture of delinquency as a setting. This suggests that it is not a gang, collectivity or group since these terms imply organization and cohesion. It has already been noted that these are not characteristics of the phenomenon in question.

The evidence regarding the manner in which participants come and go and the extent to which they interact supports the contention that these individuals who do participate in the setting are very loosely organized and represent a somewhat amorphous collection of persons. Some of them may be involved in delinquent behaviour but none are required to engage in illegal acts for purposes of fulfilling membership obligations.

Given that this setting is a place where illegal behaviour can occur without sanction from one's peers, there is an atmosphere characterized by freedom from moral constraint and thus open knowledge of illegal behaviour which, as matza suggests, is tolerated but not required.

This is consistent with Paul Lerman's point that there is

> a lack of explicit empirical evidence to support the assumption that gang boundaries of membership tend to coincide with the boundaries of symbolic participation in a delinquent subculture.[8]

The subculture of delinquency, then, has two dimensions:

1. An interactional dimensions and,
2. A cultural dimension.

The Interactional Dimension

The interactional dimension, or "social" as Lerman calls it, "refers to the patterns of interaction that distinguish participants from non-participants."[9]

Leonard Savitz points to some of the issues regarding the interactional dimension when he suggests that

> The degree of formal organization necessary, the minimum (and maximum?) number of members required (Can there by a two person gang?), and the degree of control over the individual members of the group are simply not dealt with.[10]

It has been noted from the analysis of the empirical data that, with the possible exception of the theft clique, there appears to be little in the way of formal organization. This is illustrated by the fact that it is indeed difficult to determine "membership" patterns due to the core-marginal distinction and the fact that the pair or triad appears to be the favored form of association. Also, the fact that delinquent behaviour is permitted but not required indicates a relatively minimal degree of control over participants.

In view of the prevalence of the pair or triad as a predominant type of interaction pattern, an alternative to the concept of "gang" is necessary. Lerman proposes the use of the term "network" for situations

> Where the membership boundaries are vague but interaction regularities can be identified...[11]

In the light of the analysis here, this term would seem to be appropriate in that it implies relatively loose associations of individuals and groups existing within the subculture of delinquency, associations that vary in size and degree of involvement. There is evidence to suggest that networks also are somewhat fluid insofar as many individuals participate only periodically in the subculture of delinquency and it is reasonable therefore to assume that they attach themselves to a network only temporarily.

The Cultural Dimension

Subculture, according to Paul Lerman, "refers to shared symbols, not to a specific type of interaction pattern."[12] This view is shared by James Short who defines subcultures in much the same way, arguing that they are

> important frames of reference through which individuals and groups see the world and interpret it...[13]

Based on the evidence analysed, however, it is necessary to make a rather significant change in the above interpretations of the term. We have noted that the interaction in the situation of company is characterized by sounding, "a probing of one's depth..."[14] This notion has been used to explain the commission of offences assuming that the individual <u>believes</u> those who boast of their delinquent escapades and who, at the same time, challenge others to demonstrate the desirable qualities of "toughness" and courage. With this understanding of the concept of sounding, then, the frame of reference to which Lerman and Short allude is in fact an inferred ideology. These shared symbols are, as Matza suggests, cued through a system of "shared misunderstandings," each individual believing that the others are committed to delinquent values. Thus the prevailing mood of the situation of company is responsible for the development not of shared symbols, but "perceived shared symbols." "...they infer ideology from each other. This is the primary relevance of the situation of company."[15]

The subculture of delinquency, then, consists of two dimensions: the interactional, or social, characterized by networks or interaction regularities; and the cultural which refers to shared symbols or an inferred ideology.

Assumptions Regarding the Nature of the Subculture of Delinquency.

The behavioural dimensions of the phenomenon generally regarded as subcultural delinquency have been considered along with the nature and structure of interaction within the subculture. The findings on these matters led to a consideration of the notions of cohesion and commitment, factors that seem to be implicit in the writings of the contemporary subcultural theorists. The assumption that the subculture was characterized by individuals who were committed to a set of delinquent values was rejected. So too was the assumption that these individuals formed a cohesive group. The phenomenon then took on a somewhat different character and required an explanation considerably different from those proposed by the subcultural theorists. Considerable understanding was gained on the nature of the individual who becomes delinquent by examining Matza and other researchers and theoreticians. It was only after considering that issue that attention could be directed to the composition and nature of the subculture.

The terms "subculture" and "gang" as they are used in the delinquency literature have been rejected here, as has the more neutral term "collectivity" which has been employed throughout this dissertation.

"Members" as such are rare and instead the term "participants" is more appropriately employed, since it indicates involvement but does not necessarily imply a lengthy period of time nor a degree of commitment. It is possible for an individual to participate on only one occasion or, on the other hand, he may be a "regular" participant. The term "member" does not cover the first possibility.

Rather than a delinquent subculture, it is proposed that there is, instead, a subculture of delinquency or setting characterized by a freedom from moral constraint. In further attempting to clarify the confusion over the manner in which the term "gang" and "subculture" have been used interchangeably, it is suggested that the subculture of delinquency consists of two components: the interactional and cultural.

The interactional component refers to the situation of company which is characterized by networks of individuals. The term network infers regular patterns of interaction but does not suggest "membership."

The cultural component refers to a perceived set of symbols which are shared by the participants and made known to them through the process of sounding in the situation of company. They arise through sounding and many of these symbols constitute "shared misunderstandings."

The notion of "subculture" has been explored in the light of knowledge gained about the kind of individual who participates in the subculture. It is possible, then, to state formally a set of assumptions, arrived at through an analysis of the empirical studies and the critical writings of others, which describe the subculture and the nature of interaction in that setting.

The following assumptions represent statements which appear to have some empirical support and, taken collectively, describe the subculture of delinquency, the setting in which delinquency occurs.

A-1 Most youths experience masculinity and group membership anxiety.

By masculinity anxiety is meant a concern about one's sex role status. Membership anxiety refers to one's concern about his peer group affiliations.[16]

A-2 Many youths are neither wholly free from nor completely constrained by moral sensitivities.

This is a basic assumption of control theories of criminal and delinquent behaviour.[17]

A-3 Such youths drift between, or respond to, the demands of both conventional and delinquent activities.

Drift refers to an individual who, as suggested in Assumption A-2, is neither totally free from nor contrained by moral sensitivities but who is generally "distracted" by convention.[18] Given that the distraction or the restraint is removed, such a youth is free to engage in delinquent

behaviour under certain circumstances.

In support of this assumption, Matza argues that the frequency with which youths engage in delinquent behaviour suggests a lack of commitment to either delinquent or conventional values. This is further documented by the frequency with which delinquents reform.[19]

A-4 Drift, combined with masculinity and membership anxiety, results in the interactional setting.

The interactional setting is a behavioural dimension which may be defined as the combined interaction at any one time of two or more youths. The need to reduce masculinity and membership anxiety is likely to result in youths seeking out others in similar circumstances; that is, in drift.

A-5 The interactional setting is characterized by networks or interactional regularities with vague membership boundaries.

The network is characterized by interactional regularities but not to the extent that participants may be defined as members.[20]

A-6 Drift, combined with masculinity and membership anxieties in the interactional setting, results in sounding.

Sounding may be defined as ritualized aggression generally, but not always, of a verbal nature between persons in the interactional setting. It consists of challenges and insults designed to test one's masculinity and membership status in the interactional setting and thus forces the

individual to give the appearance of being delinquent by "putting oneself in the posture of fighting."[21]

A-7 Sounding in the interactional setting results in a cultural element, or set of norms, representing a guide for behaviour.

The cultural element is a set of symbols, a guide for behaviour, which is made known to the youths in the interactional setting through sounding. It represents both a set of understandings and misunderstandings as to what constitutes desirable behaviour. The cultural element is to any individual what he perceives to be the values of other participants in the interactional setting. The values of the subculture of delinquency do not demand delinquency but merely tolerate it and thus one could adhere to what he perceives as the values without actually engaging in a delinquent act.[22]

A-8 Masculinity and membership anxieties, combined with the cultural element, lead to efforts to conform to the guide for behaviour.

To conform is to demonstrate behaviour deemed by an individual to be acceptable and valued by the youths in the interactional setting.

By attempting to demonstrate the qualities which appear to be demanded, one hopes to have his peers respond to him as if he possessed those qualities. That is, by participating in the sounding ritual, the individual attempts to "prove" his masculinity and his right to status in the situation of company.[23]

A-9 The interactional setting and the resulting cultural element constitute the two basic components of the subculture of delinquency.

The subculture of delinquency may be defined as a setting consisting of two components, the interactional and cultural, characterized by a number of individuals in drift, in which delinquency is not required but merely tolerated, and open to the participants.

The above assumptions define the subculture of delinquency; how a youth comes to participate, and the nature of the interaction that ensues. It has been noted that freedom to drift does not insure the commission of a delinquent act.[24] The individual is still confronted with obstacles or restraints on his behaviour. He is more likely to overcome these restraints in the subculture of delinquency because of the nature of the interaction which characterizes the setting. That is, he receives help through the process of sounding but he remains at this point only potentially delinquent.

A-10 If a potential delinquent, or participant in the subculture of delinquency, is able to cope with any restraints felt prior to the commission of a delinquent act, then he is likely to engage in delinquent behaviour.

A potential delinquent is a participant, or person who is periodically present in the subculture of delinquency. Delinquent behaviour is not a requisite of participation.[25]

The restraints constitute obstacles which, under normal circumstances, an individual is confronted with prior to the commission of a delinquent act. These restraints consist of:

I. Tactical considerations, including
   A. a fear of the counteraction of the authorities.
   B. a fear of the counteraction of the potential victim.[26]

II. The ability to justify previous delinquent behaviour to self and others.[27]

III. One's reaction to being labeled "inept" as a result of failure or poor performance on a previous delinquent act.[28]

Summary

The above assumptions constitute a description of the subculture of delinquency. It is noted that not all kinds of delinquent behaviour are accounted for in this description.[29] Also, it is recognized that not all youths in drift will participate even minimally in the subculture of delinquency and that many never engage in acts of delinquency.

Figure 3 represents, in summary, the assumptions from which delinquency is seen to arise. It is a description of the nature of the subculture of delinquency and does not illustrate the process by which participants

FIGURE 3

THE NATURE OF THE SUBCULTURE OF DELINQUENCY

Assumptions

1. Most youths seek masculinity and membership identity.
2. Most youths are neither wholly free from nor completely constrained by moral sensitivities and thus are free to drift between conventional and delinquent activities.

Conformity ←---------- ↓ ----------→ Other types of delinquents

Potential Delinquent

A participant in the subculture of delinquency whose belief in the moral validity of conventional norms is weak prior to his involvement in delinquent behaviour.

Interactional Setting

Combined interaction at any one time of two or more potential delinquents. Consists of a series of networks which are interaction regularities but with vague membership boundaries.

Sounding

Ritualized aggression generally but not always of a verbal nature between participants in the subculture of delinquency.

Cultural Component

Perceived by the participant as a set of symbols, a guide for behaviour, made known to him through sounding in the interactional setting. Constitutes a set of understandings and shared misunderstandings indicating that each participant believes that the others are committed to delinquent values because of the manner in which they express themselves in "sounding."

Conformity to Perceived Group Norms

Demonstration of behaviour deemed by an individual to be acceptable and valued by youths in the interactional setting, to achieve status and membership identity with peers. Participating in delinquent acts is not necessary in order to conform.

Barriers to Participation in Delinquent Behaviour

come to engage in illegal behaviour. To engage in acts of delinquency the individual must overcome the "Barriers to Participation in Delinquent Behaviour."

The empirical research analysed suggests that many individuals participate in the interactional setting without engaging in delinquent behaviour.[30] The task now is to describe the processes by which an individual:

1. commits a delinquent act, and;
2. ceases his participation in the subculture of delinquency.

In considering the commission of delinquent acts, it is necessary to outline the kinds of restraints with which the youth must contend prior to the commission of an offence.

The second process outlines the ways in which a participant - not necessarily a delinquent - severs his relationships with the subculture of delinquency.

The purpose here, then, is to complete Figure 3 by indicating what happens to the participant when he encounters the "barriers to participation in the subculture of delinquency." Given a description of the subculture, it is possible to superimpose upon Figure 3 the various alternatives that are available to a participant and the factors that determine the route for a given individual.

THE COMMISSION OF DELINQUENT ACTS: OVERCOMING RESTRAINTS

It has been noted that an individual will attempt to conform to what he perceives as the values of the sub-culture of delinquency in order to prove his masculinity and to insure his status within the gang setting.[31] Through the sounding element, he perceives delinquent behaviour as a valued act within this setting.[32]

Nevertheless, there are, as noted, three possible barriers to his participation in a delinquent act:[33] the tactical considerations; the need to justify his behaviour to himself and to others; and the possible need to contend with the fact that his peers consider him to be inept.

Tactical Considerations

The tactical considerations include a fear of the counteraction of the authorities and/or a fear of the counteraction of the potential victim.

Assuming that the individual does want to conform to the standards of his peers, as he perceives them, then if he is able to overcome the tactical considerations he is more likely to engage in a delinquent act. His inability to cope with the tactical factors lessens the likelihood that he will commit an offence.

For the individual who does commit a delinquent act, tactical considerations remain an important factor in future delinquencies. He may still be wary of possible apprehension by the authorities or retaliation by his potential victim. These considerations may even be more important to him if his previous delinquent act resulted in a bad experience for him such as a "close call."

Justification of Behaviour

The techniques of neutralization are important to participants in the subculture of delinquency since the individual is still in limbo, in drift between conventional norms and "delinquent norms." He is not delinquent all the time and spends a good deal of his time in the company of conventional others. As a result, he is subject to the disapprovals and reprisals from others. He may have to justify his previous or future delinquent act to a "conventional other" or, more likely because he is constantly being confronted with conventional values, he will have to justify his offences to himself.[34]

If the individual feels that he has successfully justified his behaviour to himself and to others, then is more likely to engage in a delinquent act. His inability to justify his behaviour will lessen the likelihood of future offences.

It has been suggested that, given control theory assumptions, the individual need not employ the techniques of neutralization prior to the commission of his first delinquent act but, rather, uses them to justify previous offences and thus make possible future offences.[35] The justifications, then, may more appropriately be a part of the "hardening process" to which Hirschi refers.[36]

Nevertheless, these justifications are an important consideration in whether or not an individual will commit offences and therefore constitute barriers which he must overcome.

Label of Inept

The needs to justify previous delinquent behaviour and to overcome tactical considerations are likely present for all delinquents in the subculture. Only some delinquents are labeled "inept" by their peers on the basis of their performance in a previous delinquent act but such a label can affect subsequent behaviour and therefore delinquents labeled "inept" are considered in a separate category.

The sounding element or the "inept" label may, as Matza suggested, deter the violator from attempting another offence.[37] It was suggested that perhaps it is more likely in view of the tone of the interaction in the

situation of company, particularly the challenging element of sounding, that the delinquent may be goaded into a repitition of his previous offence in order to regain or maintain status with peers.[38] Perhaps the crucial factor in determining which alternative the individual takes is the degree of his status and membership anxiety. Since it has been shown that many participants are marginal, it may be assumed that a loss of status does not affect some participants to the degree that it would others.

This being the case, it may be suggested that if a delinquent is labeled "inept" on the basis of his performance on a previous delinquent act, and has a high level of status and membership anxiety, then he is more likely to engage in further delinquent behaviour. Conversely, if status and membership are less important to him then, despite the fact that he has been labeled "inept," he is less likely to engage in further delinquent behaviour.

It bears noting here that an individual labeled "inept" may not have any choice regarding future delinquent acts in the subcultural setting if, on the basis of his inept performance, he is rejected by his peers. Although this does not imply that the individual will not engage in future offences, it does rule out the possibility of him participating in the subculture of delinquency.

Summary

The above considerations represent the barriers with which the individual is confronted prior to the commission of a delinquent act. Given his ability to cope with, or overcome, these considerations, he is likely to engage in delinquent behaviour. His inability to cope with these considerations simply means that he will not likely engage in acts of delinquency. He may, however, remain a participant in the subculture of delinquency.

In addition to the description of the subculture of delinquency, previously outlined in Figure 3, Figure 4 illustrates the barriers to the commission of delinquent acts and the alternatives available to the participants at that point. It should be noted that "justifications of behaviour" and "tactical considerations" are barriers likely to be encountered by all participants in the subculture. On the other hand, only some would experience the stigma of being labeled inept.

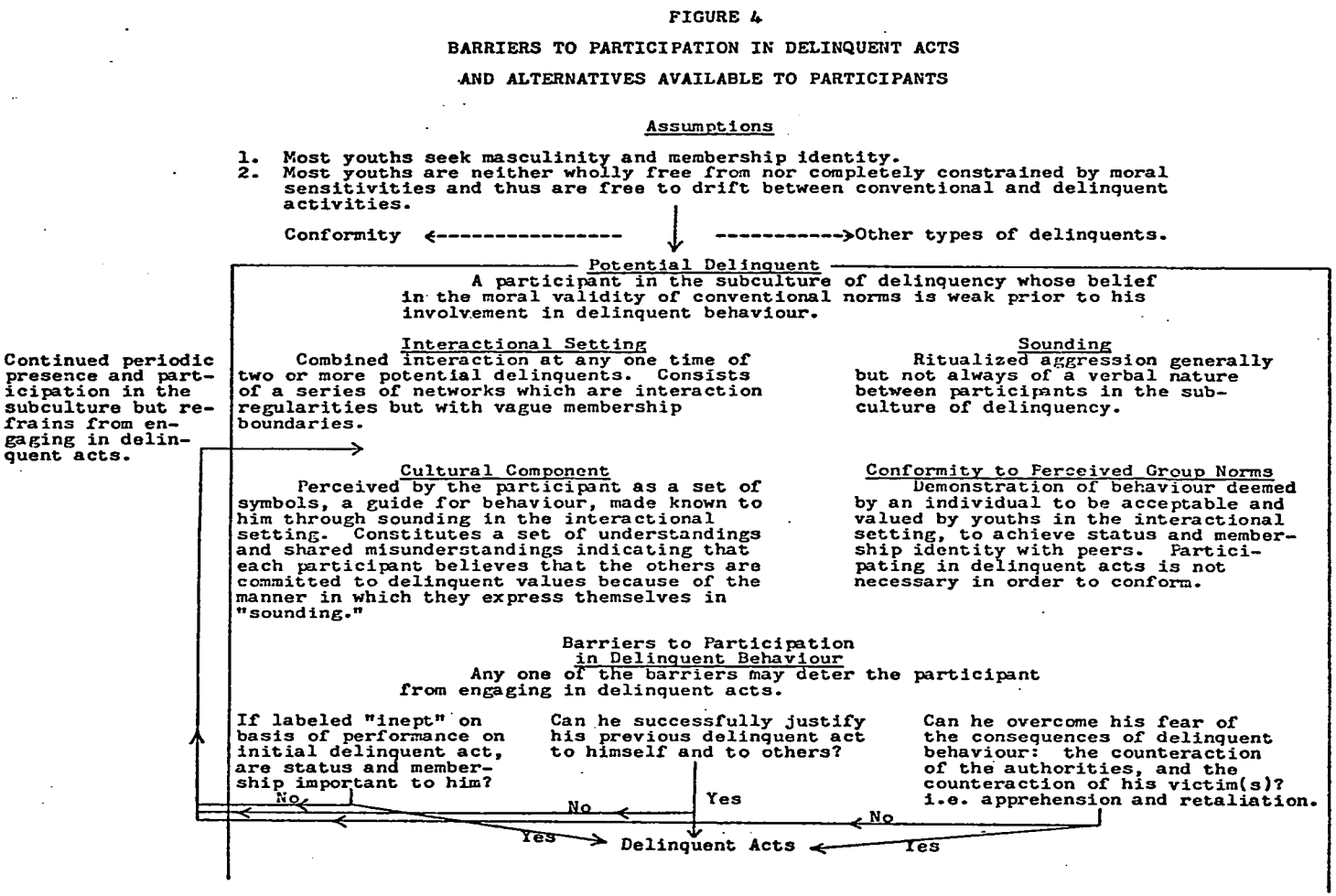
ROUTES OUT OF THE SUBCULTURE OF DELINQUENCY

Evidence has been presented which suggests that the majority of juvenile offenders eventually terminate their involvement in delinquent behaviour and do not go

FIGURE 4

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN DELINQUENT ACTS

AND ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE TO PARTICIPANTS



on to adult crime.[39] The following discussion is prefaced by that assumption, namely that most delinquents do not become adult criminals. This does not mean that they might not commit illegal acts but that they do not become involved in the kind of criminal behaviour which brings them to the attention of the authorities.

The focus of concern here is not, however, just with those individuals who have gone on to further delinquency but also with those who never committed delinquent acts but continued to participate in the interactional setting and those who at some point may have stopped committing offences but remained participants in the interactional setting. Presumably, most participants, whether delinquent or not, will eventually cease their participation in the subculture of delinquency.

Three possible routes to conformity have been mentioned and will be considered here.

Maturational Reform

First, Matza argues that a serious evaluation of delinquency is likely to occur at the "age of maturity" when the individual assumes new roles and various adult responsibilities which constitute alternative means of demonstrating masculinity. At the same time, these new

roles, related to employment, leaving school, and marriage, provide him with alternatives to participation in the subculture in that they represent the development of conventional attachments. The effect is likely to be a reduction in masculinity and membership anxiety. This suggests that the individual has resolved his concern about sex role status and peer group affiliation through the alternatives to participation in the subculture of delinquency.

This occurrence frees the individual to evaluate the delinquent situation, usually in the company of one other. This evaluation is characterized by honest exchanges between friends which results in first an awareness of the "shared misunderstandings" which have pervaded their relationship and secondly, an appraisal of each other's commitment.[40]

Given, then, that a participant experiences a reduction in masculinity and membership anxiety and, coincidental with that, an evaluation of delinquency, then it is not likely that he will continue to participate in the subculture of delinquency.

In addition to Matza's explanation, two other possibilities were suggested which represent logical and possible alternate routes out of the subculture.

Rejection

It was noted in the discussion of the offender labeled "inept" by his peers that such a person may continue to participate in the subculture provided he was not rejected by other participants.[41] In view of our knowledge of sounding, it may be suggested that most youths are, at some time, labeled negatively, whether it be "inept" or some other label. Sounding consists of challenges and insults. It seems reasonable that some youths, for a variety of reasons, may be regarded as not having "measured up" to the standards of the subculture and consequently receive a strong negative label, one that exceeds the boundaries of "normal" sounding in the interactional setting. The negative label, then, followed by rejection by one's peers is likely to result in no further or at least less participation in the subculture of delinquency.

Disillusionment

Another possible route out of the subculture focuses on the individual who cannot or will not contend with sounding as a constant source of anxiety.[42] The ritualized aggression that pervades the interaction in the subculture may not be consistent with the camaradie he expected and he may become disillusioned since his anxieties regarding

masculinity and membership status increase. Therefore, it is suggested that if a participant experiences an increase in masculinity and membership anxiety through sounding, then he is likely to cease his participation in the subculture of delinquency.

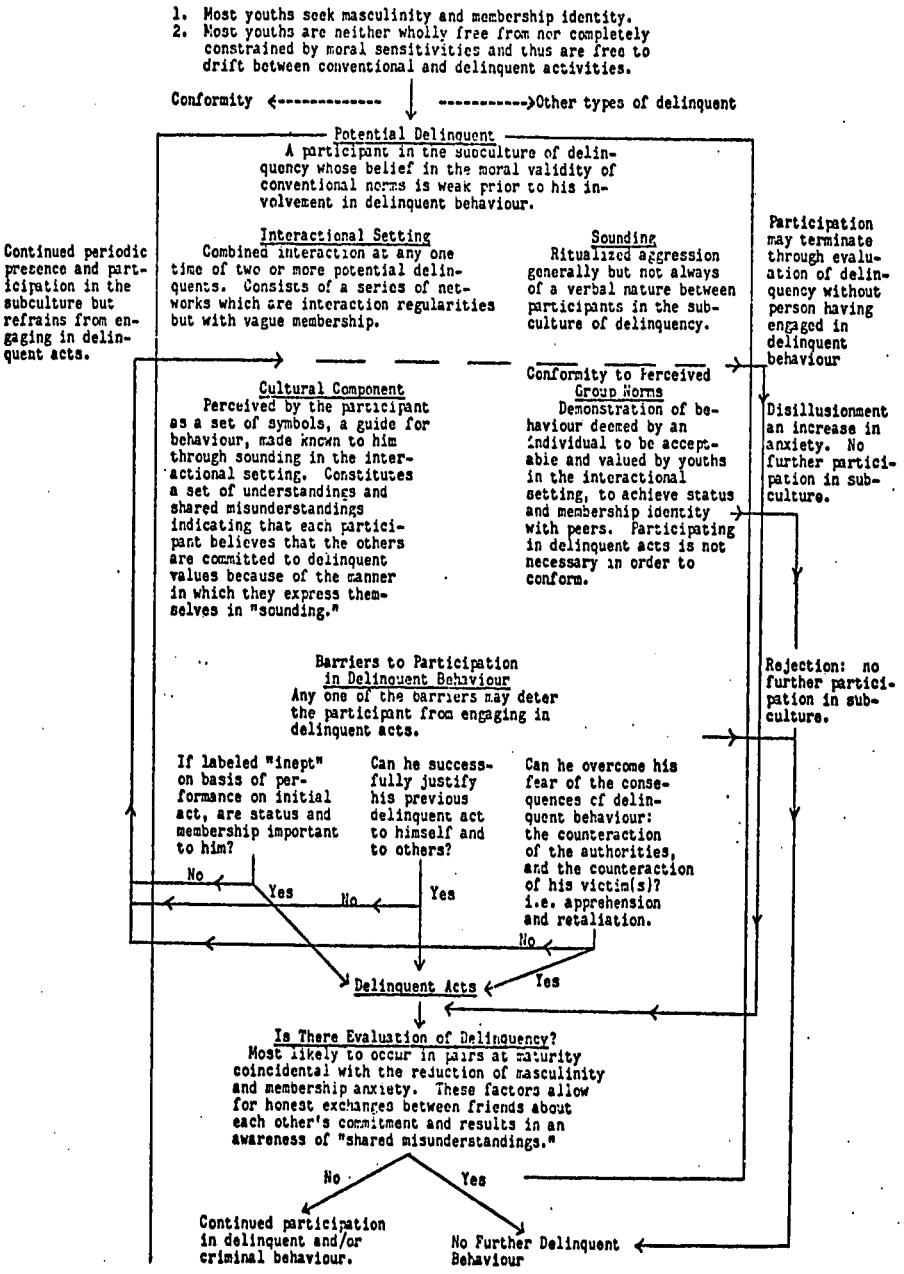
SUMMARY

Figure 5 illustrates the possible ways in which the participant may cease his participation in the interactional setting. It is, therefore, an extension of Figure 4.

In addition, it represents a complete description of the conceptual framework developed. It notes basic assumptions about the process by which youth become involved in the subculture of delinquency, the characteristics of such a subculture, the processes by which participants come to engage in delinquent acts, and the processes by which they may terminate their involvement in the subculture.

FIGURE 5

ROUTES OUT OF THE SUBCULTURE OF DELINQUENCY



FOOTNOTES

1. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 34.
2. Ibid., p. 36.
3. Supra, pp. 77-84.
4. Supra, pp. 84-89.
5. Ibid., p. 33.
6. Ibid., p. 33.
7. Ibid., p. 37.
8. Lerman, "Gangs, Networks, and Subcultural Delinquency," p. 64.
9. Ibid., p. 66.
10. Savitz, Dilemmas in Criminology, p. 60.
11. Lerman, "Gangs, Networks, and Subcultural Delinquency," p. 66.
12. Ibid., p. 63.
13. Short, "Introduction," Gang Delinquency and Delinquent Subcultures, p. 11.
14. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 53.
15. Ibid,, p. 52.
16. The notion of "member" has been rejected in favor of the term "participant." "Membership" here refers simply to "acceptance by peers."
17. Supra, pp. 120-121.
18. Matza's choice of the term "distracted" is most appropriate. He implies that the "juvenile situation" is one of encirclement by conventional others (parents, schools, etc.). This implies that the juvenile is necessarily caught up in a series of interactions with conventional others that reduce the probabilities of involvement in delinquent behaviour. See Matza, Delinquency and Drift, pp. 45-48.

19. Supra, p. 80.
20. Supra, pp. 39-49.
21. Supra, pp. 49-54.
22. Supra, pp. 46-47.
23. Supra, p. 89.
24. Supra, p. 112.
25. Supra, pp. 46-47.
26. Supra, pp. 123-125.
27. Supra, pp. 117-121.
28. Supra, p. 123.
29. Supra, pp. 102-103.
30. Supra, pp. 46-47.
31. Supra, p. 151.
32. Supra, pp. 88-90; p. 151.
33. Supra, p. 153.
34. Supra, pp. 106-108; pp. 117-121.
35. Supra, pp. 117-121.
36. Supra, p. 121.
37. Supra, p. 113.
38. Supra, p. 123.
39. Supra, p. 80.
40. Supra, pp. 108-110.
41. Supra, p. 159.
42. Supra, p. 126.

CHAPTER VII

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The period of theorizing in the 1950's provided promising leads for sociologists interested in delinquency, particularly as it exists in the lower class urban areas. The result was a number of empirical studies undertaken with a view to better understanding the delinquent sub-culture phenomenon.

The approach here has been to ignore, to some degree, the prominent contemporary theories and work back from the data of the sixties toward the development of a more adequate conceptual framework based on that data. It has been noted that not only do individual studies tend to refute specific hypotheses of the contemporary delinquency theories but, when the findings of these studies are analysed and systematized, they have some far-reaching consequences for those theories which many sociologists seem to regard as having considerable merit.

In reconceptualizing the phenomenon of lower class delinquency, it is possible to clarify the vague terminology

inherent in the works of the subcultural theorists, and to explain issues which have been left unexplained by these theorists.

CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY

The notion of subculture has been defined here so as to exclude the implication of contraculture. On the basis of the data, it is argued that the term "subculture of delinquency" is more appropriate in that it does not imply a set of delinquent values to which persons are committed. Rather, it implies a loose collection of individuals who come and go, lacking commitment to one another and, collectively demonstrating little cohesiveness.

In addition, by breaking down the subculture of delinquency into its component parts, the interactional and cultural dimensions, the confusion between the terms subculture and gang was identified and clarified.

UNEXPLAINED ISSUES IN THEORIES OF DELINQUENT SUBCULTURES

As well as the clarification and redefinition of terminology, the framework presented appears able to answer questions left unanswered by subcultural theorists and thus is worthy of empirical research.

Participation Without Delinquent Behaviour

If the subculture of delinquency is a setting in which delinquent behaviour is not required but merely tolerated, it becomes obvious and significant that participation in such a setting is possible despite the fact that an individual may not engage in delinquent behaviour. This suggests that explanations of the origins of subcultures really tell very little about how and why an individual will commit an offence. Cohen, for example, focuses on the process by which the subculture is formed and the ensuing way of life of the members. As James Short suggests, Cohen's is

> a theory to account for the generation and the maintenance of the "delinquent subculture," as distinguished from the task of accounting for why a particular boy, or group of boys, was delinquent.[1]

Similarily, Cloward and Ohlin's explanation is

> at attempt to explore two questions: (1) Why do delinquent "norms," or rules of conduct develop? (2) What are the conditions which account for the distinctive content of various systems of delinquent norms - such as those prescribing violence or theft or drug use?[2]

Granted, they cannot be held accountable for that which falls outside the scope of their study. Nevertheless, the process by which an individual actually comes to engage in an act of delinquency is a matter with which sociologists must contend. This becomes more obvious with the knowledge that participants in the subculture, the

origins of which have been explained, are not necessarily delinquent.

The discussion presented here offers a possible explanation of how and why an individual comes to engage in an act of delinquency.

The explanation is based on control theory premises, assuming, as Hirschi points out, that "for some men, considerations of morality are important: for others, they are not."[3] Once participating in a setting characterized by a freedom from moral constraint, the potential delinquent is caught up in the situation of company and the prevalence of sounding. The sounding element allows the potential delinquent to perceive a set of delinquent values to which he believes others are committed and to which he feels he must conform in order to achieve status. The actual act of delinquency is a logical end-product of the situation in which the potential delinquent finds himself.

Termination of the Delinquent Career

This framework can cope with what is, according to Hirschi, a "source of embarrassment"[4] to the proponents of the subcultural tradition: the fact that most delinquents do not become adult criminals. In assuming a

commitment to delinquent values, they have placed themselves in the position of having to explain how an individual becomes uncommitted. However, Matza points out that

> Nowhere in the accounts of the delinquent subculture do we read of crisis, reevaluation of commitment, and other normal concomitants of moral conversion.[5]

The notion of commitment to delinquent values is rejected here. Rather, the individual is viewed as uncommitted, and as a result the means by which he may terminate his delinquent career become more readily discernible.

Summary

The subcultural explanations of the fifties seem to have survived the empirical tests despite the contradictory data and relatively little supportive data. The original formulations have remained basically unchanged. Researchers have attempted to test various aspects of a particular theory but appear to have left the basic assumptions untouched. That is, sociologists have accepted the "gang/subculture" concept without challenge and have worked within the framework set out by the subcultural proponents of the fifties, as if "we all somewhow know what a gang is and that there is no need to try to define it."[6]

Dale Hardman suggests that

> attempts to force naturally occurring phenomena into prefabricated typologies have retarded rather than enhanced research.[7]

By avoiding the prefabricated typologies, such as attempted here, a quite different picture of "subcultural" delinquency emerges, and one which may have greater explanatory power.

EXPLANATORY POWER OF THE NEW FRAMEWORK

It is maintained that what Matza attempted and what has been developed here is an overall explanation of delinquency in the lower classes although the population considered in developing such an explanation is the same as that considered by Cohen and by Cloward and Ohlin.[8] This suggests simply that their description of male working class delinquency as gang behaviour may be inaccurate. Given that the notion of gang or delinquent subculture is not what makes this kind of delinquency unique - it does not exist as they suggested - then perhaps this explanation may have some utility in attempts to understand other types of delinquency.

For example, the theory derived from the data has deemphasized strain or class frustration and, instead, places considerable emphasis on peer interaction, a phenomenon that is obviously not restricted to lower class "gang" youth.

For that reason, this theory may have some utility in accounting for other kinds of delinquent behaviour in the lower class as well as much middle class delinquent behaviour. If one assumes that status and "membership" are important to youth regardless of class, then it is possible that the same kind of setting is operative for middle class youths.

Edmund Vaz, for example, in discussing a number of theories of middle class delinquency, suggests that middle class boys become delinquent "by imitating the current fads and practices of the lower class."[9] He emphasizes the "importance of status, the quest for masculinity, and the problems of adjustment among these youths."[10]

Cohen agrees arguing that the "structural props of the deferred gratification pattern have been greatly weakened,"[11] resulting in middle class youth being able to "'hang around the corner...' We have middle-class 'corner-boys.'"[12]

He adds that

> The youth cultures tend to place a high value... on those traits and activities which, in our culture, are symbolic of masculinity or adulthood or both, but which do not require self-discipline, deferred gratification, sobriety and diligence. Recklessness, prowess and the courting of danger (Chicken!) are safely masculine and may take the specific form of predatory and destructive behaviour.[13]

It may be, then, that the explanation developed here does have some utility for the understanding of delinquency, irrespective of social class.

In addition, the subcultural formulations have focused on the large urban centers in the United States and most of the empirical research has been done in cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York, where the notion of strain and class frustration is probably most discernible. To place the emphasis on peer interaction may mean that the explanation has some utility in geographic areas outside metropolitan centers and, indeed, the Canadian situation with its smaller urban areas.

SUMMARY

Sociologists should reconsider and seriously question the "subcultural" theories of delinquency. This dissertation points to the need for further evaluation of such theories and it is hoped that it provides new and more promising directions for doing so.

There is a need for continued investigation of lower class youth in large urban areas. In addition, the framework provided here, with its emphasis on peer interaction rather than strain or class frustration, may be of some utility in researching other "types" of delinquency as well. Its possible relevance to middle class delinquency, for example, has been discussed.

Those interested in delinquency in Canada may consider this framework useful too since it has generally been argued that the subcultural theories of delinquency have little relevance for Canada with its smaller urban centers. Although strain or class frustration is peculiar to particular geographic areas, this is not the case with the notion of peer interaction.

FOOTNOTES

1. James F. Short, Jr., "Cultural and Social Structural Explanations," Gang Delinquency and Delinquent Subcultures, p. 133.

2. Cloward and Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity, p. ix.

3. Hirschi, Causes of Delinquency, p. 11.

4. Ibid., p. 6.

5. Matza, Delinquency and Drift, p. 25.

6. Savitz, Dilemmas in Criminology, p. 60.

7. Hardman, "Historical Perspectives on Gang Research," p. 27.

8. Supra, pp. 102-103.

9. Edmund W. Vaz, "Introduction: Theories of Middle-Class Juvenile Delinquency," Middle-Class Juvenile Delinquency, Edmund W. Vaz (Ed.) New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1967, p. 201.

10. Ibid., p. 201.

11. Albert Cohen, "Middle-Class Delinquency and the Social Structure," Middle-Class Juvenile Delinquency, Edmund W. Vaz, (Ed.) p. 206.

12. Ibid., p. 206.

13. Ibid., p. 206.

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