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Images of Delinquency in Twin Cities Newspapers

By Michael Baizerman
and Joseph Hirak

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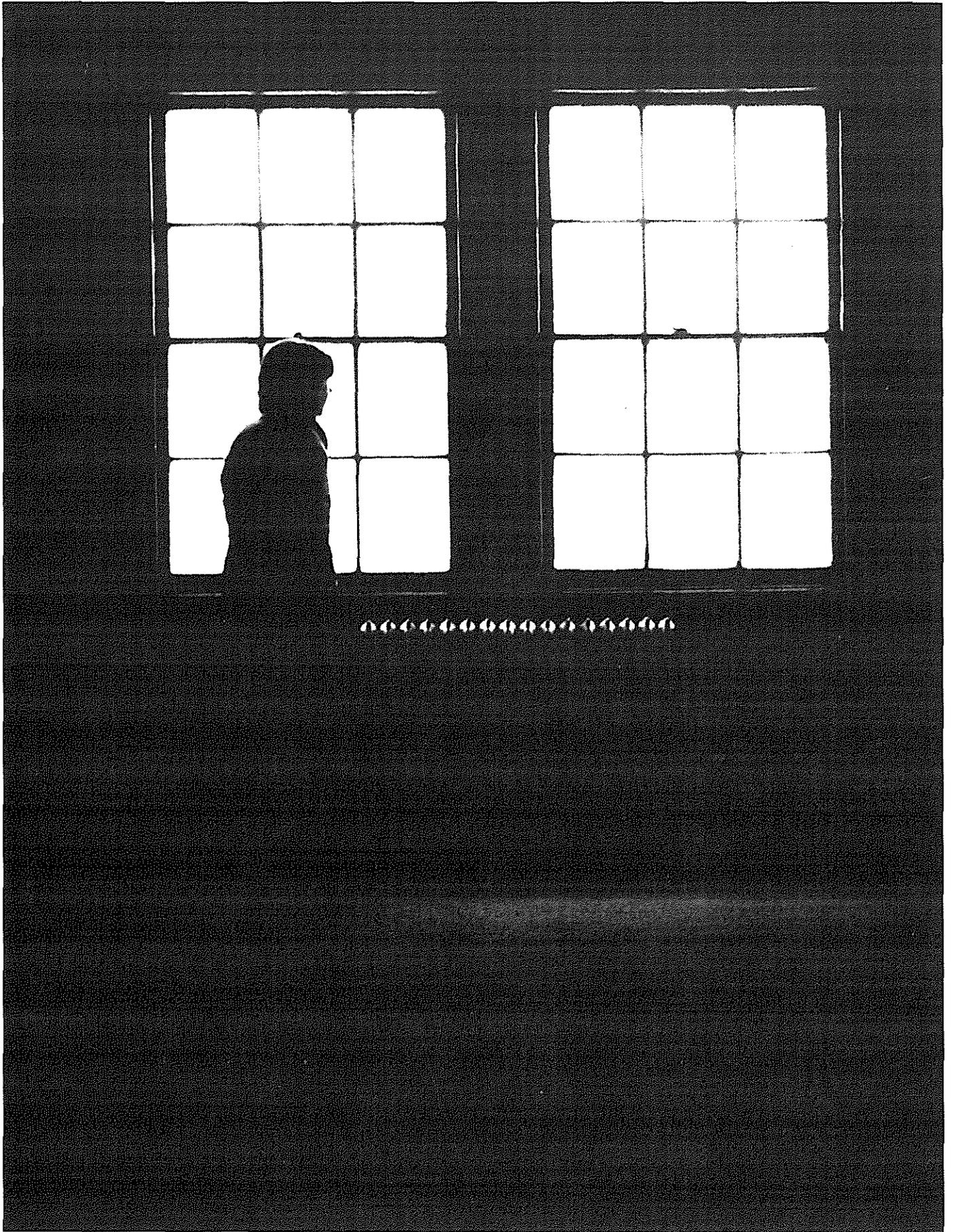
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Part 1: Background

INTRODUCTION

This is a report of two studies about how important youth issues were reported in Minnesota newspapers. One study is general and is about images of juvenile delinquency in major Twin Cities newspapers. The other study focuses on the issue of vandalism and the Metropolitan Transit Commission buses.

Based on the findings of these content analysis studies, it is clear that only a very small percentage of all delinquent acts are reported in the press. The acts that are reported seem to be those in which force is used and those in which several youth participate.

If this is an accurate statement about Twin Cities papers, some confusion could arise in public discussion and public policy about youth in general and particularly about delinquency because these acts are not their majority of delinquent acts and, indeed, are relatively rare events.¹

It is our hope that citizens of Minnesota will read the information and the issues presented in this report and will think about whether our findings would hold true for their communities and for other media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and television.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Public concern about juvenile delinquency is not new; delinquency has long been a focus for ideas and services. Indeed, it has long been a social movement. Yet, there is a qualitative difference in current theory, research, service, social action, and public debate compared to the recent past. This difference is thought to be in the social and personal consequences for youth and the youth service system which might follow if current ideas are (or continue to be) implemented.

Some of these ideas and anticipated consequences are examined briefly in the context of four emergent social movements, providing a limited background for under-

standing why and how juvenile delinquency is presented in newspapers.

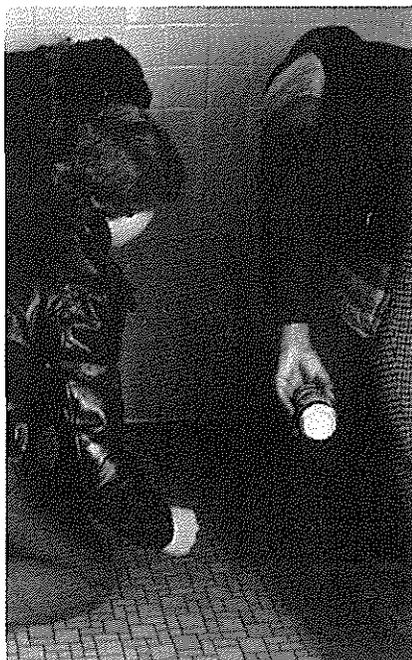
FOUR EMERGENT SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Diversion. Prevention has always been a central idea (and ideology) in juvenile delinquency. Recent public discussion about the prevention of delinquency concerns the "diversion" of youth from the juvenile justice system and, failing that, the limitation of youth "penetration into" that system.

Prevention, in these forms, is current federal, state, and municipal policy. The major organizational expression of this preventive approach is the Youth Service Bureau.

Funds for many of these prevention programs come from the federal government (Law Enforcement Assistance Administration) to state crime commissions and then to local governments or to voluntary social agencies or voluntary associations.

Theoretical rationale for diversion is found in "labeling theory" in sociology and other social science writings. Among the empirical studies that support this approach, the work of Wolfgang, et al. (1972) is a recent



classic. Active debate about this theory and research is found in the journal, *Social Problems* and in the work of Schur (1965, 1971, 1973).

In oversimplified terms, the central thesis of this view is that formal contact by youth with the juvenile justice system may have severe short and long term consequences for them. These consequences are often more serious for the youth in their social world than the original illegal act. The consequences may be to youth self-image or self-concept, or in turn, to their interpersonal relations with significant others (family, friends, teachers, etc.). Further exposure to "the system" is seen as a risk because it may mean the initiation of a juvenile delinquent "career" and, ultimately, an adult criminal career.

The central notion of youth diversion (in its various names) as found in Youth Service Bureaus (YSB) and similar agencies and programs is creating, sustaining, and using a social network of contacts by YSB staff. Such a network would include on the one hand, actors in the juvenile justice system, such as police, juvenile judges, probation officers and other staff of geographically proximate human service agencies, especially in the schools; and on the other hand, adult voluntary associations in the neighborhood, youth groups, and individual families. The purpose of these networks of contacts is to encourage youth and adults to bring youth to the YSB for counseling before a delinquent act occurs or immediately after such an act. In the latter case, referrals from police are valued.

The YSB also creates new services as needed or wanted. These might include job testing, placement and counseling, recreation, remedial education, etc.

The notion of prevention is operationalized in programs in the community in which youth live. This community focus follows other recent social programs such as Community Action Program of the War on Poverty and the Model Cities Program, which make use of local and ideological supports in the symbols community and neighborhood.

Closing the Institution. A second social movement is oriented away from the community of residence to the juvenile institution. Its goal is to close existing large, mass public

¹This phrase is used in both an everyday sense and in the technical statistical sense.

institutions serving youth. These institutions are called variously "correctional facilities," "youth prisons," or "reformatories." They can be distinguished from Reception and Diagnostic Centers (R & D), which are way-stations to the institutions, and from "holding facilities" for juveniles awaiting court action or under public welfare supervision or protection. The institutions may be administered by the state, county, or municipality as can the R & D centers and other agencies.

The major thesis of this movement is that these large, mass facilities are harmful for youth and that attempts to change the quality of care within them has had limited success. Frequently, these institutions are geographically remote from the youth's community of residence, and hence from parents and others who could support positive reintegration "into society," i.e., "into the community."

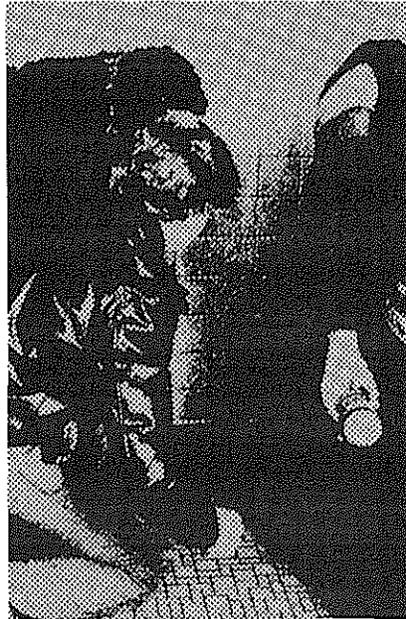
A second goal of this movement is to move youth closer to their community of residence, and, if necessary, to smaller social environments such as group homes, foster homes, or non-public youth agencies such as those of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, the Salvation Army, or the Volunteers of America. Proponents of closing mass institutions acknowledge that some youth might require placement in a more secure facility than a group home. In these instances they would reserve the right to selectively use a redesigned, small institution for these youth.

A large literature of descriptions, action efforts, and studies of these institutions is available. The state of Massachusetts expressed and encouraged this movement when it closed its mass, youth institutions.

Youth Rights. A third current social movement is youth (and children's) rights. This includes the social movements for student rights as found in the high schools and for patient rights as found in medical and health facilities, particularly college health programs and youth clinics (including the free clinics).

One central notion of this movement is that youth should have by law, rights that would protect them from the inappropriate use of adult authority in major social institutions, such as the family and the school. Such protection is thought necessary in at least two instances: when adult authority acts against

the interests of the youth and when youth are members of a legally sanctioned control agency, such as a mental hospital or youth institution. An example of the first instance might be an abuse of parental authority. This is the type of act usually subsumed under child welfare law and family law. An example of the second instance includes issues discussed as student rights, patient rights and, recently, as the right to treatment.



A second notion is that these legal rights would allow, support, and protect youth participation in making those crucial decisions which affect them in these same social institutions, and in the many other social roles they occupy. For example, as citizens youth want to vote in government elections² and want to sit on decision-making boards of agencies concerned with youth and youth services. As consumers, youth want to be able to enter into legal contracts for material goods and for services (although many youth would want their parents to assume fiscal liability for these contracts too). As people who become ill, youth want to be able to receive medical and health care without parental permission.

A third notion is related to the actual organization and procedure of juvenile court. Youth rights here

means extending to youth proceedings the same legal and procedural rights granted to adults under law.

The youth rights movement can be viewed from several perspectives. It is a movement to change the public and legal conceptions of youth as these are found in our English legal heritage and in the public mind. In this view, youth rights is a reform movement to bring laws into congruence with current public views of the social status of youth.

Youth rights is, in another view, a movement to allow difference. These are differences in personal and social style and behavior that flow from the social sources of the youth culture, the Counter Culture, and the Movement, among others. In this sense, youth rights is a social movement to enhance personal freedom, and it can also be viewed as a movement for social change.

Youth rights is a social movement which touches all reform movements. It intersects the prevention movement as that touches status offenses, police procedures with juveniles, and YSB referral patterns. Similarly, the reform movement to close mass juvenile institutions, in part, flows from the recognition that the civil-legal rights of youth are violated therein. These rights will be very difficult to establish, and even more difficult to monitor, given the matrix of administrative law, actual practices in the institutions, and the limitations of court order to promote practices as compared to stopping and preventing practices. Youth rights are central to public and professional debate about juvenile court reform, particularly in the form of court authority and laws granting this and in the rules of court procedure. Youth rights is a key concept for understanding the social and intellectual context of debate about (youth) status offense laws and about juvenile court reform.

Juvenile Court Reform. The fourth social reform movement is focused on the legal and social role of the juvenile court. The central issue is the court. Also included are the issues touched upon above in the discussion of the social and personal consequences of juvenile court proceedings for youth (e.g., negative self-concept, juvenile criminal careers, incarceration in mass juvenile institutions, etc.). Other issues concern the laws defining delinquent

²An early example is the Athenian Oath administered to youth in Athens during the fifth century (B.C.). After the oath, the youth attained the sociological status of "citizen" of the city-state.

acts, the procedures of the court, the nature of the court dispositions of juvenile offense petitions, and the nature of court sentencing (e.g., indeterminate sentences).

Particular issues include the right to an attorney, the right to a jury trial, the norm that juvenile records are confidential, and are treatment rather than criminal records, and that these must, under specified conditions, be expunged. (Here are the related issues of electronic data banks of juvenile records and the "tracking" of youth by police using these and similar data banks.) Many argue that the court's philosophy of help has, in practice, when viewed from the perspective of the personal and social consequences of court action, become a means of personal and social control of youth. This control is a central focus of reform.



Summary. These four social movements do not exhaust current issues and activities in juvenile justice reform. Youth participation in social institutions and changes in law, beliefs, and practices about youth in child welfare are related. Taken together, these suggest the turbulence in ideas, actions, and public discussion about youth and juvenile justice.

Public, professional, and academic discussion about youth status offenses can be understood as a weft in the warp of these social movements. That is, the status offenses are part of all of the ideas and activities dis-

cussed and cannot be appreciated as an issue independent of them.

The four social movements discussed above comprise many specific issues and concerns. Among them are:

- how to treat status offenders, such as truants, runaways, incorrigibles, curfew violators, or PINS (persons in need of supervision) and CINS (children in need of supervision);
- whether to use locked facilities for these youth;
- how to handle status offenses;
- whether the court should deal with youth who have committed very serious crimes, such as murder, as juveniles or adults;
- what the appropriate place and necessary services are for these serious offenders;
- and, how effective are delinquency prevention and treatment programs and facilities, particularly those in the community, such as Youth Service Bureaus, group homes, and other alternatives to incarceration.

These issues have been raised in Minnesota State Legislative hearings, court cases, and specific court hearings, as well as in special governmental criminal justice committees on the national, state, regional, and county levels. This public attention to delinquency-related topics is reflected in the press. Therefore, we sought to learn how delinquency had been reported in Minnesota newspapers.

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Focus was given to our exploratory and descriptive studies by using broad research questions. The three main questions were:

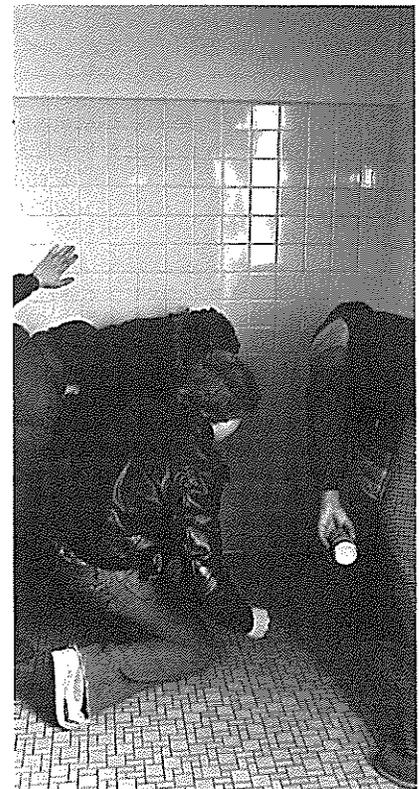
1. What images of juvenile delinquency are found in the major Twin Cities newspapers?
2. What images of delinquent youth are found in the major Twin Cities papers?
3. What views of youth development are presented in these newspapers?

Key Words. The key words in this study are "images" and "juvenile delinquency." By "images" was meant the facts and the verbal pictures about juvenile delinquents, delinquent acts, and services for youth

presented in the newspaper. These were "impressions" of delinquency presented in the text, not necessarily those "received" by the readers. "Images" also meant the actual words used to describe and discuss the subject, and the signs, symbols, metaphors, and parts of speech used.

By "juvenile delinquency" was meant violations of the Minnesota Juvenile Code (statute)—a formal definition—while by "juvenile delinquent" was meant those youth who either committed these acts or were adjudicated for committing these acts.

Sources of Information. The information (data) used in this study came from Minnesota newspapers, particularly the four major dailies in the Twin Cities: The Minneapolis Tribune (morning), Minneapolis Star (afternoon), the St. Paul Pioneer Press (morning), and the St. Paul Dispatch (afternoon). For the general study of delinquency images, all editions during the year July 1, 1975 to June 30, 1976 were used (1356 editions). For the specific study of vandalism and the MTC buses, only the appropriate articles and editorials were used. (For a more detailed explanation of the research methodology, see appendix A.)



Part 2: Images of Delinquency in Twin Cities Newspapers

In this study we looked at the images of delinquency presented in news stories, headlines of the news stories, editorials, and headlines of editorials. The four sets of findings are presented below as answers to a series of questions.

Images in News Stories

Is Delinquency a Common Event?

A total of 111 news articles about direct delinquent acts were found in the four Twin Cities dailies for the study year. Of these, 61 (55 percent) were in the two St. Paul dailies and 49 (45 percent) were in the two Minneapolis dailies. During the study year, there were 1356 editions of these four dailies. Hence, on the average, one article on a direct delinquent act appeared in every 12 editions. This is one every three days.

The frequency of appearance alone could suggest to readers that direct acts of juvenile delinquency are common. If readers were aware that many such acts familiar to them or their friends do not "make the papers" they could conclude that delinquency is a very common occurrence.

Is There More Delinquency in The Other City?

Readers who are aware of how often delinquent acts are reported in the dailies might conclude that delinquency is common in their city, and more common than in the neighboring Twin City (i.e., Minneapolis or St. Paul). Why more common? Because the dailies in each city report a large percentage of delinquent acts which occurred in the neighboring city, in the suburbs or outstate, thus swelling the total number of incidents in the given paper. Readers who noted only the headline and those who read the article but did not note where the act occurred could conclude that there

was less delinquency in their city than the neighboring city.

The Minneapolis dailies included 11 (24 percent) reports from St. Paul, while the St. Paul dailies reported 10 (15 percent) stories from Minneapolis. The St. Paul dailies reported about twice as many stories from the suburbs (12 percent) as did the Minneapolis papers (7 percent). Both reported similar percentages of stories from outstate (about 20 percent).

Several factors influence decisions about what stories to include in a newspaper. One of these is the area in which the readers live. Twin Cities dailies are regional papers in that some of the readership lives beyond the geographic boundaries of both cities. Consequently, stories are included of events occurring beyond the legal boundaries of the cities. This practice swells numbers of stories and could lead readers to con-

clude that more is happening than really is.

Is Delinquency An Individual Or Group Phenomenon? There are many images of the "outlaw" in the public mind. One image from films and books is of a male, riding alone on a dark horse and wearing dark clothes and a dark hat. More modern outlaw images include the lone gangster and the highly organized gang of professionals. While these images are of adults, there are other similar images of youth in trouble and youth causing trouble.

One youth image is of the boy who steals, acting alone. In some variations, he is the "troubled youth" with personal and family problems. Another image is of the youth "gang." These are boys, "out for kicks," who act without premeditation, as vandals, for example. A different image is that of the highly organized gang that plans its robberies or fights.

In these images, youth can be of any racial/ethnic background, but they are usually males, except when the image is of a young gang. Then, girls may be involved as members or, indirectly, as "rooters," as an audience.

These are familiar images from movies and television. And in some communities these images may actually correspond, in part, to some local youth. In the Twin Cities, there are groups of youth in most neighborhoods. However, there are few young gangs that are active delinquent units. Similarly, Juvenile



Court petition data suggest that most youth were not part of a group action at the time of arrest.

Are these facts the same as those presented in news stories of delinquent acts? There were 253 youth included in the 111 news stories. Most often only one youth was mentioned in each story (65 percent in Minneapolis and 51 percent in St. Paul papers), with two youth as the next most frequent number in a single article (21 percent; 25 percent). Delinquency is presented as a single youth or as two youth ("friends?") in 86 percent of the stories in Minneapolis papers and 75 percent of the stories in the St. Paul papers.

Are Delinquent Boys or Girls; Children or Adolescents? What image of delinquents' gender is presented in the dailies? In the Twin Cities' papers, delinquents are boys (94 percent) who are most often either 14 or 17 years old (19 percent and 15 percent of all youth). Next most frequent are 15 (9 percent) and 16 (9 percent) year-olds. There are few youth (5 percent) 13 years old and younger and no girls under 15 years old. For about one third (36 percent) of the youth no age was reported and most of that one third were boys (33 percent).

Using the data for boys only, the rank order by age for all boys and for boys in each city was:

Totals	
14 years old	(20%)
17 years old	(16%)
15 years old	(10%)
16 years old	(10%)
St. Paul	
12 years old	(21%)
14 years old	(16%)
15 years old	(9%)
16 years old	(9%)
Minneapolis	
14 years old	(29%)
17 years old	(12%)
16 years old	(12%)
15 years old	(7%)

In the data for St. Paul the age order was reversed, with a 5 percent increase in the number of 17 year-olds and a 4 percent decrease in 14 year-olds. In Minneapolis the rank order was the same as the totals, but there was a 9 percent increase in the percentage of 14 year-olds and a 4

percent decrease in the percentage of 17 year-olds. The major differences between dailies in the two cities was the frequency of reports about the 14 and 17 year-olds.

Is This Delinquent White, Black, Hispanic, Native American or Asian American? The statistical composite delinquent is a 14 to 17 year-old boy (or a boy without an age) who acted alone or with one other boy. What is his race? He has none! Race is noted only four times for the total of 253 youth, and three of these four youths were Black.

Are Delinquent Acts "Serious?" Public images of delinquent acts include those which are viewed as pranks, those viewed as serious acts, and those which fall between these extremes. Some examples of the latter behavior are, "joy riding" in a car, drinking beer in a group, and "hanging out" on a street corner or at a local fast-food place.

The issues of the seriousness of an act is related to the issues of punishment and treatment, as well as to notions of cause of the act, mental status of the youth, and the like. Factors used to determine indices of seriousness are amount of loss, use of physical violence, use of weapons, etc.

Data about this come from news stories, particularly those which explicitly state that the act was armed assault or some other specific and those stories in which the victim or object of the act is noted. This was seen in 101 of the 149 acts (67 percent). Seventy-seven references were to people (76 percent) and 24 (23 percent) were to property. Fully 79 percent of the victims reported were adults (61 cases) and the others were youth. Slightly more male adult (34) and youth (9) were reported as victims than were female adults (27) or youth (7).

It is believed that the public would consider an act against a person more serious than an act against property, against an adult more serious than against a youth, and against a female more serious than against a male. If this is true, then the delinquent acts reported were relatively serious.

Does Crime Pay? The question of whether "crime pays" is an everyday, common-sense query. The question is implicitly and explicitly answered negatively in most television shows about police. But the question of whether crime pays is more complex

than television indicates. A more complete answer must specify for example, does crime pay: 1) for the police; 2) for society; 3) for the youth? In a general sense crime clearly does pay for the police. It helps them get higher budgets. In a general sense, it does not pay for society because of the loss of lives and goods.

Does Crime Pay For Youth? Does one criminal or delinquent act have consequences for a particular youth that are more beneficial than not? Does a life-style of delinquent behavior have, by the youth's own values, more benefits than liabilities? The best answer we can give is that the newspapers suggest that certain acts do not pay—youth can get caught!

Does The Youth Get Caught? Of the 113 juveniles reported in both cities, 84 youth (74.2 percent) had been apprehended, charged, were to be charged, had had a petition drawn, had been released to parents, had disposition hearings (sentenced), or were being recommended to stand trial as adults. The remaining 29 youth (25.8 percent) had not been caught. From these data about direct delinquent acts reported in the local press, it can be concluded that "the police get their boy," that the state is effectively controlling delinquency.

IMAGES IN NEWS STORY HEADLINES

The next set of findings is about the headlines of the news stories. To help us analyze these headlines, we used three simple research questions:

1. What words about youth were used in the headlines?
2. What words about the act were used in the headlines?
3. What words about adults were used in the headlines?

As before, the findings are presented as answers to questions.

Who Are The Delinquents? If people were to read only the headlines of newspaper stories of direct delinquent acts, they would learn most often a number, i.e. how many youth. Most often, the number was one youth (78 percent). Youths' age, sex or both age and sex together were noted relatively infrequently.

There was some difference between the St. Paul and Minneapolis papers here:

CITIES/NEWSPAPERS

	Minneapolis(48)		St. Paul (21)		Totals	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
A Number of Youth	31	60	16	80	47	68
Youth Age	8	16	1	5	9	13
Youth Sex	2	4	5	25	7	10
Youth Age/Sex	2	4	1	5	3	4

When sex was given boys were noted more times than girls, but overall, the number of times boys were noted was equal to the number of times that sex was not noted. So, if the youth had a sex, it was male. Hence, the image could be that boys get in trouble more than girls.

This is true.

What Did The Youth Do? As discussed earlier, almost all of the direct acts reported were about theft, violence, or both. This finding was seen more vividly in the headlines of the news stories. The words used to compose the headlines are words about violence and about the other acts.¹

EXAMPLES OF WORDS USED IN HEADLINES OF STORIES OF DIRECT ACTS OF DELINQUENCY

Words About Violent Acts

- violence
- stabbing death
- women's death
- fatal beating

¹Another reader might sort a specific word differently, e.g. "hijacking."

- shooting
- shooting spree
- purse theft that led to death of woman, 85
- youth beat, rob
- beating woman
- blow by student
- knife wielding
- attempted murder
- gun attack
- rape death

Words About Other Acts

- drug possession
- car vandalism
- driving charges
- school vandal
- car rams gas station
- automobile accident
- jail blaze
- grabbed purse
- burglary
- grab "pillow"
- robbed
- hijacking

There seems to be qualitative differences between the words on the two lists.

By definition, words about violence can be said to be more powerful than words about the other acts. Exceptions might be "robbery," "drug possession," and "hijacking."²

What Happened To The Youth?

The youth were reported to be in the following statuses, almost always as a consequence of an adult act. This adult was either a police officer or a juvenile court judge, although frequently this is not explicitly stated.

WORDS ABOUT POLICE STATUS

- held in custody
- seized captured
- charged arrested

WORDS ABOUT DELINQUENCY STATUS

- school vandal
- roller

WORDS ABOUT YOUTH'S STATUS

(none)

WORDS ABOUT COURT STATUS

- certified (as adult)
- (awaiting) hearing
- sent to

WORDS ABOUT YOUTH AND ACT (OTHER)

- fleeing youth
- escapes
- target (or shooting)

WORDS ABOUT OTHER PARTICIPANTS

corralled by

WORDS ABOUT YOUTH GROUP

- theft ring
- teen's spree
- gang

WORDS ABOUT MEDICAL STATUS

- cut, bruised
- shot

²This can be thought of as examples of what could be called the "rhetoric of delinquency" or the "rhetoric of violence."



It can be seen from these lists that headline words indicate the youths were caught and subsequently held for court action. These words suggest that news stories about delinquent acts are very often written using information obtained from the police and the courts.

Summary. If readers paid attention only to the headlines of news stories about delinquent acts, one image of delinquency they might receive would be that of a young male who acted violently and who was apprehended by the police. Other images would include the male vandal, the male burglar, and the male in trouble somehow "because" of a car.⁵

This analysis of story headlines is most important if editors do indeed operate according to these standard textbook journalism guidelines:

As many readers keep posted on daily happenings almost entirely by scanning the headlines, the copy editor must incorporate as much information as possible in the head, must present it with unswerving accuracy and must emphasize the important point or points of the news. (Gart & Bernstein, 1961)

The same text suggests that, "... a headline containing a few words gives a handy condensation of a news story ..."

But, it is also true that headlines are meant to be "grabbers," sometimes emphasizing the sensational to attract readers for the story for the paper. If distortion occurs in the headlines of stories about juvenile delinquency, perhaps it is partly intentional and contrary to the journalistic ideal presented above.

IMAGES IN EDITORIALS

The editorial page of a newspaper is the place where opinions are stated. In general, editorials "expose the policy of the paper," in their interpretation, "... of the news of the day in accordance with policies of the newspapers which they serve." (Mott, et al., 1958). Editorials may "inform, may explain, argue, urge action, crusade, appraise, announce policies, and offer entertainment," (Ibid). In this part of the study, we sought first to find the images of delinquent youth presented in editorials.⁴ Later, we also sought to learn the images presented of youth and youth-adult relations.⁵

⁵Of course, the car doesn't cause the act but is an inextricable part of the image.

Probe questions were used to focus our analysis of the editorials. Nine questions reflected themes which we thought important to learn about.

Can Delinquency Be Prevented?

The first probe question was "What could (should) be done to keep juvenile delinquency from occurring?" We sought to discover whether ideas about prevention were presented and, if so, in what form. Several such ideas were found. One was that "services for youths will discourage them from later delinquent activities." This idea is partly grounded in the idea that some delinquent behavior is an outcome of personal or family problems. It is a form of the classical psychological-psychiatric view of delinquency. An example is this attitude: "Runaway youth may leave home because of family conflict. Services should be available to families to resolve these conflicts. If they are resolved, youth will be less likely to run away from home."

A second notion about prevention was that "punishment is preventive." A variation on this idea was that the "threat of punishment is preventive." For example, if teachers are allowed to use physical force with certain students in certain situations (without running the risk of legal action), then it is likely that more severe troubles can be prevented.

A third prevention idea was that facts can lead to understanding which, in turn, can lead to the prevention of something. For example, if people were fully informed, then they would be more likely to under-

stand and to act in a rational or appropriate way. This would result in preventing a bad situation or in controlling it.

These prevention ideas express two other basic orientations—one to juvenile delinquency and the other to social change. The first orientation is the view that delinquent behavior is the result solely or largely of some personal or family problem. The social change orientation, in its rationalistic form assumes that knowledge is, in and of itself, sufficient to change people's behavior.

What Causes Delinquency? The second probe question was: "Who or what causes juvenile delinquency?" The idea of cause was found in several editorials. In one, the cause of delinquent behavior was thought to be some personal or family problem; delinquent behavior was seen as a response to this personal or family problem. Related was the idea that delinquent behavior is a symptom of some personal or social problem or situation.

Another editorial reviewed other ideas about cause: "moral breakdown" (family, society); war and civil unrest and the presentation of these on television; "too much freedom and mobility" (from parents); parents "too concerned with their own pleasure seeking;" "both parents work."

There are many profound differences between the approaches and the results of looking for the causes of juvenile delinquency as this is done in social science and in everyday, common sense thinking. Suffice it to say that this seemingly simple, straight-forward topic is among the most difficult in the social sciences.

How Much Delinquency is There?

The third probe question was: "How many juvenile delinquent acts (youth) are there?" Few statements about the amount or frequency of delinquency were found in the editorials. However, two points can be made about the statements reviewed.

First, the words "many" and "minority" rather than "majority (of youth)" were used several times. Note that these words do not refer to a specific number of youth. However, they imply large numbers of youth. Consequently, one could get the impression that delinquency is a big problem without this having been written or supported. Note, too, that the words have another important meaning: "Not all youth are delin-

⁴It is important to note that although the editorials were analyzed individually, answers are presented for all editorials (in the Twin Cities' papers, in outstate newspapers, and combined). That is, the data are presented across papers, thus, the questions about images and themes are not built up editorial by editorial, in the natural sequence of date of publication as a reader would see them.

The approach taken followed one of our purposes: To learn the general themes presented in editorials about delinquents, other youth, etc. Such a purpose led to a qualitatively different kind of analysis than that done for news stories of direct delinquent acts. It was not our intent to analyze the editorial stance of any one newspaper on any one or any series of issues. Rather, we sought to learn something about editorials as a class of data. Our intent was to learn the range and structure of ideas and issues about youth found in all the editorials, and to learn the commonalities among these ideas and issues about youth.

⁵A list of editorial subjects includes:

Boys should be given dogs as a way to prevent delinquency
Runaway youth
The status of juvenile crime and juvenile justice
Hard-core delinquents
Free rides for youth on MTC buses
Court intrusion into schools' use of discipline
Vandalism and parents' role
Detention facilities

quents or are bad; many youth are good. The bad ones, the delinquents, are a minority of all the youth in our town, city, state." In short, the two ideas can be put together in one phrase as: "Yes, there are some youth who are delinquents and while these are not all or most youth, we still have a problem."

One editorial noted that statistics showed that the number of Minneapolis runaways in the first half of 1974 was about 5 percent higher than in the comparable 1973 period. This is an example of how numbers are used to document the extent of delinquency, when in fact, the numbers may not contribute to clarity. What is important in this example is the use of language, of what has been called a "rhetoric of numerality." Numbers seem to be harder, more exact, more scientific than words. Numbers seem to convey "truth," while words may not.

What Should Be Done? The fourth probe question was "What could (should) be done by whom, and how, to help these youth?" The editorials discussed few programs for the prevention or treatment of delinquent youth. Only two kinds of programs were noted and both were tied directly to problems.

One problem was runaway youth. The editorial reviewed runaways and federal funds available for services to these youth and their parents. The other problem discussed was the need for more, different, or new facilities for some delinquent youth. Among the needs mentioned were a new county detention facility, a secure location in a county hospital and a secure facility for "hard-core" delinquent youth. The editorials on facilities appeared during public legislative hearings about funds for such units.

A major concern in these discussions about facilities was where to put these youth, not what services to provide for them. This emphasis may be the result of the public debate at that time about the "hard-core" delinquents the "violent youths,"—the alleged lack of a location to house them⁶ and the alleged lack of an effective treatment model. Let us look more closely at the words and the rhetoric used to discuss this issue.

Several "loaded" words were used in discussions about the need for

these new units: "security wing; detention facilities; a secure place and secure facility." The word "secure" connotes safety. Literally, "dangerous," "violent," "hard-core" youth will be "placed" ("put") in a safe place. Symbolically, the place is safe because it is away from us; they can't escape easily, and they can't hurt us.

The word "facility" means a place where youth will stay while they are under court or state supervision. Symbolically, a facility is a "government place," a "cold place," a "storage place." It is where youth are "put" or "sent," not where they are "placed." This is administrative language. In contrast, in helping language it is not to be a "service place, a helping place, a growing place, a rehabilitation place, a treatment place."

A "secure facility" for "dangerous, violent and hard-core delinquents;" this is the language of editorial comment and public debate about these dangerous youth; it is a rhetoric of control and punishment. The effect of this rhetoric is to contribute to the public's sense of personal security because "we will be safe from them." This is a classical and, currently, very common public response to delinquents (and to adult criminals).⁸

What Should Our Policy Be? The fifth probe question was: "What policies should be adopted to prevent these acts and help these youth?" It is in this category that we expected editorial opinion about delinquency to be clearest.

This was not found. Instead, we discovered that while some of the editorials focused on delinquency as a phenomenon, the major themes were the newspapers' socio-political philosophies in general (i.e. without specific references to delinquency) and, in particular, the newspapers' philosophies about "correct" intra- and inter-governmental relations.

An example of socio-political stance about delinquency was found in an editorial which argued that children and youth are the parents' responsibility until "the welfare state is in full bloom;" it is their responsibility to care for their children and, hence, in this way to prevent their children from doing delinquent acts.

⁷One editorial used the word "shelter." Unlike "facility," a "shelter" is a legal-administrative term with a pretty clear meaning. The phrase "detention facility" is common also.

⁸Out of sight, out of mind; out of sight out of danger to me." (See the readings in Cohen & Young (1973)).

Examples of a newspaper's general socio-political philosophy that were found in editorials about delinquency are as follows:

"the federal courts have steadily expanded their interventions in public education systems over the last twenty years."

"... schools should be run by educational authorities, not the judiciary" (issue was corporal punishment).

An example of a newspaper's philosophy about governmental relations as the focus of an editorial on delinquency was seen in an editorial about placing "hard-core" delinquent youth. The editorial discussed the conflicting opinions of a juvenile court judge and the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Corrections about this issue, and the probable involvement of the legislature and the Minnesota Supreme Court in this decision. It also reviewed the public issue and the participants. In the final paragraph, comments were made about the substance of the issue and about the proper relation between participants, especially between the legislature and the Court.

What Are The Personal And Social Consequences of Delinquency? The sixth probe question was: "What is (are) the expected consequence(s) of (the amount of delinquency, services for these youth and social policies) on the youth others?" As with the themes about causes, the themes about consequences can be divided into those related to individual youth and those related to larger social groups. There were no explicit statements about the consequences of delinquency. Rather, the idea of consequences was found in discussions of laws, social policies, and social programs.

The form of the idea was: If x is (is not) done, then y will (continue, get worse). We want to change x so as to change y; or we don't want y so let's change x. This logic is similar to that used to discuss the ideas of prevention. For example:

If a law is not passed, then youth will continue to act badly in school.

We want to change the law about vandalism so that we can support teachers' efforts to keep discipline.

We don't want vandalism in schools to continue: let's pass a tougher law about it.

⁶There are usually no or very few girls in this group if commitment to the State Department of Corrections is used as the indicator for adjudicated youth who were (are) considered "hard-core, violent."

What Are Normal And Delinquent Youth Like? Here, we used four questions to learn the editorial views of "normal" and delinquent youth. By implication in the editorials, non-delinquency was defined as the absence of delinquent behavior, but there were no implied connections between non-delinquency and normality or health.

Important too, was the finding that no comment was made about the responsibilities of youth for self or for other youth. The editorials are written about a world inhabited by adults only,⁹ and they are written by adults for adults.

What Are The Socio-Political Issues About Delinquency? Here, we looked for recurring themes in the answers to "which socio-political organizations or social institutions should do what about delinquent youth, the problem of delinquency?" All editorial content in this category was about bills introduced in the Minnesota legislature. The focus was on the relationship between and among government agencies, as noted above. In a real sense, the data for this question are found in the answers to the other questions (see above).¹⁰

So far, we have looked at ideas about youth and delinquency in the editorials. Here we present data from analyses of the words and phrases used in the editorials. We begin with words about youth.

EDITORIAL WORDS REFERRING TO YOUTH

Youth in general

Youth, youngsters, young people

Age oriented

All persons under 18, youth under the age of 18, under 18 group, children, some children, juveniles, kids, little kids, kids far from little

Sex oriented

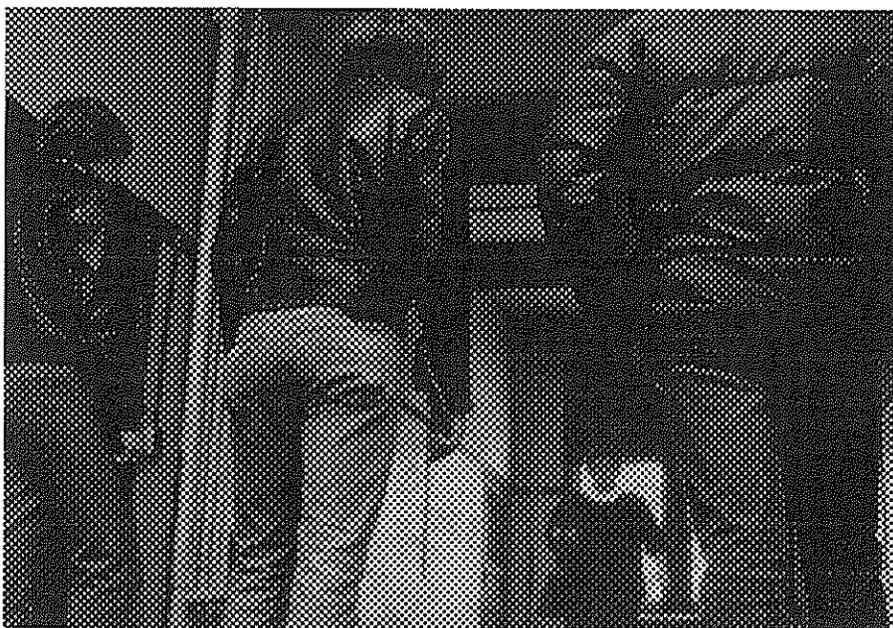
Young boys, boys

Specific youth

"Johnny," black pupil, large black enrollment, school kids, pupil, students, serious young people, innocent

Youth in trouble

Potential troublemaker, runaway juveniles, runaways, delinquents, young offenders, impetuous youngsters, turned-off kids



Youths causing trouble

Youthful vandals, unruly youngsters and teenagers, rowdy peers, rowdies, guilty, troublemakers, hard-core, incorrigible, often violent offenders, hard-core offenders, hard-core juveniles, swarm of free riders, unrestrained youth, youthful freeloaders, unruly youths, disorderly pupils, ill-mannered youth gangs, bad actor, joyriders

Next, these words were sorted into categories made up of two factors—age and the symbolic image of the youth.

YOUTH WORDS IN EDITORIALS: AGE AND SYMBOL

<u>Young/Not Dangerous</u>	<u>Adolescent/Neutral</u>	<u>Adolescent/"Dangerous"</u>
<i>boy(s)</i>	<i>youth</i>	<i>delinquent</i>
<i>child(ren)</i>	<i>student</i>	<i>bad actors</i>
<i>kid(s)</i>	<i>person(s) under 18</i>	<i>unrestrained youth</i>
<i>young children</i>	<i>under 18 group</i>	<i>hard-core delinquents</i>
	<i>young people</i>	<i>incorrigible</i>
	<i>youngsters</i>	
	<i>juvenile</i>	
	<i>In Between</i>	
	<i>turned-off kids</i>	
	<i>runaways—not dangerous, but more than neutral</i>	

Next, all words in the editorials which referred to adults were listed and then organized into categories.

EDITORIAL WORDS REFERRING TO ADULTS

paying passengers, passengers, paying customers, older customers, bus patron, adult passengers, other passengers, all riders

school, school staff
school teacher, teachers, another teacher
school authorities, school administrators, educational authorities
educators, some educators, many educators
principal, specific principals
parents generally, parents, most parents, abandoned parents, unreasonable parents, many parents
general public, most people, adults, long suffering taxpayers, older people, others

staff writers, listener, counselor, spokesman
specific adults
bus drivers, drivers
police, off-duty policemen, extra police, plainclothes, cops
commission members, federal government, MTC, federal bureaucrats, lawmakers, Minnesota Corrections Department, Corrections Commis-

⁹For our position, see Konopka, (1973).

¹⁰No data were found for the question, "How should adults relate to youth?"

sioner, Legislature, legislators, federal judge, Supreme Court of Minnesota, legal counsel, Ohio Civil Rights Organizations, other cities, judiciary, specific Board of Education, school board members

representative of the bus driver's union, National Education Association's officer, all senators (MN)

It is seen that the adult words refer most often to the occupational status (role), the jobs of adults. These words, then, do not carry evaluations or judgments about the adult; they merely place the adult in a social context.

In contrast, many words about youth refer to the youth's delinquency status (role). Such usage results often in a language structure (or language convention) in which a neutral adult word appears in close relationship to a judgmental youth word; e.g. teacher-school vandal; police-delinquent; parent-runaway.

What is important about this language structure is that the adult appears symbolically as neutral or "good" and the youth appears as neutral (e.g. 16 years old) or "bad." The result is a constant equation in which age (adult-youth) and morality (good-bad) are linked. This comparison seems to be a stylistic convention.

IMAGES IN EDITORIAL HEADLINES

The third analysis assessed the clarity and accuracy of editorial headlines. Editorial headlines about the MTC fare policy stated most clearly both what the editorial was about and the paper's position on the issues. For example:

*No More "Easy Riders"
End Free Rides for Kids
Good-bye to Freebies
No More Easy Rides*

Headlines about other juvenile delinquency issues were unclear about what specific issue would follow (e.g., "Dirt Under the Rug"; "Mom, Dad and Dog Too"; "Thinking a Bit"). Some editorial heads were neutral about the paper's stand on the issue: "Juvenile Crime, Juvenile-Justice; Where to Put Hard-Core Delinquents"; others stated the paper's position; "The Problem of Runaway Juveniles"; "Courts Invade Schools"; "Curbing Vandalism—It Remains Parents' Role."

In only a few editorial headlines were there explicit statements about the quality of youth-adult relations. Usually, the nature of these relations was implied and revolved around the idea that adults must or should "do something" about these youth or this youth problem. This same idea was found in the editorial text.

Editorial Headline Words About Youth. The next analysis listed and categorized the editorial headline words referring to youth, to adults, and to the relationships between them. Compared to the words used in the headlines of news stories, fewer different words were used in editorial headlines. Words referring to youth were:

*Juvenile
Runaway Juvenile
Hard-Core Delinquent
Kids
Easy Riders*

The word referring to delinquent acts was "vandalism." "Juvenile" is less an age-specific word than either "kids" or "delinquents" and it does not seem to carry any specific connotation of good or bad; it is a descriptive term. "Kids," "hard-core delinquent" and "easy riders," on the other hand, are loaded words—ones that have many connotations. For example, "kids" seems to connote young teenagers who are not "bad," those who are "normal," those who do normal "kids' things" as in "kids will be kids."

Other Editorial Phrases About Youth. Two other common phrases which we believe are "loaded" were used in editorials. One is "hard-core delinquent" and the other is "easy rider."

"Hard-core delinquent" is a phrase that suggests many things. Among these are the "tough" youth, whose "very core" is "rotten or bad or sick," youth who are "bad to the core." This phrase has appeared in Minnesota newspapers in statements by those in the juvenile justice system (e.g., judges) and by those on legislative committees. It refers to youth who have a history of contact with the juvenile justice system "recidivists," and who have not been "helped" by that system. Often, these youth are called "violent" and the phrase "violent hard-core youth (delinquents)" is now common. Note the other common phrases, "hard-core pornography; and rotten apple core."

These youth are the ones who have not been helped (i.e. changed in a positive way by the system). The use of the metaphor "hard core" serves to place the reasons for the therapeutic failure "in the youth," not in the treatment or correctional system. The problem is the youth, not us. This phrase, then, is part of a language of frustration, one which incorporates psychiatric ("sick") or moral ("bad") ideas about these youth.

Even more important, the metaphor "hard core delinquent" is the clue to a treatment ideology. This treatment ideology sets expectations about these youth and services for them. Ideologies such as this help blind adults to the uniqueness of each youth by metaphorically creating a class of youth and by implying that the youths in this class will likely not benefit from the service as now offered. In other words, the ideology supports a self-fulfilling prophecy, "don't do anything because it won't work anyway."

"Easy rider" is the other phrase referring to youth which appeared in editorial heads. This too is "loaded" with metaphorical meaning. The words are the title of a popular movie about "hip" young adults on a motorcycle trip who are the victims of random violence. These words appeared in editorials about the Metropolitan Transit Commission's policy to provide bus rides to and from school to youth at no cost. (For more on this issue, see Part 3.) The phrase picks up the "shiftless" images of the youth portrayed in the movie and provides a way of interpreting the actions of some of the youth who committed violent acts on the buses.

The phrase also was used as shorthand for those who defined the bus-fare policy as a form of welfare, as a "give-away" to underserving youth (the poor).

Editorial Headline Words About Adults. Words referring to adults were:

*Parents
Mom, Dad
Teachers*

In contrast to the words about youth, words about adults in editorial heads were descriptive (e.g., parents, teachers), or connoted as positive image (e.g., mom, dad).

Editorial Aphorisms. Another analysis of editorials looked at the aphorisms found in the editorial

texts. By editorial aphorisms is meant the common-sense thinking, the social and personal values, or basic assumptions which hold the editorial ideas together. From this analysis it was apparent that there is a common ideology about delinquency. This ideology underlies the public debate in Minnesota about facilities for youth (institutions), about the juvenile justice community corrections program (ideology and social movement) and about the jurisdictional conflicts between juvenile court judges and the state Commissioner of Corrections. Some of these aphorisms are:

YOUTH

*Kids are running wild
Youth are too free
Kids get involved with bad company
Kids are frivolous
Youth are uncontrollable; you reap what you sow*

PARENTS

*Woman's place is in the home, not at work (if possible)
Parents have feelings too
Spare the rod and spoil the child
"If God had believed in permissiveness, He would have given us the Ten Suggestions"*

ON WHAT IS GOOD

*Counseling is good; innovation is good; new is not necessarily good or better.
Evaluation is good; knowledge is good.*

THINGS FREE

*If you pay for it, you'll realize its worth.
If it's free, you don't respect it, and it gets abused.*

ON EXPERTS

*Those on the firing line know best.
Experts don't know everything.*

OTHER

*This is the lesser of two evils.
The potential is worse than the actual.
Evil is communicable (like a disease).
Innocent suffer because of the guilty.
If "you ask for it, you'll get it"—sooner or later
Information is necessary to mobilize people to do something.
We have to act now, not procrastinate.*

These common sense phrases are often confusing because though they

may be accurate generalizations, they don't hold true for specific instances. But this is unimportant, because they have such a secure place on our everyday thinking that we often do not "see" them. Hence, we tend to accept (or reject) them without a thought. These aphorisms are like cliches. It is the strategy of a cliché to avoid notice. Partially because of this, these aphorisms continue and, in turn, influence our thinking about delinquency and delinquents.

Editorial Logic. A final set of findings is from the analysis of the logic used in various editorial positions. It was found that this logic includes a mixture of social values, social facts, and opinion:

- Free bus rides led to problems; to reduce or diminish the problems, end free bus rides.
- When the negatives outweigh the positives, stop doing it (free bus rides).
- If a youth is given a dog, he will learn important things which, in turn, will reduce chances of his becoming delinquent—so argues a researcher. Is it not strange to expect an animal to teach a boy what his parents are supposed to; if the theory proves correct, should every boy get a dog?
- Since no one is fully sure about what to do to prevent and to reduce juvenile crime, research should be done and programs should be begun and evaluated.
- Bus vandalism and lack of school discipline are similar in that

these result from insufficient adult control over youth.

- Free youth riders are creating trouble on the buses. This trouble has resulted in a decrease in the number of adult riders who pay. To increase these riders and, hence revenue, terminate free rides for youth.
- Free rides is a social experiment which hasn't worked. End the experiment.
- Free rides for youth have resulted in more youth downtown. Kids disrupt business downtown. There is an increasing number of business thefts downtown. To reduce these thefts, end free rides for youth.
- Judges can order things to be done, but if the things can't be done it doesn't make sense to order them.
- Judges can order school staff, but such orders are interference and will lead to ineffective teaching and school administration and to student discipline problems.
- For teachers to be effective, they must feel that they can use their judgment and act on it. Teachers must feel free to discipline youth; this contributes to their effectiveness. Therefore, they should not have to worry about being sued because they discipline kids.

It is clear that the editorials were written by adults for adults, even though the subject was delinquency and delinquent youth. Youth, juvenile delinquents and delinquency are



These common sense phrases are often confusing because though they

not the central images in the editorials. Rather, the central images were about what adults should or might do to delinquent youth and how governmental units should work with one another. Another view was that "the old truths still hold most of the time," but we must be aware of new issues and try innovative approaches to prevention and services.

The only clear image of delinquency was that of the "hard-core" delinquent youth.

CONCLUSIONS

In this study of the image of juvenile delinquency, three questions were used to focus the research.

The first and second research questions sought to learn about the images of delinquents and delinquency in the Twin Cities press. Here, no simple answer is possible, and the many answers that were found have been presented. We can conclude that the overall images of delinquency in news stories tend toward those in which force is used and focus primarily on boys. Editorials seem to exclude direct images of youth and include adults writing to adults about services for these youth.

The third question was, "What views of youth development appear in the Minnesota press?" The simple answer is that none were found in the material reviewed for this study. It is true that references were made

to youth-family relations, to the role of parents in supervising ("developing?") their children and, in one instance, to the role of a family pet on this process. However, no comparisons were offered between youth in trouble and those not in trouble except indirectly and then very rarely within the context of youth development.

More generally, our conclusions are that the very rhetoric used supports the notion that delinquency news focuses primarily on acts of theft and violence.

Another conclusion is that the impression of delinquency as theft and violence follows from the types of delinquent acts which are reported and those which are excluded (e.g., status offenses such as smoking, curfew violations and the like). Most stories are about acts in one small part of the delinquency spectrum.

Finally, it must be pointed out that there are more youth now than ever before in Minnesota. Since these youth are such a large proportion of the total population, there are bound to be many delinquent acts, even when the rate of such acts is going down. These simple facts are not used in the press to mitigate the image of delinquency as "rampant," "out-of-control," or of epidemiological proportions.

Things may not really be as bad as the image of them.

Part 3: Vandalism and the Metropolitan Transit Commission

INTRODUCTION

Many of the news stories and editorials about delinquency were about vandalism¹ on public buses in the Twin Cities. These buses are the responsibility of the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC). Reportedly, vandalism was on the increase in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

For many years, vandalism has been a severe problem in mass transportation systems in New York and Chicago. Frequently in those cities vandalism was only a relatively severe problem because violent crime on public transportation was common. A recent, federally-sponsored study by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (Schnell, et al., 1973) documented the extent of the problem. Schnell and associates surveyed 37 U.S. transit systems to learn the incidence of transit crime. They found few published reports and, while they present data about the whole range of crime rather than about vandalism specifically, they do report data about the cost of vandalism. Nationwide, in the year 1971, the costs for the systems studied ranged from \$717.00 to \$10 million.

Vandalism affecting public transportation such as trolleys, subway cars, and buses has a long history in this country. For example, it was not

uncommon many years ago in St. Paul for youth to go to the Snelling Avenue yards and "fool around" with the equipment and, at times, the passengers. This was told to us by a now stately 85-year-old man who frequently "fooled around" during his youth. During 1975, vandalism and delinquency were reported and editorialized on because of an alleged change in the number and rate of these acts.

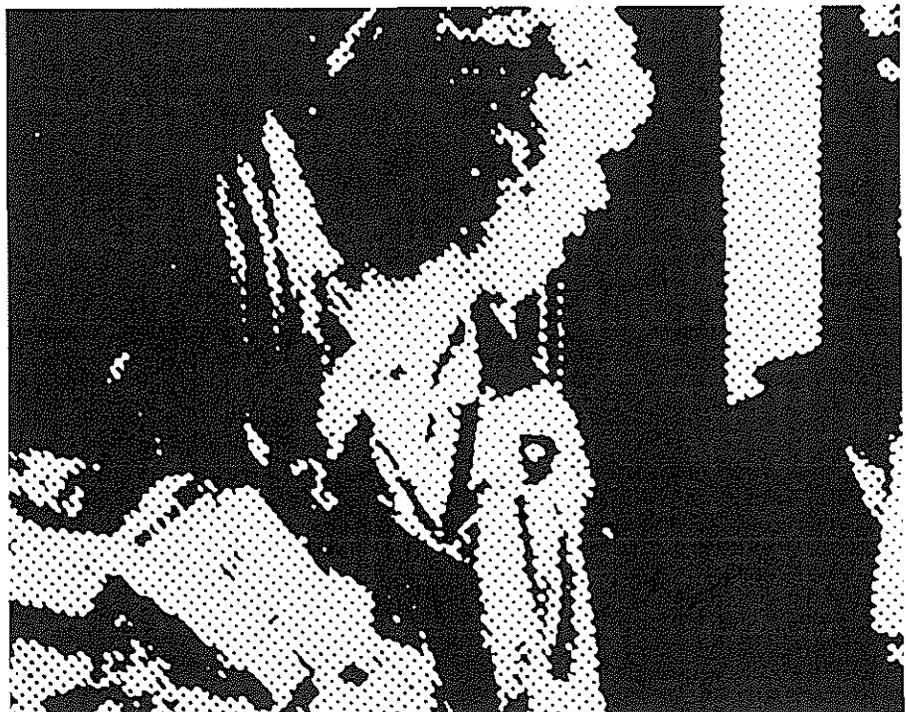
THE ISSUE IN THE TWIN CITIES

In 1975, the Minnesota Legislature passed a unique bill, one which allowed the MTC to have a policy of "no-cost" or minimal cost rides for

youth. Special fares for youth had been in effect since January 30, 1975. This policy was an experiment, and was the first in the nation.

Two issues came to be joined after the MTC implemented the no cost youth fare: youth vandalism on the MTC buses reportedly increased and the no-cost youth fare was defined as the cause of this increased vandalism. It was this issue—the relationship between the youth fare policy and youth vandalism—that was found in newspaper stories and editorials about delinquency.

In 1975 the policy of free rides for youth was rescinded. This policy change followed a June 4, 1975 ruling by State District Court Judge Andrew Danielson upholding the



¹Vandalism is an old word dating back to 1794. It was coined during the French Revolution by an "apologist who likened the destruction of works of art during the revolution to the behavior of Vandales," an early Germanic tribe who sacked Rome in the fifth century.

In common, current usage, the word usually refers to youth and to those youth who engage in the deliberate defacement, mutilation or destruction of private or public property. Vandalism seems to refer to delinquent acts which are of relatively minor seriousness on the scale of delinquent acts. Vandalism has been reported about in relation to cemeteries, schools, public housing, public recreation areas, railroads and particularly of late, public transportation vehicles.

constitutionality of state laws authorizing the MTC to set free fares. This policy was changed by the legislature in 1975 and the fee for youth under 18 years old was set at 10¢.

The issue of youth crime and vandalism on the MTC was reported on and editorialized about between March and July, 1975 in the Twin Cities and metropolitan press. The papers also published many "letters to the editor" about the issue. The issue became public debate.

Debate also took place in the State Legislature. There, a Subcommittee of the Minnesota House Local and Urban Affairs Committee held hearings. Among those who presented opinions was the President of Transit Employees Division 1005, Amalgamated Transit Union.

Clearly, delinquency and vandalism have always occurred on MTC vehicles and at passenger waiting areas throughout the Twin Cities. The MTC bases its knowledge of vandalism on driver reports among other sources of information. It is of interest that seven stories about vandalism on the MTC were found and these appeared with the editorials when the House hearings were being held. Also of interest, five of these stories were reported in the press toward the very end of the 1975 school year.

FINDINGS FROM NEWS STORIES

Seven reports of incidents on the MTC were published in the Twin Cities papers. In only two articles were youth's age and sex given: both were boys who were 15 years old. In five reports, the number of participating youth was noted: two youths (in three articles), three youths (1 article) and ten youths (1 article). The location, when reported, was St. Paul. Theft and violence were noted once each and vandalism was noted twice. The victim was almost always an adult (five of the six known victims). In three instances, it was noted that charges were being leveled.

As with the other articles about delinquency, youth's race was not reported. However, the location of the incident was given in all seven reports. To those who know the Twin Cities, an address can be an indirect racial reference and in this way the youth's race can be implied.

From the articles it was not possible to determine the days of the week

or the times during the day when the incidents occurred. The public debate, however, was presented in a way that suggested that the phenomenon usually occurred after school.

It was found that these reports were presented in a more graphic way than most of the other delinquency stories reviewed. For example:

"... the youth pulled her onto the floor and kicked her several times in the head. Her right eye was closed and she had scratches on her face, but was not seriously injured..."

Or: "... punched her in the face..."

Or: "pulling her off the seat... she apparently was not hurt."

"... punched her in the face..."

"... suffered minor head injuries and lost her purse containing \$70 when she attempted to mediate a fight among youths... the youths pushed him and punched him in the nose when he too attempted to stop the ruckus."

"... was assaulted by several juveniles. He was kicked and required treatment for head injuries... the youths broke 12 bus windows and destroyed a ceiling panel causing \$500 damages."

"The ten beat and kicked the three, took their watches, tournament tickets and about \$25."

"The attackers then kicked out the rear window of the bus and crawled out..."

GENERAL STORIES ABOUT THE YOUTH FARE ISSUE

The broad issue of the no-cost youth fare on MTC vehicles was covered in general stories appearing in the Twin Cities press. Facts were found in these that were not reported in the stories of delinquency incidents. One such issue was that the no-cost rides, where youth rode the bus to downtown St. Paul retail stores, allegedly increased the number of youths downtown. Others included: the overloading of buses by youth; "frivolous riding;" negative reaction by adults; the right versus the privilege of riding the bus; the mechanical problem drivers have because of bus technology (e.g. can't release brakes when backdoor is open); verbal profanity used by youth; youth being noisy, violation of the social norms of queuing (e.g.

"crowding ahead of those waiting in line"), truancy; reduction in "adult ridership."

All of these issues were presented as being related to, and indeed caused by, the special youth fare. Still other issues were the defacement of vehicles with written profanity; the presence of police on buses to prevent delinquent acts; and the cost in people and dollars of the policy to have police ride buses. All of these issues seemed imbedded in the ongoing relationship between and among the MTC and certain groups, agencies, and individuals. Many of these issues were also in letters to the editor in the papers of both cities and some suburbs.

The direct news stories, the general stories, the editorials, and the letters to the editors tended to associate phrases such as "bad kids" with "welfarism." At times as we shall see, the language about youth and about welfare may have had racial overtones.

THE DEBATE AGAINST THE POLICY

The language of public welfare was used in the news stories and it suggested that "getting something for nothing" is, as a principle, a terrible thing (Edelman, 1975). Words and phrases were found throughout the stories: "free loaders," "freebies," and "free rides." The phrase "easy rider" appeared often. For some, it may have had the same meaning found in the movie of that name: youth freedom, irresponsibility, aimlessness, violence.

The logic implicit in these articles was that senior citizens had "earned" their free ride passes because of their previous "contributions to society" (i.e. as in social security). Youth, it was suggested, had not yet contributed to society. Hence, they were getting something for nothing (i.e., "welfare"). Rightfully, the articles argued, seniors are "first class citizens" and youth are "second class citizens." The MTC policy of youth fares encouraged the opposite treatment.

The rhetorics of delinquency, welfare, and race contained a strong anti-youth sentiment. It may very well be that the issue of youth vandalism on MTC buses was for some an opportunity to state feelings and views about youth in general—about

"liberal public policy" and liberal social values—and about a variety of youth-related topics such as permissiveness by parents, by the juvenile court and by the schools.

A St. Paul City Councilperson was quoted as saying:

These troublemakers evidently may range over the entire metropolitan area free, terrorizing as



they wish, secure in their anonymity in neighborhoods far from home (Kelly, April 10, 1975).

An MTC Commissioner who was also a St. Paul City Councilperson was quoted as saying:

The downtown merchants are against it, the bus drivers' union is against it, senior citizens' groups and most of the people I have talked to have been opposed to the program . . . What else is there to hear? (Hall, May 22, 1975).

THE DEBATE FOR THE POLICY

Others offered a more balanced definition of the issue. Some pointed out that it was only a few youth who were acting in unacceptable ways. Some suggested a change in the hours during which youth could ride at no cost, while yet others suggested that a small charge—5¢ or 10¢—would screen out those youth who were not using the bus in the way adults wanted them to.

OTHER ISSUES

An issue which was not stated but which seemed omnipresent in the press accounts was: youth were not doing what adults wanted them to do. In other words, the no-fare policy seemed to have been built upon adult expectations about how youth should behave. Some youth did not behave in those ways.

adults did not intend the no-fare policy to encourage "youth gang" activity.

Inappropriate Adventure. A quote used earlier is repeated:

These troublemakers evidently may range over the entire metropolitan area free, terrorizing as they wish, secure in their anonymity in neighborhoods far from home (emphasis ours).

The words underlined are significant in this context because they suggest that some youth used the MTC buses in ways adults did not expect or approve, such as to go downtown. The general issue discussed was inappropriate use of the buses for adventure, and activity which came to be defined as inappropriate adventure.

This inappropriate adventure, in turn, is related to youth independence, lack of parental, school, and societal control of youth and, likely, to adult resentment of youth's freedom to ride around and to the free time youth had to ride around, to "be free." Similar feelings were expressed in phrases such as "joy-riding," "frivolous" use of the buses, misuse of the "privilege" or the "gift" of no-cost rides. All of these were grounded in the fear of actual youth violence and harassment of other passengers.

It was likely that youth had a variety of reasons for riding the buses to places other than to school and home. One possible reason may have been boredom—an idea popular in the 1950s and 60s as a partial cause of some delinquent behavior.

From a youth development perspective (Konopka, 1973), another reason can be suggested. Two characteristics of youth are their search for adventure and their need to experiment. Both of these are thought to be necessary for youth to develop in a healthy way. In this view, youths riding the buses around the metropolitan area outside of their neighborhoods may be defined as a positive behavior, even a necessary one. However, some people defined taking the bus or riding the bus across neighborhood lines as an instance of youth not knowing their place. This is the age old phenomenon of youth-adult tension; it is also a phrase with racial overtones.

Being Afraid. One type of young-gang delinquent activity in other cit-

Window Shopping. One example of this situation is that some youth went downtown rather than to school and then home. Some went shopping. "Window shopping," that is looking and not buying, is an acceptable adult behavior, but one which may not be acceptable if youth do it, particularly in a group of 4, 5, 6, 7 or more. This many youths of whatever race may be defined or perceived by some adults as a "gang."² The term "gang" may evoke images of danger and delinquency. It may be that when adults perceive several youth together who are Black, Chicano, or Native American they see a "gang." Such a perception is likely not uncommon, and likely works in a somewhat less severe way if the youth are white.³ It is apparent that

²This is adapted from the Meadian aphorisms: "We see things not as they are but as we are." We do not first see and then define; we define first, then see" (Kuhn, 1987).

³This perception may be more acute and more personally salient for senior citizens, particularly those who are white.



ies, which has been noted in Twin Cities' newspapers, is accosting people in downtown business areas, and not only on their own turf, as was the case during the 1950's.⁴ In communities where the fear of crime and delinquency is high, regardless of the facts, people often see their neighborhood as safe and familiar ground—a quiet harbor. To have youth from somewhere else come into the neighborhood may be to experience an “invasion by outsiders.” This “invasion” could be perceived as threatening the safety people feel in their own neighborhood. The no-fare policy facilitated access to new neighborhoods.

Perhaps the least pleasant feeling people can have is that of fear. This theme was recurrent in the press coverage of the MTC issue. For some, the feeling was one of terror. They

⁴For example, see “Detroit vigilant after lawlessness by youth gangs,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, August 18, 1976.

⁵There are technical differences between the notions of “fear and anxiety” with the former often reserved to “objective” situations and the latter used to designate feelings of fear in the absence of “objective” situations. In both cases, for the individual the feelings are present and real.

must have thought their fears were being realized by youth on the buses, particularly noisy, rowdy youth. Such fear may have been one source of the anti-youth positions taken by some who wrote to the editor.

It is not at issue whether the fear had a basis in fact, nor is there any doubt that some people were afraid or even terrified. For them the fear was real. It is important, though, to consider whether the press coverage of this public issue contributed to this fear and anxiety.

IN WHICH WAYS DID THE PRESS CONTRIBUTE TO THE PUBLIC DEBATE?

The question assumes that the press did contribute to the public debate. This assertion cannot be proven in any cause-effect way. Though we are aware that correlation is not proof of causation, we can show that the reports of actual incidents—the many letters to the editor and the general stories and editorials—were elements of active press coverage of the debate. We also sug-

gest that the press, by its very activity, helped to define the parameters, symbols, and language of the public debate.

This view is not the same as what has been called the “paranoid style” in American social thought. We do not assert that someone orchestrated the press or that some group controlled the public debate as part of a larger plan. Rather, it is suggested that the press and other participants acted in ways which resulted in the redefinition of the MTC no-fare youth policy from “experiment” to “failed experiment” and that this assessment may not have been based upon the facts about the incidence of youth delinquency and vandalism, its frequency, or its severity.

Did this kind of participation by the press contribute to the fear and anxiety felt by some? Likely it did, again for reasons which have nothing to do with the intentions of individual reporters or other newspaper staff. These reasons have to do with the very nature of newspapers and their place in our lives—with the very notion of public debate.

Part 4: Implications and Observations

IMPLICATIONS

These studies have several implications for public policy, research, and for those who simply read the paper. Some of these implications include:

- The image of delinquency is not a full, clear image of what actually occurs; it is biased toward being overly clear about theft and violent acts and being very fuzzy about status offenses and non-violent acts.
- The reality presented by the newspapers may help reinforce the idea that there will always be delinquency (i.e. the category of youth behavior which is called delinquency).
- Readers could come to expect delinquency to occur and, hence, not see it for what it really is. The image they see may be little different from the image they have in mind.
- Reporters who write about youth might be made more aware of how they contribute to the images of delinquency and of youth. Such awareness could lead to changes in practice.
- Legislators and others who help define policy about delinquency may be using images which are distorted and, consequently, which distort the policy (i.e. policy for the wrong groups, or wrong policy for the wrong group).
- Delinquents are presented as inherently bad, and, if left untreated, they will inevitably go wrong. While this may be true for some youth, it is not true for most. One consequence of this kind of attitude is that people may have limited hopes and expectations for and about an individual youth or about delinquent youth in general. As we wrote before, this is unacceptable to us.

NOTES ON THE USE OF UNSTATED COMPARISON GROUPS AND ON OPPOSITES

Minnesota newspapers present implicit images of healthy and less

healthy modes of youth development, one called delinquency and the other nameless. There are unstated comparisons between these images, and the images rarely appear together or even near one another. For example, one image might be about a high school football team and the other might be about a group of delinquent boys. The first group of boys is "good or healthy" while the second group is "bad or sick."

Rarely is it written that the boys in the "gang" might also be the same boys who are on the football team. Much delinquency is episodic and is done by youth who are not thought of as "being delinquents."

The last point is most important and is very difficult to understand. It is the idea that youth who are caught for doing delinquent acts are not delinquents in the sense that "they are" as people delinquent or bad or evil "through and through." This is the doctrine of essentialism, that delinquency is an essence, something relatively independent of the youths which they "have" in the way that one "has" a cold or one "is" ill. The "core" of the youth is not spoiled as an apple's core can spoil. This is a metaphor; people don't have a core in this sense.

The shift from act to youth is common in our everyday speech and is ag common as the belief and fact that a "good kid" can do bad things and a "bad kid" can do good things.

This unstated comparison is made more obvious because of another fact about our everyday language. It seems that English is more specific in the negative than in the positive, so that it is easier to be specific about "badness" than about "goodness."

Directly related is the observation that many words about negative acts, (e.g., "wouldn't") are, in fact, words with negative moral connotation or meaning. This is seen even more readily in phrases such as "he didn't meet his friend," "he would not go home," "he hit her and ran away."

For delinquency, all of this comes together to reinforce the images of delinquency as "badness" because of

an unstated comparison with its opposite, "goodness" or at least non-delinquency.

Another opposite implied in the comparison of delinquents and non-delinquent youth is "up and down." This is found in the idea of "career" and in the common phrase "delinquent career." In the next years, delinquent youth (if not stopped or helped) will "go down" (i.e. get worse), while non-delinquent youth will "go up" (i.e. continue "to develop in a positive direction"). This is an example of a vivid image, although one not often stated explicitly except with reference to prevention and services. This image of "trajectory," of development and of career also reinforces the comparison between delinquent and non-delinquent youth.

Finally, the unstated comparisons between good and bad youth (behavior) is made using different locations of the newspaper. Rarely does one find both on the same page or even in the same section of the newspaper. Hence, there may be subjective geographical rules used by the newspaper or the readers which function as comparative geographical structures (i.e. "here and there" in the language of opposites).

All of this is important in-so-far as newspapers contribute to and "reinforce" delinquents and, in turn as those images are used in everyday thought and work as a basis for public policy, "neighborhood reaction" to a delinquency program moving in to its area and the like.

It may be of value for newspaper staff to know about normal youth development so that comparisons can be clear. This could lead to clearer writing about delinquency and delinquent youth; and to understanding how "delinquent and non-delinquent" are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories. Put more simply, any one youth or group of youth can cross these categories going in either or both directions (sometimes even in the same day).

"READING THE PAPER" AND "MAKING THE PAPER": TWO COMMON EXPRESSIONS

There are many common sayings about newspapers. Two of these are: "reading the paper" and "making the paper." Such everyday phrases are often "shorthand" for a complex set

of ideas and meanings.¹ Therefore, we felt it was important to analyze these phrases to see how they might relate to our study of newspapers and delinquency images.

Making the Paper as Status Enhancement. Part of the speculation about the media and youth is that getting into the paper (i.e. having one's name in the newspaper) is important for many people. For some youth, it is very important to "make the paper" and participation in delinquent acts is a way of accomplishing this. In this sense, the delinquent act is a conscious, thought-out means to achieve the goal of being reported in the daily paper.²

The fact that youths appear in a news story can be status enhancing for them in relation to their peers, their friends, and others. It is a way of showing that (or feeling that) they are important. It is a way of attaining immortality because once they are in the paper, they will always be in the paper; they may die, but the paper lives "forever" in the library and the newspaper's own morgue.

Such an attitude is also common among adults who are politicians, entertainers, and "personalities." "Making the paper" is a legitimate activity: publicity and public relations people and agents do this to earn a living.

Delinquent Careers. There is another way of looking at the phrase "making the paper." It is found in the socio-psychological literature on "deviant careers." From this perspective, the publication of stories about delinquent acts is the presentation of images about being and acting delinquent. These images are constructed from details about specific delinquent acts. Hence, the reader can learn how to be a delinquent, how to live as a delinquent.

Public reactions vary with different kinds of delinquent acts and different types of delinquents. However, it is possible to learn what kinds of acts and what types of youth and youth styles the public thinks are dangerous and worthy of public action (e.g., police "crackdown" or juvenile court "toughness") from some very simple criteria. These include: "Was it on the first page of the paper?"

Was it on the first page of the inside section? Was there a picture? Was it a long or short article, etc."³

Reading the Paper. What parts do newspapers play in our everyday world, particularly, in the everyday world of family living? Park (1940) suggests that news is the expected but unpredictable. This means that the news is about routine, everyday events such as births, deaths, fires, accidents, etc., which are predictable, in an abstract sense, but which are unpredictable in a specific sense (i.e., who will die, when, and how).

There are two possible consequences of reading the paper regularly. One may be that our categories for understanding ourselves and the world are reaffirmed. "The world is as we think it is." A second possible consequence may be that the distinctions we make between "good" and "evil" (i.e. morals, values, philosophy about many things) are reaffirmed. "What was good is still good." This is important to our study because it suggests that the images of delinquency in papers will be reinforced.

WAS THE NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OBJECTIVE?

The reader of this report could ask the simple and direct question, were the news stories objective? (Are the stories I read and see on television objective?) This is one perspective for reading this report and for thinking about many other kinds of events and situations.

The word "objective" is both an everyday, non-technical word and a technical word. It is this simple fact which contributes to the confusion in public debate about the role of the media.

In non-technical terms, we say a report is objective when we are given both sides of the story; or the facts, without interpretation; or, we can be shown that it is fair to all parties. From a technical standpoint, a study or report is objective when certain techniques or methods were used to collect the data.

The non-technical uses of the word objective are confusing because any report may be said to have many sides. And, more directly, what we consider fact in our everyday life at home and at work or play cannot be

found lying around like stones on grass. Facts are made, are constructed in a social, psychological process; facts are said to be accomplished.

In this sense, and in the psychological and physiological sense of perception, all perceiving and all seeing is interpretive. There is no interpretation in "apperceiving," the physiological and chemical processes of biochemical reaction to the world outside our body (and ourself).

There are many everyday, technical languages, including newspaper, television news, literary criticism, socio-political commentary and social science (and the languages within the social sciences). There are many perspectives on the use of language within each of these social worlds and on how to learn the meaning of words used within and across these social worlds. One such perspective is used by Wittgenstein, a philosopher who wrote about language games.

For our purposes, he meant by this the confusion which results when a word with a certain meaning found in one language game is used in another language game where it means something different. "Objective" is such a word.

There is another issue found in the discussion of whether the press, the stories were objective. This is the issue of whether actual events were changed by the presence of those reporting them and, if so, does this render the media as distorters of events?

Part of the issue seems to hinge on the obvious question, "how would you know if the event would have been different." The answer can be given using a principle named after its definer, Heisenberg, a physicist. In short, the principle states that in research, the act of measuring a phenomena changes it; this paradox can be extended to many research approaches in the social sciences.

By extension and in the same technical language, we can use the Heisenberg principle to assume that most actual events which are called news have been modified in some unknown ways merely by the presence of newsmen.

Another approach to the issue is to use a technical understanding of the word news; like with the word "fact," above, "news" refers to an "accomplishment"—the construction or transformation of an "event" (some-

¹There are several social sciences and humanities which begin their analysis with everyday speech.

²The word "image" is connected here too. See e.g. Boorstin (1964).

³There is also an academic study of crime seriousness.

thing in one reality category) into something (else) in another reality category.

This transformation of reality, this construction of reality for those not present to experience it, is simply and precisely the everyday, mundane work of newspaper (and other news) workers. This is not a mystical process. It is just, simply, what some people do at work.

This perspective is not intended as a way "to get the media," nor is it intended as a criticism of the media. Rather, it is only a way of understanding news as a social institution in our society.

Now we can again go back to the question of whether the actual events can be said to have been changed by those reporting them. There were no events, there were perceived events. Those who went to report the events perceived and, in this way, categorized the happenings, the occurrences as events—a new reality. Those who transformed the happenings into events were not passive, non-reactive reporters of objective reality. They were people whose job it is to transform reality for this is what reporting is; it is "making news" in the process of perceiving and writing up a happening.

Did the youth hit the old lady? Let's say yes, he did. Where then is the transformation and construction? It is in the simple shift from "hit" to "crime" or "event" or "news" or "fact" in a news story. It is a "fact" (in the sense of an agreed upon statement of what occurred) that the boy hit the lady. When a fact of this kind (quality) is put in a newspaper (or television) story or report, it becomes a fact of another kind (quality).

This second kind of fact is a different language game than the first kind of fact. A newspaper fact can only be accomplished by newspeople and herein lies (part of) its difference.

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Appendix A: The Study

The purpose of this study was to learn the images of juvenile delinquency and of juvenile delinquents presented in Minnesota newspapers. The results of the study have been presented. Here we discuss how the study was done and some related topics.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Using a common distinction, this study was on the level of exploratory/descriptive research. For example, no formal hypotheses were constructed or used. Instead, we did content analyses. This is a common approach for working with qualitative data, particularly with written materials, and has a history of use in social science studies.

In this study we developed "probe" questions and used them as eye-glasses to read the newspapers. These came from our work in youth development (e.g., Konopka 1973), and from the literature about delinquency, image, and newspapers. The three basic questions which guided the study were:

1. What images of juvenile delinquency are found in the major Twin Cities newspapers?
2. What images of delinquent youth are found in the major Twin Cities papers?
3. What views of youth development are presented in these newspapers?

The other, narrower questions developed and used in the research are found throughout the text.

To define what would be considered a newspaper for this study, we secured a list from the Minnesota Newspaper Association; any paper listed was considered a newspaper.¹

Sampling. Given the three months available in which to do the study, it was impossible to read every page of every newspaper for a full year. It was decided to stipulate a period of sufficient duration to cover public

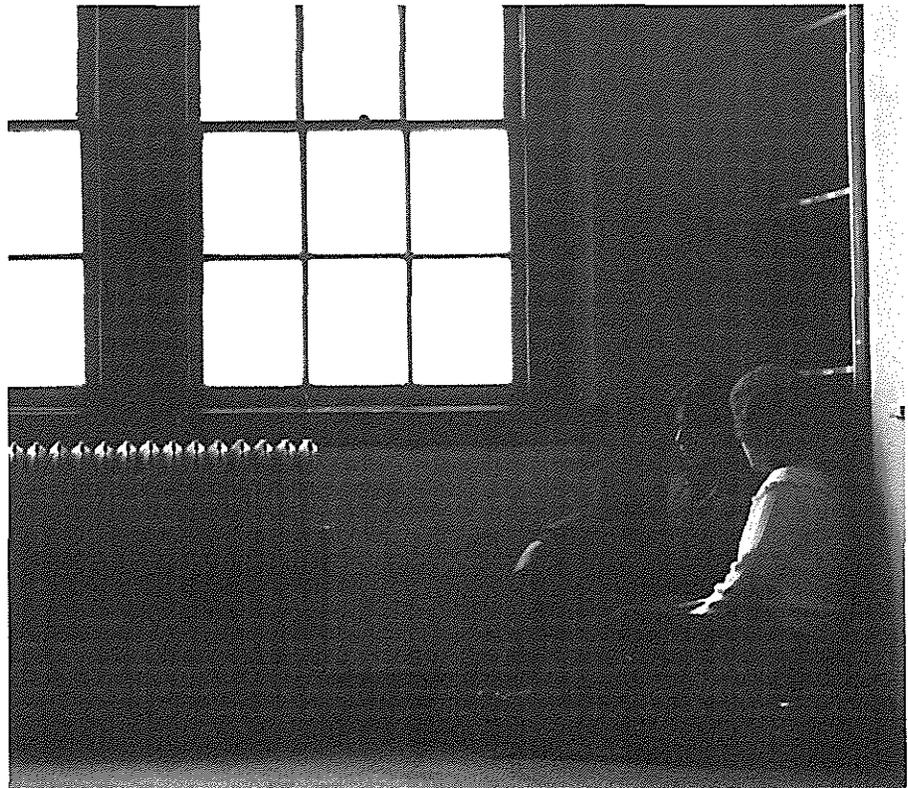
discussion of delinquency and to guard against bias that might be caused by minor or major delinquent crime waves or other seasonal phenomena.² The year July 1, 1975 to June 30, 1976 was chosen.

Though this was primarily a study of Twin Cities papers, we decided to look at other state papers as well. Our decision about which geographic areas to cover was, to a large extent, also a decision to include both dailies and weeklies. This is because small cities and towns in Minnesota frequently have only a weekly local paper, while all the medium and large cities have daily newspapers. The local paper for non-urban areas most often reports on events throughout a county, while the dailies in the city are oriented primarily to city issues. However, as will be shown, these city dailies do include reports from contiguous counties, and, in some way, are statewide dailies.

We began our work under the assumption that it would be possible to find a central, nearby location which collected, stored, and allowed access to all of the state's newspapers, and which would have equipment for photo duplication of newspaper text. Ideally, we also hoped to find an index to each newspaper. However we ran into difficulties. For example, the Minnesota Historical Society had the papers, but there was no index. And we learned that most Minnesota newspapers do not make indexes of their content.

In our search, we learned that select public agencies and small, private clipping services have a practice of clipping select categories of newspaper articles. We decided to pursue this angle.

²Given the Minnesota climate of winter and summer extremes, it is possible that certain acts are more likely to occur or to be found out at certain times of the year.



¹Some community newspapers were not listed, nor were all "ethnic" newspapers known.

To define (and hence "see") youths as delinquents is, paradoxically, not to see the individual youths in their uniqueness; it is to "see" the image of a delinquent.

Sample Articles; Sample Clippings. It was learned that, among others, the Minnesota State Department of Corrections subscribed to a commercial clipping service, as did the non-profit, private Correctional Services of Minnesota (Minneapolis).

The Minnesota State Legislature Reference Library did its own clipping. The Metropolitan Transit Commission also had clips of articles about youth vandalism on the buses in the Twin Cities. A review of these sets of clips (and, for the Legislature, these categories of clips) suggested that it would be practical to use clippings in this study. Contact was made with commercial clipping services to learn their subscribers during the study period so as to obtain clippings about delinquency.

It was decided to use the clips of the State Legislature Reference Library because the categories for storage included a wide range of delinquent stories, far wider than the clips of any other agency. The legislative aide of a state representative who chaired a House Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, helped us

to gain open and full access to these clips.³

All clips in the appropriate categories were photocopied. The public library indexes were used to check the kind and number of clips from Twin Cities newspapers and articles not included in the clips were photocopied from microfilm copies of these four newspapers.

The decision to use clips was made for practical reasons of time and funds. Once made, this decision in turn determined the sample of newspapers included.⁴

Possible Sampling Bias. At least five types of sampling bias are possible because of the use of clips. First, the use of the "convenience sample" of clips excluded a theoretically derived sampling plan and, hence, excluded some newspapers and included others on grounds irrelevant

³Representative Ken Nelson, Minneapolis

⁴The Legislature Reference Library did not include all Minnesota newspapers listed by the Minnesota Publishers Association.





to this study. In addition, it is not totally clear whether all editions of the sample newspapers were clipped for every day or week during the study period. And, it is not clear whether all sections of all newspapers (every edition) were clipped. Last, different people clipped the articles.

Given the lack of explicit criteria for clipping articles for the catego-

ries of delinquency, the use of different people to clip, and the absence of any orientation to delinquency for the clippers, it is likely that there is relatively low inter-clipper reliability for certain newspaper reports. By cross-checking the clippings with the library index, an effort was made to be as complete as possible.

Content Validity. Content validity is a relevant type of validity here.

This is the “representativeness or sampling adequacy of the content...” (emphasis in original) (Kerlinger, 1964). Said in a slightly different way by the same author, “content validation is guided by the question: Is the substance or content of this measure representative of the content or the universe of content of the property being measured.”

It is argued that the clips are likely to have high content validity for “normatively defined delinquent acts” and relatively low content validity for “marginal delinquent acts.” That is, it is likely that delinquent acts, such as group attacks, vandalism, murder and other serious acts, appear in all papers about as often as in our sample. Status offenses and other minor acts either appear less often than in our sample or are fully excluded.

The data from the set of clips, then, probably accurately represents the total articles about acts which people on the street would call delinquency. It is probably an inaccurate representation of articles about marginal delinquent acts, editorials, and general articles about delinquency. Consequently, the sampling bias should result in a relatively higher number of reports about more serious delinquent acts and relatively fewer reports about less serious delinquent acts. (This is what was found.)

Concurrent Validity. The last paragraph was a conclusion based on reasoning. It is possible to partially test it. Such a test would be of “concurrent validity” (Kerlinger, 1967). This validity is checked by “prediction to an outside criterion.” Here, this is the kind and number of recorded delinquent acts.

There are several problems in such a check. Among these, the most important are:

- not all acts are recognized and reported
- in those reported, a youth is not always apprehended
- of those youth apprehended, not all have juvenile court petitions
- of those petitions, not all are accepted by the court
- of those petitions accepted by the court, not all are recorded as discrete acts for multiple petitions can be used
- of those petitions accepted and reported as discrete acts, no tabula-



tion is reported statewide on the number of youth involved.

For these and other reasons concerning the public data system about juvenile justice in Minnesota (and elsewhere), it is only possible to obtain data about delinquency which is of questionable completeness and accuracy. Hence, only approximations are possible.

A NOTE ABOUT THE WORD "IMAGE" AS USED IN THIS STUDY

The word "image" is used in the titles of a variety of books (e.g. Boorstin, 1964; Fore, 1970; Hartshorne, 1968; Matson, 1966). It has several formal meanings. Among these, two are important here.

The first is that "image" means a copy of something with the implications that this copy is less than the original—it is not authentic. The second is a picture in the mind, one constructed not by direct perception, but by memory or imagination (Oxford English Dictionary; Cleavenger, 1966). Image as used here means an "idea about" something, an idea in our minds.⁵

We used the word and idea "image" in our study because it is a common, nontechnical word which is found in the everyday speech of people who

⁵Image is used here as a metaphor, for some. Others "see" this differently. Indeed a basic mode of thinking is visual (Arnheim, 1971). Images are often so obvious that these are "unseen" i.e. not "thought of." This is also a point of confluence between our language of "seeing," the early visual theory of the mind and the place of "cliche."

take its utility as an idea and its meaning in conversation for granted. It was used because it is used (it works).

Image is in some way a part of our thinking process. Thought is inconceivable without images. So, if one has images of delinquency or delinquents, these will definitely and by definition (i.e. *a priori*) be part of one's thinking about delinquency and delinquents. These images are one of the specific sources of our actions about individual youth who have committed delinquent acts and about delinquent youth in general. If the images used in everyday thought about delinquency are, in fact, a basis for individual and group action and reaction, it becomes crucial to know what these images are and to understand how we use these to feel, think, plan, and act.

CONSTRUCTING IMAGES OF DELINQUENTS

A study of the images of youth presented in the press would require the researcher to locate all stories wherever they appeared in the newspaper. Within such a context, the study of images of delinquents would result in a mix of images of kids in trouble, troubled kids, and kids who are doing good things.

This is not the context presented herein, for this is a study only of delinquent images. The reader is reminded of this because it is easy to forget that youth who are caught doing delinquent acts and are peti-

tioned for these are a very small part of those who engage in delinquent acts. And, crucially, youth who engage in delinquent acts can be the very same youth who also do good things (or have personal troubles).

Images of Delinquents. Two ideas are included in the notion of the social construction of images of delinquents. One idea is that an individual's sense of reality is built up from social information obtained during life and subjectively interpreted. The second idea is that social phenomena, such as delinquency (with their images, symbols, metaphors, language etc.) are constructed. That is, people make laws which define certain behaviors as illegal and as morally "bad" and, in so doing, construct categories of acts and of people. By virtue of their membership in these categories (e.g. being caught for breaking the law) people come to be defined and seen as delinquents and as "bad."

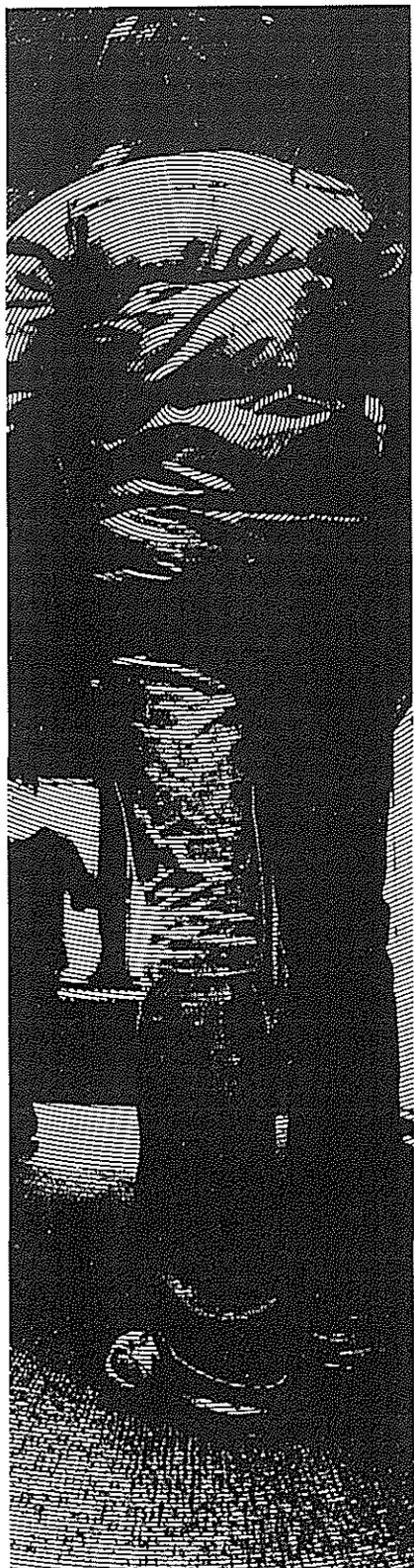
Images of delinquents, then, are both a source and a result of personal and social realities. These realities have profound consequences for the population at large and for the population of delinquent youth. To define (and hence "see") youths as delinquents is, paradoxically, not to see the individual youths in their uniqueness; it is to "see" the image of a delinquent.

Constructing and Maintaining Images. There is a recent literature on journalism which argues that the press "manufactures" (Cohen and Young, 1973) or makes news (Roshco, 1975). That is, news does not exist out there waiting to be reported, but instead is created or constructed by reporters or other participants.

News is socially constructed; newspapers present this constructed reality for those who were not there to experience it.⁶ If delinquency news is constructed in this sense, and if the images of delinquency are constructed also, then the press has a crucial part at least in the way delinquency is thought about, and, in turn, in the public policies formulated to prevent delinquency and the services developed to treat delinquent youth.

⁶This view is close to the social constructionist view of juvenile crime. Put simply, public data about youth crime results from a social process in which many people make concrete decisions about the youth.

Appendix B: Special Notes For Youth Workers



HOW TO USE THIS PRODUCT

We expect to find directions on a box to tell us how to use a product the way it was intended to be used. In a similar sense, we are used to being given directions about how to use the results of research. And the reader who is familiar with natural science, agricultural and most social science research reports already knows to look at the research findings, at the research design, at the study population, at the instruments used, etc. Readers with this kind of knowledge may have trouble with this report.

A different approach is presented here about how to use this product—the report of a study. Rather than beginning with the report, we suggest that you begin with yourself, the reader.

How you approach this report is likely related to what you want to get out of it and your situation at work, at home, in your community.

We approach this and all reports based on our purpose(s)-at-hand. This is our conscious reason for looking at the report. In a simple sense, our purpose(s)-at-hand can be general or specific.

It is general when we read the report not to find a specific answer to a question, but rather to scan it, because the title “caught our eye” or we have thought about the topic.

Our purpose(s)-at-hand are specific when we are looking for an answer to a particular question; when we are trying to solve a problem; or trying “to get unstuck” in our work with some youth; or we’re “looking for ideas” about how to do a particular something a new way, like growing a garden.

Being aware of one’s purpose(s)-at-hand is one place to begin a personal assessment to enhance utilization.

Personal Assessment. Personal assessment is a way to help you ground research utilization to what you want to get from the research

report. This suggests that what you will look for in a research report and what you will get out of or take from a research report will depend on your purpose(s)-at-hand.

Put another way, the whole report can be used as a field to pick in; what is a “weed” and what is “grass,” what is useful and what is irrelevant depends upon what you want or need at the moment. Your situation, your purpose(s)-at-hand define what might be useful to you.

Put now as two rules-of-thumb:

1. The reader not the report defines what can be utilized;
2. The reader’s purpose(s)-at-hand define what might be useful.

Purpose(s)-at-hand. What are my purpose(s) for reading this, now? Are these “general,” as above, or are these “specific?” Am I scanning; or am I looking for an answer to a particular question?

These questions can be grounded in another way: Which of me is reading this research report? Is it me the professional youthworker; or me the parent; or me the adult leader in a church group; or me the researcher about youth; or me the housewife; or me the grown-up who was once a teenager; or...Some people read as one of these, while others read in two or more roles. The more roles one is reading in, the more perspectives one has on what s(he) is reading. This is neither “good” or “bad.” It is just something to be aware of. I’m pretty clear about how I am orienting to the report when I’m clear about my role(s) and my purpose(s) at hand.

As I begin to read the report, I can try to be aware of which people, buildings, scenes come to mind (as pictures). For example: when I am reading research as a youthworker who has a problem with a group of six adolescent girls, I may see their faces in my mind as I read; I may see also the place where I work, and the last time I was with these youth.

Another way to enhance utilization is to enhance reading comprehension. Questions are a good way to do this. These questions can be written down before, during or after the reading; these can be used anytime while you read; and these can be general or specific.

It is useful to write questions which make your own purpose(s)-at-hand real. Questions are a way to put these purpose(s)-at-hand to work. For example:

I am a youth worker who is reading this report on delinquent images as a youth worker who is working with a group of six delinquent girls. To me, these adolescents seem to be acting out an image of "bad girl" which they have in their minds. My hunch is that I can help them choose whether to change how they present themselves; and in this way help them keep out of trouble. I'm looking for a way to get at the whole thing of image.

- What is an "image?"
- Is it "part" of a person?
- How does "image" develop?
- Is "image" the same as "self-image?"
- Is there something in this study which will suggest to me (or which

I can use) to understand more about these kids?

- What does the report suggest that I do about these teenagers?
- What ideas (about these kids) come to mind as I read?
- What ideas (about working with these kids) come to mind as I read?
- What ideas about kids (and/or working with them) come to mind as I read?

Where can I look for answers to my questions? Anywhere in the research report. "What will the answer look like when I find it?" You may literally look for an answer and find an answer. More likely, you will read and get ideas, images, notions, insights, etc. These will occur to you as you try to construct an answer to your question and/or as you think about your problem or situation or stucked-ness.

Try to look at the words, photos, numbers, type, page layout and all other aspects of the page in front of you as you read. Each may stimulate an idea; and each aspect of the page may stimulate an idea; and each aspect of the page may stimulate certain kinds of ideas.

For example: The numbers might stimulate ideas about the size of your group; the photographs may bring to mind the faces of the kids

as they "look tough." The type size may help make certain words "pop-out" at you; etc.

Put another way, try to experience each page you look at and each aspect of every page. By doing this with awareness, you may "get an idea," and have an answer; or a hunch.

The Utilization Hunch (or Utilization Hypothesis). Eureka: An Answer! You find or make an answer to your question. Great! But...will the answer work?

When you have found an answer to your question, you have a utilization hunch or a utilization hypothesis. You believe that this idea when put into practice will solve your problem or help you get unstuck or give you some ideas. The only way you know whether this will work is to try it.

Utilization as Action Research. Try it! Now, you have to take this idea, these words, and turn them into, translate them: (operationalize them), transform them, or in some way implement them in a whole other language and idiom: from words to action.

Finally, monitor or in some way report and study how you put the words into actions and what the consequences of the actions were.

Thoughts

FOUR EMERGENT SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Diversions. Prevention has always been a central idea (and ideology) in juvenile delinquency. Recent public discussion about the prevention of delinquency concerns the "diversion" of youth from the juvenile justice system and, failing that, the limitation of youth "penetration into" that system.

Prevention, in these forms, is current federal, state, and municipal policy. The major organizational expression of this preventive approach is the Youth Service Bureau.

Funds for many of these prevention programs come from the federal government (Law Enforcement Assistance Administration) to state crime commissions and then to local governments or to voluntary social agencies or voluntary associations.

Theoretical rationale for diversion is found in "labeling theory" in sociology and other social science writings. Among the empirical studies that support this approach, the work of Wolfgang, et al. (1972) is a recent classic. Active debate about this theory and research is found in the journal, *Social Problems* and in the work of Schur (1965, 1971, 1973).

In oversimplified terms, the central thesis of this view is that formal contact by youth with the juvenile justice system may have severe short and long term consequences for them. These consequences are often more serious for the youth in their social world than the original illegal act. The consequences may be to youth self-image or self-concept, or in turn, to their interpersonal relations with significant others (family, friends, teachers, etc.). Further exposure to "the system" is seen as a risk because it may mean the initiation of a juvenile delinquent "career" and, ultimately, an adult criminal career.

The central notion of youth diversion (in its various names) as found

in Youth Service Bureaus (YSB) and similar agencies and programs is creating, sustaining, and using a social network of contacts by YSB staff. Such a network would include on the one hand, actors in the juvenile justice system, such as police, juvenile judges, probation officers and other staff of geographically proximate human service agencies, especially in the schools; and on the other hand, adult voluntary associations in the neighborhood, youth groups, and individual families. The purpose of these networks of contacts is to encourage youth and adults to bring youth to the YSB for counseling before a delinquent act occurs or immediately after such an act. In the latter case, referrals from police are valued.

The YSB also creates new services as needed or wanted. These might include job testing, placement and counseling, recreation, remedial education, etc.

The notion of prevention is operationalized in programs in the community in which youth live. This community focus follows other recent social programs such as Community Action Program of the War on Poverty and the Model Cities Program, which make use of local and ideological supports in the symbols community and neighborhood.

Closing the Institution. A second social movement is oriented away from the community of residence to the juvenile institution. Its goal is to close existing large, mass public institutions serving youth. These institutions are called variously "correctional facilities," "youth prisons," or "reformatories." They can be distinguished from Reception and Diagnostic Centers (R & D), which are way-stations to the institutions, and from "holding facilities" for juveniles awaiting court action or under public welfare supervision or protection. The institutions may be admin-

istered by the state, county, or municipality as can the R & D centers and other agencies.

The major thesis of this movement is that these large, mass facilities are harmful for youth and that attempts to change the quality of care within them has had limited success. Frequently, these institutions are geographically remote from the youth's community of residence, and hence from parents and others who could support positive reintegration "into society," i.e., "into the community."

A second goal of this movement is to move youth closer to their community of residence, and, if necessary, to smaller social environments such as group homes, foster homes, or non-public youth agencies such as those of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, the Salvation Army, or the Volunteers of America. Proponents of closing mass institutions acknowledge that some youth might require placement in a more secure facility than a group home. In these instances they would reserve the right to selectively use a redesigned, small institution for these youth.

A large literature of descriptions, action efforts, and studies of these institutions is available. The state of

couraged this movement when it closed its mass, youth institutions.

Youth Rights. A third current social movement is youth (and children's) rights. This includes the social movements for student rights as found in the high schools and for patient rights as found in medical and health facilities, particularly college health programs and youth clinics (including the free clinics).

One central notion of this movement is that youth should have by law, rights that would protect them from the inappropriate use of adult authority in major social institutions, such as the family and the school. Such protection is thought necessary in at least two instances: when adult authority acts against the interests of the youth and when youth are members of a legally sanctioned control agency, such as a mental hospital or youth institution. An example of the first instance might be an abuse of parental authority. This is the type of act usually subsumed under child welfare law and family law. An example of the second instance includes issues discussed as student rights, patient rights and, recently, as the right to treatment.

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