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John W. Kinch

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CONTINUITIES IN THE STUDY OF DELINQUENT TYPES

JOHN W. KINCH*

The author is Assistant Professor of Sociology in San Francisco State College. He previously served on the faculty of the University of Washington, where he obtained his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees.

The great interest shown by criminologists in the study of typologies in recent years is evidenced by the number of articles on the subject published in this *Journal* alone. In the following paper, Professor Kinch analyzes the nature of previous typological analyses of juvenile delinquents and points out the need for a synthesis of typological theory. He proposes a method by which these previous studies can be collated and compared and outlines the factors which must be explored in order to develop a systematic typological theory of juvenile delinquency.—EDITOR.

One prominent theme in delinquency study in the past decade has been the claim that delinquency consists of a number of fundamentally different types of behavior, and that no single explanation can satisfactorily deal with all of this varied behavior. This view comes from a variety of sources—sociologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and others. Yet, even with the sizeable store of speculative and research literature that has accumulated in recent years, very few attempts have been made to take this typological orientation further than a briefly-articulated viewpoint. General arguments have been advanced that delinquency is comprised of types, without specifying the nature of these types. Or, in some instances, cryptic, anecdotal, and ambiguous typological schemes have been suggested.

Perhaps the stage is set for some advances in typological analysis. This paper is an attempt to point some directions for typological theory. The paper does two things. First, it sets out a specific logic by means of which the typologies which have appeared in the literature can be collated. The purpose in this section is to determine the extent to which the diverse typological statements in the existing literature overlap—to what extent do different observers appear to be talking about similar delinquent behavior patterns? This section represents the first stage of mature typological analysis, in which the range of behavior patterns to be accounted for in a typological theory is indicated.

After the existing typologies of delinquency

* The author is especially obligated to Don C. Gibbons, whose helpful suggestions pervade the entire paper. I am also indebted to Clarence C. Schrag, Stanton Wheeler, Peter G. Garabedian, and Walter Gerson for reading and commenting on an earlier draft of this paper.

have been assembled, the paper will suggest some of the considerations which are involved in any attempt to develop a systematic and inclusive typological theory of delinquency. This paper is not a statement of such a theory, but instead represents some of the groundwork which precedes systematic theory. The paper does suggest some of the concepts which could be fruitfully applied in a typological theory.

Some sophisticated and provocative work is now going on in the area of typological theory. Cohen and Short,¹ Cloward and Ohlin,² and others³ are presently involved in clarifying the nature of gang delinquency. In fact, this work is particularly noticeable by contrast to the inactivity in other areas of etiological analysis, in the case of both juvenile and adult offenders. However, subcultural analysis of gang delinquency does not exhaust the full range of problems of explanation. One of the purposes of the present discussion is to show that there are other forms of delinquency which cry out for explanation.

A LOGIC FOR COLLATING EXISTING TYPOLOGIES

It is not uncommon today for writers in the field of delinquency to talk in terms of a few outstanding "types" of delinquents. These types when examined in detail seem to be defined as clusters of many different attributes. There are at least fifteen instances of typological statements in the literature in which a set of delinquent types has been advanced.⁴ In a number of these the defining attri-

¹ E.g., Cohen & Short, *Research in Delinquent Subcultures*, 14 J. SOCIAL ISSUES 20 (1958).

² CLOWARD & OHLIN, *DELINQUENCY AND OPPORTUNITY* (1960).

³ Miller, *Lower-Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency*, 14 J. SOCIAL ISSUES 5 (1958).

⁴ See *infra*, note 6.

butes of the types are not specifically indicated. Also, the underlying theories, usually implicit, on which these are based are not clear. As a result, collation of these typologies might initially appear to be either impossible, or if possible, of dubious value.

However, it may be that these fifteen typologies are less diverse than first appearances might suggest. It is the contention of this author that these classifications share at least one defining attribute in common. Examination of these typologies suggests that one element used to differentiate delinquents into types has to do with the offender's orientation to the larger society and to delinquent groups as major reference groups. For example, one category of delinquent types consists of those delinquents who have attenuated loyalty to the norms of the larger society, but who are oriented to delinquent peers. The types in this category are labeled variously as, for example, the subcultural deviant, pseudo-social boy,⁵ and the gang delinquent. Systematically, the variations of delinquent patterns defined in these terms are indicated in Table I.⁶ This should not be thought of as a typology in itself, but rather a means by which the existing typologies can be classified.

In applying this classification, two questions are concerned. First, to what extent are the delinquents involved in a delinquent group, i.e., do they adhere to the norms which can be identified as delinquent? Second, are the delinquents relatively integrated members of the larger society, i.e., do they identify with "middle class" conventional values? There are three categories of delinquents that result from this classification scheme: "pro-social delinquents," who identify with the larger society; "anti-social delinquents," who fail to identify with the relevant parts of the value system

⁵ The scheme utilizes two assumptions that are open to attack. First, it is assumed that the individual who uses one kind of reference group is excluded from using the other kind. This assumption can be defended only when it is understood that the scheme refers to the relevant parts of the value system—those parts within which the delinquent norms contradict the norms of the larger society. At this point it becomes a matter of definition—an important matter, but outside the scope of this paper.

The second assumption that deserves consideration is the contention that what might appear to be a continuous variable—use of a reference group—can be meaningfully dichotomized. It could be argued that all delinquents use both kinds of reference groups to some extent and that the concern is with the degree to which either kind is used. The justification here is a pragmatic one in that the use of the dichotomy provides a technique for handling this variable which proves worthwhile and at the same time does not violate any notion about the nature of reference groups.

TABLE I
BASIS FOR A CLASSIFICATION OF
DELINQUENT TYPOLOGIES

Name of Type	Reference Groups	
	Larger Society	Delinquent Groups
I. Pro-social delinquent.....	+	-
II. Anti-social delinquent.....	-	+
III. A-social delinquent.....	-	-

+ indicates orientation towards the reference groups.

- indicates lack of orientation towards the reference groups.

of the larger society, but use delinquent groups as their reference groups; and "a-social delinquents," who fail to use either kind of reference group as a source of their values and attitudes.

Consistency in the Literature

Examination of the literature reveals the possibility of classifying most of the typologies according to the scheme in Table I. In light of the variant theoretical frameworks used in these studies it is rather surprising to find the number of reports that can be successfully classified. One is impressed with the number of independent studies which seem to be dealing with the same or very similar typologies. Table II⁶ presents the classifica-

⁶ Following are the references to the citations in Table II: ABRAHAMSEN, WHO ARE THE GUILTY? (1952); ARGOW, *A Proposed Functional Classification of Criminal Behavior*, 4 J. CRIMINAL PSYCHOPATHOLOGY 687 (1943); BLOCK & FLYNN, DELINQUENCY: THE JUVENILE OFFENDER IN AMERICA TODAY (1956); EDELSTON, THE EARLIEST STAGE OF DELINQUENCY (1952); ESMAN, *Diagnostic Categories of Delinquency*, 1 NPPA J. 113 (1955); FRIEDLANDER, THE PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL APPROACH TO JUVENILE DELINQUENCY (1947); GIBBONS & GARRITY, *The Sociology of Delinquent Behavior* (unpublished manuscript); HIRSCHBERG, *The Socialized Delinquent*, 6 NERVOUS CHILD 447 (1947); (Richard L. Jenkins has published his work with several authors, and the next six references all pertain to his contributions) JENKINS, BREAKING PATTERNS OF DEFEAT (1954); HEWITT & JENKINS, FUNDAMENTAL PATTERNS OF MALADJUSTMENT (1936); JENKINS & GLICKMAN, *Patterns of Personality Organization Among Delinquents*, 6 NERVOUS CHILD 329 (1947), and *Common Syndromes in Child Psychiatry*, 16 AM. J. ORTHOPSYCHIATRY 244 (1946); JENKINS & HEWITT, *Types of Personality Structures Encountered in Child Guidance Clinics*, 14 AM. J. ORTHOPSYCHIATRY 84 (1944); LOIT & JENKINS, *Patterns of Maladjustment in Children*, 51 J. CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY 16 (1953); MUELLER, *An Objective Approach to a Behavioral Classification of Juvenile Delinquents* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Psychology, University of Washington, 1959); REDL & WINEMAN, CHILDREN WHO HATE (1951); REISS, *Social Correlates of Psychological Types of Delinquency*, 17 AM. SOCIOLOGICAL REV. 710 (1952);

TABLE II
SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPOLOGIES OF DELINQUENTS AS FOUND IN THE LITERATURE

Authors	Type I	Type II	Type III
Present discussion.....	Pro-social	Anti-social	A-social
Abrahamsen.....	Situational accidental offenders	Associational offenders	Genuine psychopath
Argow.....	Situationally provoked syndrome	Associated learning syndrome	Compensatory syndrome
Bloch and Flynn.....		Cultural deviant	Unsocialized aggressive; acting out neurotic
Edelstin.....	Benign delinquency	Anti-social behavior based on environmental problems	Character defect; psychopathic and infantile
Esman.....	Adolescent crisis delinquent	Dyssocial delinquent	Anti-social delinquent
Friedlander.....	Puberty offender	True criminal	Anti-social character; aggressive; psychopathic youth
Gibbons and Garrity.....	Casual delinquent	Gang offender A. Predatory theft B. Aggressive street gang C. Urban Negro	Aggressive delinquent
Hirschberg.....		Socialized delinquent	Unsocialized aggressive
Jenkins.....		Socialized delinquent	Unsocialized aggressive delinquent
Mueller.....	Accidental delinquent	Socialized delinquent A. "Good" controls B. "Bad" controls	Unsocialized aggressive delinquent
Redl and Wineman.....		Genuine delinquent super-ego disturbance	Severe impulse disturbances; disturbances in aggression
Reiss.....	Relatively integrated	Relatively defective super-ego control	Weak ego; highly aggressive
Tappan.....	Acute criminal (accidental)	Normal or chronic delinquent	Psychopathic delinquent
Topping.....		Pseudo-social boy	Aggressive delinquent
Weinberg.....		Subcultural deviant	"True" psychopath

tion of the types from the various studies considered utilizing the scheme presented in Table I. Note that types II and III appear in almost all the studies, with type I not infrequently reported.

TAPPAN, JUVENILE DELINQUENCY (1949); Topping, *Case Studies of Aggressive Delinquents*, 11 AM. J. ORTHOPSYCHIATRY 485 (1941), and *Treatment of the Pseudo-Social Boy*, 13 AM. J. ORTHOPSYCHIATRY 353 (1943); WEINBERG, SOCIETY AND PERSONALITY DISORDERS (1952).

The studies presented in Table II all deal with two or more types. There are a great number of studies dealing with only one type or sub-type which are not classified here. Although these are too numerous to list, the following provide some of the better examples: Bandura & Walters, *Dependency Conflicts in Aggressive Delinquents*, 14 J. SOCIAL ISSUES 52 (1958); Cohen & Short, *supra* note 1; Miller, *supra* note 3; CLOWARD & OHLIN, *op. cit. supra* note 2; and Wattenberg & Balistrieri, *Gang Membership and Juvenile Misconduct*, 15 AM. SOCIOLOGICAL REV. 744 (1950).

The summary table points out similarities found in the studies of delinquent types when a classification scheme is used. Agreement such as this suggests the possibility that the various authors are dealing with real types, which exhibit basically similar patterns of behavior within themselves and are fundamentally different from each other. Further it suggests that one dimension, or defining factor, that can be helpful in understanding types of delinquents may have to do with reference groups. This, of course, is only one in a cluster of different attributes which go into defining the specific type. As other factors are added to the scheme the final analysis will define a number of types under each of the three categories mentioned here. Later, this paper will suggest other attributes which might be useful in a typology; however, at

this point the idea of reference groups is particularly useful in pointing out the consistency found in the literature.

There are some important implications of this agreement on types. There would seem to be little justification for testing hypotheses to the effect that delinquency is not homogeneous. This has been shown. Research could legitimately start with the assumption that types do exist and go on from there. Attempts to do this have met with some degree of success. Mueller showed that delinquent types varied in their responses to various kinds of treatment assignments, some types successfully responding to one kind of treatment, while others successfully responded to other assignments.⁷ The present author's work dealing with the self-concepts of delinquents indicated the possibility of building upon the available knowledge on delinquent types to develop a better understanding of the individuals within each type.⁸

The eventual growth of our knowledge in this area will rely on the development of a meaningful theory based on the available information which can be used to guide further research. Jenkins' work in this area is encouraging.⁹ The presentation of Gibbons and Garrity in a yet unpublished textbook on delinquency shows even more promise from a sociological standpoint.¹⁰ The present paper suggests a possible foundation upon which a typological theory might be based.

PROBLEMS FOR THEORY AND RESEARCH

We contend that the existence of types has been established, but where does this lead us? Do we know explicitly what the defining attributes are? Do we know what causes these varying patterns of behavior? Simply because we have a scheme to classify the various types studied so far does not indicate that we have isolated either a cause or a defining factor.

A good typological theory of delinquency, as well as fulfilling the criteria that apply to any scientific theory, should in addition fulfill the following criteria:

⁷ Mueller, *An Objective Approach to a Behavioral Classification of Juvenile Delinquents* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Psychology, University of Washington, 1959).

⁸ Kinch, *Certain Social-Psychological Aspects of Types of Juvenile Delinquents* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Washington, 1959).

⁹ JENKINS, *BREAKING PATTERNS OF DEFEAT* (1954).

¹⁰ Gibbons & Garrity, *The Sociology of Delinquent Behavior* (unpublished manuscript).

(1) The theory should clearly specify the characteristics of the delinquent types. The theory should distinguish between those factors used in defining the type and the correlates of those factors, i.e., the truth claims that may be made about the types.

(2) The theory should describe the etiological process or processes involved within each type. It should specify the causal factors that lead to the behavior that classifies the delinquent into one type or another.

(3) A good theory will indicate the processes which explain the relationship between types. It is a mistake to assume that the typological approach necessarily requires a separate theory for each type. If at all possible the theory should use the same concepts to explain each type, the difference between types being explained in terms of different relationships between the same concepts.

Stated in an overly simplified manner: the theory must specify the factors which define the types, it must indicate the causal factors, and if possible it should indicate the way in which these factors interrelate.¹¹

Definitional Factors

One of the present concerns in theory building should be a clarification of the defining attributes of delinquent types. At this point it is very important that a clear distinction be made between what Zetterberg calls "propositions that are definitions and propositions that are hypotheses."¹² The definitions of the types must not be confused with the truth claims made about them. By keeping these two aspects of theory straight it is possible to test empirical hypotheses concerning the relationship between the types and descriptive characteristics of various kinds.¹³ The following hypothesis provides an example: "Pro-social delinquents, as defined by their orientation towards the larger society as a reference group, are likely to come from middle-class homes and conceive of themselves as non-delinquents." Accumulation of knowledge in this manner may provide information for clarifying the definitions used and for

¹¹ In this discussion of typological theory the author was influenced by the work of Gibbons and Garrity in their text book, *supra* note 10, and in their article *Definition and Analysis of Certain Criminal Types*, 53 J. CRIM. L., C. & P.S. 27 (1962).

¹² Zetterberg, *On Axiomatic Theories in Sociology*, in LAZARSFELD & ROSENBERG, *THE LANGUAGE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH* (1955).

¹³ Reiss, *Social Correlates of Psychological Types of Delinquency*, 17 AM. SOCIOLOGICAL REV. 710 (1952).

developing more precise definitions. That is, if the above hypothesis is confirmed, it may be well to add the factor, non-delinquent self-concept, to the definition, thereby making it more precise.

At present it is possible to suggest some concepts that might be involved in this aspect of a typological theory of delinquency; however it is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt to suggest *how* these factors are involved. Present social psychological approaches to delinquency seem to indicate that the following concepts would be involved in a complete definition of delinquent types:

- a. Offense patterns—The type of behavior that brings the delinquent to the attention of the law enforcement agencies ought to be considered.
- b. Self-concept—Variations in the way the delinquents see themselves may have a bearing on the type of delinquent they are.
- c. Reference groups—The reference groups the delinquents are oriented towards may be helpful in classifying their behavior.

The literature makes it clear that these three variables are interrelated, but it is the contention here that they are distinct enough so that each will make a significant contribution to a definition of delinquent types.

Causal Factors

The search for etiological factors is dependent on the definitional considerations above; however, it need not wait for the final answer in order to get started. As mentioned earlier a significant amount of work is now going on in the area of gang delinquency (the anti-social delinquents). Particular need for etiological research and theory construction covering the *total range* of delinquent types seems quite apparent.

The present store of knowledge suggests some concepts that seem to have a bearing on the causes of delinquency. The list submitted here may prove suggestive, but in no way should be taken as conclusive:

(1) Social class—Class differences are likely to prove discriminating factors, not only between delinquents and non-delinquents, but also between the types of delinquents. Class conflict has been suggested as an important aspect of this variable. For example, Cohen's explanation of the gang delinquent can be seen as the use of the middle

class as a negative reference group by working class boys.¹⁴

(2) Family background—There is a good deal of evidence that suggests that the kinds of treatment, training, and attitudes that the child finds in the home play important roles in the types of behavior he will exhibit in later life. For example, Jenkins emphasized the importance of parental rejection in explaining his aggressive (a-social) delinquents.¹⁵

(3) Role definitions—The concept of role may play a particularly important part in a theory which attempts to explain what types are observed. The expectations of society for the individual, the kinds of behavior persons expect of the individual, may contribute to the formation of types.

This list of concepts is far too general to have much significance in itself. No real attempt is made to suggest how these concepts contribute to the formation of delinquent types. Various authors have gone much further in dealing with the concepts individually. It is merely suggested here that a meaningful analysis of types is likely to involve some of these ideas.

Interrelations Within and Between Types

The causal factors mentioned above must answer two questions in order for the typological theory to be complete. First, they must indicate the etiological processes which are involved within each type. What factors lead to a particular pattern of behavior? At the same time these factors should explain why it is some individuals end up in one category while others seem to fit different types. Most of the etiological work that is now going on in the area of delinquent types is concerned with explaining the processes involved in becoming a particular type of delinquent. There seems to be a need for some consideration of the very basic question of why we find types of delinquents at all. This paper has suggested that there is some rather conclusive evidence that delinquents do not just differ from one another in *degree*, but in addition they vary in *kind*. Why? A good typological theory must satisfactorily handle this question.

The three areas of concern which have been discussed above by no means exhaust the problems that are involved in the development of a typo-

¹⁴ COHEN, DELINQUENT BOYS: THE CULTURE OF THE GANG (1955).

¹⁵ JENKINS, *op. cit.* *supra* note 9.

logical theory of delinquency. There are problems relating to prevention and treatment that could be considered. There are problems relating to specific research techniques. The list of problems could go on almost indefinitely. The problems that seem central in importance at the present state of knowledge were chosen for consideration.

SUMMARY

This discussion of delinquent types was designed to show certain consistencies in the present store of

knowledge on the subject. By presenting a scheme for summarizing the present information and by suggesting areas where further understanding is needed, the hope is that new research will be stimulated in what seems to be a fruitful approach to juvenile delinquency. With the confidence that certain types do exist in reality it seems most useful at present to move on in search of answers to some of the more crucial questions suggested in this paper.