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PIONEERING WITH SELF-CONCEPT AS A VULNERABILITY FACTOR IN DELINQUENCY

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This paper presents a retrospective assessment of a pioneering line of research on the self-concept as an insulator against delinquency. The authors were in search of a clue—a possible self-factor—which might shed light on what it is that steers youths in high delinquency areas of a large city away from involvement in delinquency. Certainly, criminologists and sociologists are well aware of the simple fact that a large percentage of adolescents in high delinquency areas manage to keep out of official trouble with the law, walk around the street-corner gang and avoid its so-called "subculture", stay in school rather than drop out, identify with the norms and values of the dominant society, and turn their backs on the availability of illegitimate means to ends in their neighborhood environment. What, then, are the components which enable adolescents to develop and maintain non-delinquent patterns of conduct despite the adversities of family, class position, and neighborhood?

It was decided that the best subjects for an initial inquiry would be the sixth-grade boys in high delinquency areas. Attention was focused on white sixth-grade boys, so as not to complicate the research design with race and sex variables. One might well ask: why sixth-grade boys? The answer is that they are approximately 12 years of age and are at the threshold of adolescence as well as the threshold of officially complained-upon delinquency. Complaints on boys for delinquency begin to increase at this age and keep on increasing through the succeeding years of adolescence. In addition, it begins to be feasible to interview a

child, at the age of 12, about himself and his world as he sees it. Attempts to obtain, by verbal interviews or pencil and paper inventories, subjective data from young children about themselves run into difficulty. This does not mean, however, that one cannot procure objective data from pre-adolescent children.

As a start, the authors in 1955 gained permission to ask sixth-grade teachers in predominantly white elementary schools in high delinquency areas of Columbus, Ohio—teachers who interact with their pupils the entire school day for an entire school year—to indicate from among the white boys in their classes those who would never get into trouble with the law. Despite the fact that most of the teachers were middle-class females, the authors maintain—and we think very rightly so—that they have a sense of the direction in which their pupils are going. Kvaraceus' work in developing a delinquency proneness measure certainly bears out our contention that teachers' behavior ratings, evaluations, or prognostications are quite accurate.¹

A CLOSE LOOK AT SAMPLING AND PROCEDURE

Thirty sixth-grade teachers nominated 192 white-boys in their classes who in their opinion would not experience police or juvenile court contact. The range was from 15 to 100 percent of the white boys in the 30 classes and the average per class was 6.4 boys.

The teachers at the time of making their nomi-

¹ KVARACEUS, ANXIOUS YOUTH: DYNAMICS OF DELIQUENCY, 102-108 (1966).

nations of the so-called "good boys" were asked to give their reasons for each nomination. They mentioned 1,033 reasons or 5.4 reasons per boy; 45 percent represented favorable personal characteristics, attitudes, and interests; 27 percent, one or more aspects of favorable home situations; 20 percent, participation in character-building youth organizations, religious activities, conforming in-school behavior, after-school employment; 7 percent, negative evaluations such as being excessively timid, naive, or overprotected so as to preclude involvement in delinquent behavior.

Sixteen of the 192 "good boys", constituting 8.3 percent of the teachers' nominees, turned out to have had, after clearance was made, previous contact with the police or the juvenile court. In 13 of the 16 cases, one or more members of the family had also had contact with the courts. Members of 42 additional families also had court contact, although the boys were not involved.

The authors eliminated these 16 boys, who already had contact with the law, from their "good boy" sample. In addition, when interviewers tried to locate the remaining 176 boys (out of the original 192), they could not find 51 boys, probably due in small part to wrong address, but in most part to removal of the family from the community in the interim of the several months between the teachers' nominations and the field follow-up. The project was left with a sample of 125 (192 minus 16 minus 51).²

A schedule was developed to be administered on an individual basis to each of the 125 good boys in their own homes. Among other formal scales and inventories included in the schedule were 50 items which attempted to assess the boy's perception of himself in relation to his family, friends, school, and possible involvement with the law. We called these items self-concept items, because the responses represented the boy's perception of himself in reference to the significant others in his immediate world.

Two research interviewers contacted the mother at home and obtained permission to interview her and her son. The one interviewer administered the schedule to the boy in one room; the other interviewer administered a specially prepared schedule to the mother in another room simultaneously.

The following school year, namely 1956, the

authors returned to the same 30 sixth-grade classrooms and asked the teachers, most of whom were the same ones they interviewed in 1955, to nominate the white boys in their rooms, who would, in their opinion, almost certainly experience police or juvenile-court contact in the future.

The teachers named 108 white boys, constituting about 25 percent of the eligible boys. Twenty-four of the 108 nominated "bad boys" (23 percent) had already had contact with the police and juvenile court (as against 8.3 percent of the "good boy" nominees). In view of a much shorter time span between teacher nomination and home interview, we only lost 7 boys in the "bad boy" sample, reducing it to 101 cases. The interview schedules for the boy and the mother were the same in the 1956 101-bad-boy sample as in the 125-good-boy sample of the previous year.

The scores on the two directionally-oriented scales of the California Psychological Inventory (*De* scale and *Re* scale), which were included in the schedule administered to each boy, were different in the expected directions: significantly more favorable for the good-boys than for the bad-boys or more unfavorable for the bad-boys than the good-boys. Because the *De* scale of the CPI (now called the Socialization scale, measuring directionality toward and away from delinquency) and the *Re* scale of the CPI (measuring directionality toward social responsibility) are standardized scales, with national and even some international norms, the authors felt that the convincingly and significantly more favorable showing of the good, and the more unfavorable showing of the bad-boy sample, tended to validate the teacher's nominations. Likewise, these scale scores provided corroboration for the more favorable answers on the self-concept items received from the good than from the bad boys. In addition to these associations, the answers of the mothers to questions about their sons, paralleling virtually all of the questions used in the self-concept inventory for the boys, also added an additional dimension of validation. Thus, the teachers, the mothers, the *De* and *Re* Scales, and the boys' responses to the self-concept questions were highly consistent.

FOLLOW-UP FOUR YEARS LATER

Four years after initial contact (1959 for the good and 1960 for the bad boys), the authors set about determining how many of the boys were

² Reckless, Dinitz & Murray, *Teacher Nominations and Evaluations of "Good" Boys in High-Delinquency Areas*, 57 ELEM. SCHOOL J. 221 (1957).

known to the juvenile court. Out of the total of 125 in the 1955 sample of good boys, they were able to locate and assess 103; out of the 101 in the 1956 sample of bad boys, 70. Incidentally, attrition was not related to scale scores or self-concept responses in either cohort. Those who remained in the community had scored neither better nor worse on the *De* and *Re* scales or on the self-concept responses than those who left.

Twenty-seven of the 70 bad boys (39 percent) had contact with the juvenile court for delinquency in the four year follow-up period—not including the court contacts in the instance of 24 out of the original 101 sample, prior to our study. Each of the twenty-seven out of the traceable 70 bad-boys averaged over 3 contacts with the juvenile court throughout the four-year period or from the time the boys were approximately 12 to the time they were 16 years of age.

In contrast, just four out of the 101 good boys who were followed had a one-time record in the juvenile court in the ensuing four-year period of follow-up—and only for very minor offenses. Ninety-nine of the 103 good boys were still in school, although half of them had passed legal age for drop-out. Of the 99 still in school, all but four impressed their teachers as unlikely to get into future difficulty. Their responses to the re-administered self-concept items were quite favorable, just as favorable as they were four years previously and the mothers' evaluations were just as favorable as four years earlier.

There was a remarkable four-year cohort stability on all of the directional indicators in both the good- and bad-boy samples: self concept projections, teachers' prognostications, mothers' evaluations, scores on the *De* and *Re* scales of the CPI.

Furthermore, the authors were able to compare the traceable 103 good, and the 70 bad-boys, on the Nye-Short self-reporting delinquency check list (using 7 of the original Nye-Short items) and they found that the latter scored more unfavorably than the former. (This self-reporting check list was not available to us in 1955 and 1956.) Hence, "professed" involvement corroborated reported involvement in delinquency as well as the direction of the self-concept responses, and the teachers' expectations.

At this point it is important to duplicate the theoretical underpinning of our quest to discover what insulates a boy in the high delinquency areas against involvement in delinquency.

In our quest to discover what insulates a boy against delinquency in a high delinquency area, we believe we have some tangible evidence that a good self concept, undoubtedly a product of favorable socialization, veers slum boys away from delinquency, while a poor self concept, a product of unfavorable socialization, gives the slum boy no resistance to deviancy, delinquent companions, or delinquent sub-culture. We feel that components of the self strength, such as a favorable concept of self, act as an inner buffer or inner containment against deviancy, distraction, lure, and pressures. Our operational assumptions are that a good self concept is indicative of a residual favorable socialization and a strong inner self, which in turn steers the person away from bad companions and street corner society, toward middle class values, and to awareness of possibility of upward movement in the opportunity structure. Conversely, the poor concept of self is indicative of a residual unfavorable socialization (by 12 years of age probably not the result of participation in delinquency subculture) and indicative of weak inner direction (self or ego), which in turn does not deflect the boy from bad companions and street corner society, does not enable him to embrace middle class values, and gives him an awareness of being cut off from upward movement in the legitimate opportunity system.

We feel that the selective operation of the self element is not specified in the response to the models of behavior presented to the person by his associates in differential association theory (Sutherland) and is even less specified in delinquency subculture theory (Cohen), as well as "opportunity structure" theory (Cloward and Ohlin).³

CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDIES

In 1957, the authors administered 717 schedules to sixth-grade children in 24 classes in eleven elementary schools of Columbus, Ohio, chosen according to census tract indexes of socio-economic status as well as high and low delinquency. Eight of the schools (with 17 sixth-grade classes) served disadvantaged areas with high delinquency rates,

³ Dinitz, Scarpetti & Reckless, *Delinquency Vulnerability: A Cross Group and Longitudinal Analysis*, 27 *Am. Sociol. Rev.* 517 (1962).

while 3 served middle-class areas where delinquency rates were low. All the sixth-grade pupils present in class on the appointed day were administered a schedule. The schedule consisted of 46 items from the *De* scale, 38 items from the *Re* scale (both from the California Psychological Inventory which is a factor-analyzed version of the Minnesota Multiphasic Inventory), 56 self concept items, plus certain social background items. During the administration of the inventories, the sixth-grade room teacher was interviewed elsewhere by a research assistant. With her cumulative record cards before her, the teacher rated each child in her class as either headed for trouble with the law, not sure, or not headed for trouble with the law.

Since the schedule was administered in school, a standard introductory statement requesting cooperation and allaying fears was used. On the front page of the schedule the following statement appeared in bold type: *Remember this is not a test. We simply want to know how you feel about things. There are no right or wrong answers. The right answer for you is how you feel about things.* Dr. Dinitz read aloud each question, reminding the pupils of the response pattern: true or false; yes or no.

Dr. Ernest Donald analyzed 354 boys' schedules from among the total of 717. Because the teachers nominated too few girls as headed for trouble with the law to warrant comparison, the Donald analysis applied only to white and colored sixth-grade boys in both the high and low delinquency areas of Columbus, Ohio in 1957.⁴ The various subgroups in the 1957 sample of 354 sixth-grade boys consisted of the subgroups shown in Table I.

It was possible to relate the favorable and unfavorable responses on each of the 56 self-concept items with the dichotomous nominations of the sixth-grade teachers (headed for trouble with the law, including not sure, versus not headed for trouble with the law). Table II lists 16 of the 56 self-concept items, used in the 1957 schedule, which were found to be differentiated by teacher nomination at the .05 level of confidence and beyond (9 items at the .001; 3, at the .01; 1, at the .02; and 3, at the .05 level of confidence). Note that the items through number 39 were answered by yes or no; items 42 and 46 were answered by

⁴ Donald & Dinitz, *Self Concept and Delinquency Proneness*, INTERDISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS OF CRIMINOLOGY; PAPERS OF THE AM. SOC. OF CRIMINOL., 1964 (Reckless & Newman, Eds.) 49-59 (1965).

TABLE I
THE SAMPLE OF SIXTH-GRADE BOYS BY SUBGROUPS,
COLUMBUS, OHIO, 1957

Subgroup	Number
Teacher's nomination:	
Not headed for trouble (good).....	222
Headed for trouble* (bad).....	132
Race:	
White.....	234
Negro.....	120
Area:	
Low delinquency (good).....	125
High delinquency (bad).....	229
Nomination by race:	
Good white.....	155
Good Negro.....	67
Bad white.....	79
Bad Negro.....	53
Nomination by race by area:	
Good white (good).....	86
Good white (poor).....	69
Good Negro (poor).....	67
Bad white (good).....	39
Bad white (bad).....	40
Bad Negro (bad).....	53

* Including the teacher's evaluation of "not sure." The teacher rated each boy in terms of whether she thought he was headed for trouble with the law, not sure, or not headed for trouble with the law.⁵

a response format of often, sometimes, never; item 50, as will be seen on inspection, was answered by checking one out of three possibilities.

When the favorable and unfavorable responses on these 16 self-concept items were related to high and low scores on the *De* scale of the California Psychological Inventory (which also measures direction toward or away from delinquency), all but one item (number 25) reached the minimum .05 level of statistical significance. Certainly, there is corroboration here; teacher nomination, response to self-concept items, and scores on the *De* scale are going in the same direction.

Five of the 16 significant self-concept items according to teachers' nomination, as presented in Table II, were discriminated by the race of the sixth-grade (1957) Columbus boys (items 2, 12, 23, 39, 52); seven, by high and low delinquency area (items 1, 2, 12, 25, 26, 27, and 39); 6, by I.Q. level, 94 and above, 93 and below (items 2, 17, 23, 27, 30, and 42); 1, by reading achievement

⁵ *Ibid.* 50.

TABLE II

SIGNIFICANT SELF-CONCEPT ITEMS ACCORDING TO TEACHER NOMINATION, ASSOCIATED WITH HIGH AND LOW SCORES ON THE *De* SCALE OF THE CALIFORNIA PSYCHOLOGICAL INVENTORY

Original Schedule No.	Self-Concept Items
1	Will you probably be taken to juvenile court sometime?
2	Will you probably have to go to jail sometime?
6	If you found that a friend was leading you into trouble, would you continue to run around with him or her?
11	Do you plan to finish high school?
12	Do you think you'll stay out of trouble in the future?
17	Are grown-ups usually against you?
21	If you could get permission to work at 14 would you quit school?
23	Are you a big shot with your pals?
24	Do you think your teacher thinks you will ever get into trouble with the law?
25	Do you think your mother thinks you will ever get into trouble with the law?
26	Do you think if you were to get into trouble with the law, it would be bad for you in the future?
27	Have you ever been told that you were headed for trouble with the law?
39	Have most of your friends been in trouble with the law?
42	Do you confide in your father?
46	Do your parents punish you?
50	Do you think your are quiet _____ average _____ active _____. ⁶

(item 17); and 7 by arithmetic achievement (1, 2, 11, 12, 24, 26, and 29).

After having spotted the 16 significant self-concept items, it was possible to obtain a total self-concept score on the 16. High total scores were in the unfavorable (delinquency) direction. When the mean (total) scores on the 16 self-concept items were computed for various subgroups of the sixth-grade boy sample (1957), the difference in the means for white and colored boys was (a) slight (although significant statistically); (b) somewhat larger for boys by type of area (again statistically significant); (c) not significant for white boys in high and in low delinquency areas; (d) significant for white boys in good areas and

colored boys in bad areas; and (e) not significant for white boys and Negro boys (both) in areas of high delinquency.

By way of comparison, the mean self-concept score for boys with high *De* scores and that for boys with low *De* scores differed most of all and at a significance level of .00001.⁷ In commenting on these findings relative to self-concept scores by various subgroups of the sixth-grade Columbus boys, Donald had this to say:

One is almost ready to hazard the guess that race and type of neighborhood, whatever they may signify in the accumulated socialization of 12-year-old boys, are relatively unimportant in determining self concepts. On the other hand, a large mean score difference on the self-concept items is found when the sixth-grade boys are divided by favorable and unfavorable direction of socialization as measured by the scores on the *De* scale. Evidently the big thing which determines the boy's self-concept orientation is something other than race and neighborhood. Might we say that it is the quality of family interaction and impact, apart from class and race, plus the impact of other supplementary relationships found within the child's world?⁸

Further details on the entire 717 (1957) "big run", giving the mean scores for girls as well as boys on the *De* and *Re* scales, IQ, Reading Achievement, and Arithmetic Achievement, by sex, race, type of area, and teacher nomination were presented in a special article, published in 1958.⁹ In addition, an analysis of 400 of the 717 (1957) sixth-grade children, girls as well as boys, all from high delinquency areas, was published in 1960.¹⁰

SOUNDINGS IN BROOKLYN AND AKRON

Prior to Donald's 1963 item analysis of the authors' self-concept items, using 354 schedules of sixth-grade boys in the 1957 Columbus, Ohio sample, and establishing 16 discriminating items which could be summated into a total score, the authors received permission in 1959 to administer

⁷ *Ibid.* 52-53.

⁸ *Ibid.* 54.

⁹ Dinitz, Kay & Reckless, *Group Gradients in Delinquency Potential and Achievement Scores of Sixth Graders*, 33 *Am. J. Orthopsych.* 598 (1958).

¹⁰ Simpson, Dinitz, Kay & Reckless, *Delinquency Potential in Pre-Adolescents in High Delinquency Areas*, 10 *Br. J. Delinquency*, 211 (1960).

⁶ *Ibid.* 51.

a schedule to 697 sixth-grade children in six elementary schools of Brooklyn, serving high, medium, and low delinquency areas. The object here was to determine whether the trends noted in Columbus applied to the more complex, heterogeneous, urban environment of New York.

The Brooklyn schedule consisted of 46 items of the *De* scale; 34 self-concept items, including 9 which deal with a general view that the child has of himself, 7 with his view of his home and parents, and 8 with his view of how his father deals with him (a sort of father rejection assessment), and 10 with his projection about getting into trouble with the law; and 7 items taken from the Nye-Short inventory of self-reported delinquency involvement. However, it was not possible to obtain the sixth-grade teachers' prognostications of delinquency vulnerability in the Brooklyn project.

The findings on the Brooklyn study were never published. It was expected, however, that the sixth-grade males would test more unfavorably than the sixth-grade females, Negro more than white, high-delinquency area more than low-delinquency area pupils, Puerto Rican sixth-graders about the same as Negro sixth graders, on all or most of the measures in the schedule. The greatest over-all differences between the various subgroups among the 1959 Brooklyn sixth-grade pupils occurred in mean scores on the *De* scale, which measures direction toward and away from delinquency. The 10 self-concept items dealing with projected involvement with the law made less sharp distinctions than the *De* scale between the various subgroups, although practically all differences between the means scores were significant. The mean subgroup scores on the self-concept items which focused on the father's rejection of the child were not significant, while most of the mean scores on the child's view of his home and parents did not distinguish the various subgroups in Brooklyn. The mean scores on the Nye-Short self-reported involvement in delinquency, likewise, for the most part did not differentiate the various subgroups. The authors wished that they could have gone into Brooklyn with a self-concept scale based on the 16 discriminating items which Donald analyzed and with more sophisticated measures of self-reported involvement.

The authors received considerable encouragement from the results of a 1959 Akron, Ohio study

made by Dr. Edwin L. Lively.¹¹ Lively administered the authors' Brooklyn schedule to 1171 pupils, boys and girls, in Akron: 192 in sixth-grade, 324 in seventh-grade, 325 in eighth-grade, and 300 in ninth-grade rooms, divided among schools serving lower and middle class neighborhoods as well as high and low delinquency areas. It was possible in this study to tell whether the mean scores by various subgroups (sex, race, high-low delinquency area, and teacher prognostication) had stability with increasing age in adolescence (roughly 12 through 15).

The mean scores on the *De* scale (now called the Socialization scale) of the *CRP*, the 10 self-concept items projecting involvement with the law, and the 7 items dealing with the child's view of his home, were quite stable throughout the four age samples (sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth graders). The scores on the 8 items dealing with the child's view of his relations with his father (mostly rejection items) were not stable for the subgroups of the four age levels. The mean scores on the 7 self-reported involvements in delinquency increased with age (which trend seems logical).

Very interesting, as far as directional corroboration is concerned, is the fact that scores on the five instruments analyzed in the Akron study (*De* scale—now called Socialization scale, home items, law involvement items, father rejection items and self-reported delinquency) intercorrelated very well indeed ranging from $+ .27$ to $+ .65$, and at about the same levels of intercorrelation for each age sample: sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade.¹² (One should remind himself that if the coefficients of correlation had been in the high seventies, eighties, or nineties, he should suspect that any two measures which highly correlated would be assessing the same component of self.) This directional corroboration plus the corroboration of stability with age gave re-assurance to the authors that a self factor seems to be involved in vulnerability toward or insulation against delinquency.

A disconcerting note, however, needs to be inserted at this point. The authors attempted to administer the Brooklyn schedule in representative sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth grades of

¹¹ Lively, Dinitz & Reckless, *Self Concept as a Predictor of Juvenile Delinquency*, 32 *AM. J. ORTHOPSY.* 1 (1962).

¹² Lively, *A Study of Teen-Age Socialization and Delinquency Insulation by Grade Levels* (a Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State Univ. 1959, 70-71).

two large metropolitan school systems after the excellent results in Akron. But they were turned down in both instances, due to the political dynamite which could be caused by administering schedules to children. And just recently a new National Institute of Mental Health regulation requires that the principal investigators of research projects obtain parental permission before administering scales and inventories to school children.

APPLICATION TO PREVENTION

In 1959, the authors were asked by the Columbus, Ohio school system, to attempt some practical application of their findings. A demonstration on a very limited scale was undertaken to determine the feasibility of presenting appropriate models of behavior to sixth-grade boys, selected by teachers as headed for trouble. (Parental permission was obtained and the program occupied the last school period plus a half hour over school-closing time each day.) The main thrust of this demonstration was directed toward helping the vulnerable sixth-grade boy internalize effective models of behavior, thus building-up or strengthening his self concept. The worker in charge of the model-building sessions was also trained to be a most significant other (adult) in the lives of the participants.

Three years of such limited demonstration projects led to the formulation of a large demonstration-research project, supported by grants from the National Institute of Mental Health, to discover whether appropriate presentation of realistic models of behavior in the classroom could "beef up" a vulnerable boy's self. The design followed the theory and procedures of our original work on the self concept as the insulating agent against trends toward delinquency.

The authors selected eight junior high schools of the inner city of Columbus, Ohio, which served disadvantaged and high delinquency neighborhoods. These 8 junior high schools were fed pupils by 44 elementary schools. In May of 1963, the authors, after having received the go-ahead signal from the granting agency, asked the sixth-grade teachers of the 44 elementary schools to nominate the boys in their classes who, in their opinion were likely to get into trouble with the law and likely to drop out of school as well as the boys who were likely not to get into trouble with the law and likely to stay in school. In each school,

the principal reviewed and confirmed the sixth-grade teacher's rating.

The over-all average was about 75 percent good; 25 percent bad boys. The following September when the boys reached the eight junior high schools, the nominated vulnerable ("bad") boys were randomly divided into two groups: an experimental, and a control group. The project also called for a continuing follow-up of a sample of 15 percent of the so-called "good" boys.

Preliminary data on the validity of these teacher-nominations of their students as vulnerable, doubtfully vulnerable or not vulnerable to later involvement with the law have been obtained. These data tend to support the contention that teacher-nominations are reasonably valid indicators of case outcomes of the 176 boys nominated as "good" (not vulnerable) in May, 1963; 154 or 87.5% had no contact with the police as of August, 1966. Of the unsure nominees, 69.4% avoided police contact in the comparable 3-year period, while just 53.7% of the nominated "bad" (vulnerable) boys were free of contact in the same three and one-fourth year time period.

The Columbus junior high schools at the time of the intervention demonstration operated "self contained classes," which ran for three consecutive school periods (of forty minutes each) with the same teacher. In these self-contained classes, world geography, Ohio history, and English were taught in mixed groups, boys as well as girls. The project called for placing the experimental group (randomly split half of the vulnerable boys) into an all-boy self-contained class of approximately 25 boys. It called also for retaining the other half of the vulnerable boys as well as the nonvulnerable boys in the regular mixed self-contained classes.

Permission was obtained from parents to gather the experimental group into a special all-boy section. When the boys and parents asked why, our reply was that Mr. Jones, the teacher, wanted Joe in his class and wanted an all-boy section.

Four male seventh-grade project teachers were selected by the authors (the principal investigators). They were specially trained to present "model" materials, as a youth development supplement to the regular diet of world geography, Ohio history, and English. They were trained also to play the role of the most significant adult in the lives of these boys in the experimental classes. They were involved in a summer tooling-up program, met with the project's research director

each day after school, and with the project's consulting child psychiatrist each Saturday morning as a group.

Each of the four project teachers had two experimental self-contained classes: one in the morning at one junior high school and one in the afternoon at another junior high school. Thus, there was one experimental all-boy self-contained class in each of the 8 junior high schools serving children from disadvantaged, high-delinquency areas. The four project teachers worked with the research director in developing appropriate "lesson plans" to get on target of presenting models of behavior in an effective way. In addition, the project teachers, as a result of their Saturday morning discussions with the project's consulting psychiatrist, developed a class-room climate or atmosphere conducive to internalization of the regular class fare and the project's supplementation. The experimental group was found, on an average, to be reading at the fourth-grade level. Consequently, the project used seventh-grade materials written at a fourth-grade comprehension level and it availed itself of various reading-therapy procedures.

The youth-development supplementation (presentation of models of behavior) was fed into the experimental all-boy classes at the same time, in all eight groups—feeding in the same lesson plans—such as finding out something about the man on your city block who has the reputation of being the best worker so as to put on the board (on such and such day). During the first year of operation (1963-1964), the project teachers worked valiantly to develop lesson plans which had possibility of model takeover. These plans were standardized and used in the same way, to supplement the regular school fare, in two successive years, namely 1964-1965 and 1965-1966. During the last two years of the project, it was possible for the project teachers to use their after-school over-time for making home visits.

The demonstration-research design consisted of an experimental group and two control groups, in three cohorts, 1963-1964, 1964-1965, and 1965-1966. Standard information was accumulated on each boy. Certain inventories were administered to the three groups in September and again in May of each year, at the close of the school year. Available school information on reading and arithmetic achievement, absences, conduct, school performance, is being collected for the file. Yearly clearance (every year until 1970) of all

three sub-groups (the experimental group and the two control groups) is made through school records and through the files of the juvenile bureau of the police department in the summer of each follow-up year, to record truancy, non-attendance, and complaints for delinquency. Each yearly cohort will have four yearly clearances and by the time of the fourth clearance each boy will have passed his sixteenth birthday and will have had the legal opportunity to quit school and go to work.

Is the youth development supplement, in terms of presentation of appropriate models of behavior, strong enough preventive medicine? Does it reach the adolescent boy and presumably his self? Will the teacher-nominated vulnerable boys, who received Dr. Reckless and Dinitz's vitamins do better over a four-year period than their untreated first-cousins (also vulnerable boys) and even the teacher-nominated "good boys"? This is the question. The authors will have some answers in the fall of 1970.

CONCLUSION

It is no longer sufficient for sociologists who study criminal and delinquent behavior to call attention to the possible impact of disorganized and disadvantaged neighborhoods, family tensions and insufficiencies, bad companions and street-corner gangs, and the availability of illegitimate means to ends. Who responds to carriers of patterns of delinquency and crime? Who resists and goes the other way? We live in a society of alternates, where the self has more and more opportunities for acceptance or rejection of available confrontations. Consequently, sociologists as criminologists must join the search for the self-factors which determine direction of behavior or choice among alternates and in this endeavor they must work with their colleagues in psychology and psychiatry in an effort to discover what self factors actually determine the direction of behavior and how they can be controlled.

The proposal herein has been to explore the self-concept as one important self-factor which controls the direction of the person. There is certainly some preliminary evidence in the authors' work to date, to indicate that the self-concept might be one of the important self-factors in determining the "drift" toward or away from delinquency and crime. The authors do not presume that such a self-factor would operate in instances of deep character and emotional dis-

turbances. But for the large majority of unofficial and official offenders as well as effective conformers to the dominant norms of a democratic, industrial, urban, mobile society, it is certainly feasible to operate on the hypothesis that self-factors determine direction of behavior toward or away from delinquency and deviance in general.

The authors feel they uncovered some corroborating evidence, namely that the self-concept of early adolescent might be one of the self-factors which controls directionality. Certainly, teachers' prognostications of sixth-grade boys—even the mothers' evaluations—plus the *De* scale (now called Socialization scale) indicate that directionality, toward or away from delinquent behavior, can be sensed and assessed. If, in the future, effective assessment of self-reported delinquency can be made, sociologists as well as behavioral-science researchers will have another effective instrument to gauge directionality of the youth.

It seems to the authors that these indicators of directionality toward or away from deviance point to the strong possibility of a favorable-to-unfavorable self concept in the young person, which is acting as the controlling agent. Our large cross-sectional study in 1957 certainly indicated that self-concept factors, the teachers' prognostication of direction of the youth, the *De* scale's assessment of direction were interrelated. And the authors, if they might be spared glibness, do not think it is the subtle "rub-off" of the teacher's sense of the individual youth's direction which causes an internalization of a favorable image of himself (although this might happen in rare instances). And in the 1955 and 1956 samples, when the mother's projections of direction in which the son was travelling were obtained, the authors did not feel that in the overwhelming majority of instances the mother's faith or lack of faith in the directional outcome of her boy was the "looking glass" which gave the boy his image (although this might happen in more instances than in the impact of the sixth-grade teacher's sense of direction on the boy). The authors believe that a youth in American society obtains his self-concepts from many experiential sources, inside and outside the home and school.

The findings from the Akron study point to stability of direction as assessed by teacher's nomination and other instruments of assessment. Here again, the authors' interpretation is that directional stability in comparable samples of the

sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grades reflects the operation of a self factor. However, this is not as convincing evidence as if the same sample of children could be tested during four successive years of adolescence. Nevertheless, the authors felt they received indications of longitudinal stability in the operation of a self factor in the four-year follow-up of the 1955 good-boy sample and the 1956 bad-boy sample.

Undoubtedly, there is a need for the development of an effective self-concept measure which can assess the direction toward or away from delinquency or deviant behavior generally. There is need also to develop measures of other self factors which control directionality. When such factors are uncovered and when they are effectively measured, then it should be possible to chart workable programs to prevent delinquency and to re-enforce the components of self which enable the youth to be an effective conformer.

Certainly, the authors' experience in Brooklyn indicates that it is necessary to use much more discriminating instruments than the ones they used and it could very well be that much more sensitive instruments are needed to record differences in self development among sixth graders in high, medium, and low delinquency areas as well as white, colored, and Puerto Rican sixth graders than among sixth-grade white and colored adolescents in different areas of Columbus and Akron, Ohio.

In the meantime, more faith can be placed in the sixth-grade teacher's evaluations or her assessments of the directionality of her male pupils. Sophisticated studies could be made of the predictive efficacy of her ratings. More use could be made of her ratings, say in May of each year after 35 weeks of daily contact, for designing preventive programs or attempting individualized corrective therapy. More sophisticated effort should also be expended on attempting to develop improved measures of self-reported delinquency.

One of the most difficult tasks would be to follow a large stratified sample of children who were evaluated at the first-grade level by the Gluecks' family-factor prediction instrument, to obtain teacher's prognostication, a self-reported delinquency measure, and an assessment of self concept at the sixth-grade level, and to make an official delinquency clearance on each youth in the sample at 18 years of age, no matter how many times he may have changed residence.