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EXPLORATIONS IN THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

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The adolescent culture is viewed by some as being typically irresponsible, composed of youths bent primarily on having a good time. Consequently, the problem of delinquency among juveniles is often by-passed. On the other hand, there are those who believe that middle-class boys are clean cut, sober, and responsible persons; they are boys whom we should be proud of and on whom we can depend. They believe that whenever acts of delinquency, irresponsibility, or outbursts of teenage exuberance occur, it is usually the result of a handful of youths, a subculture which is perhaps tumorous but not malignant.

We have suggested elsewhere that delinquency among middle-class youths is not merely the unhappy juxtaposition of youth and circumstance, but that it is largely an institutionalized component of the middle-class youth culture which is best understood through examination of the everyday activities common to middle-class teenagers.¹ Generally, the seeds of middle-class delinquency reside in the culturally esteemed patterns themselves.²

This paper explores the problem of the institutionalization of selected delinquent acts among middle-class boys. Data are presented to help substantiate the notion that failure to engage in selected acts of delinquent behavior is variously sanctioned among these adolescents. Data were gathered by distributing anonymous questionnaires to 1,693 white high school boys in grades 9 through 13 in five coeducational high schools situated in four Canadian communities. The subjects ranged between thirteen and nineteen years of age. All the schools are located in mainly middle-class areas. Although the communities vary in size, no community is especially rural in character; the populations are predominantly caucasian. This paper deals specifically with 850 boys, aged thirteen to eighteen, whose parents are either occupationally and/or educationally middle-class.³

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¹ Scott & Vaz, *A Perspective on Middle-Class Delinquency*, 29 CAN. J. ECON. & POL. SCI. 324-35 (1963).

² *Id.*

³ This paper is part of a larger study of self-reported delinquency among Canadian middle-class adolescents. A detailed account of the techniques employed in

THE LOSS OF POPULARITY AMONG MIDDLE-CLASS ADOLESCENTS AS SANCTION FOR NOT ENGAGING IN DELINQUENT PRACTICES

Norms have their genesis in the social experiences of group life. The emergence of norms within a group depends, in part, upon the interests and goals of its members. We are interested primarily in the institutionalization of delinquent practices among middle-class adolescents. However, our study focuses on only one dimension of the institutionalization of delinquent practices.

Professor Levy has described the concept of institutionalization as:

A given normative pattern affecting human action in terms of a social system will be considered *more or less well* institutionalized to the degree to which conformity with the pattern is generally to be expected and to the degree to which failure to conform with the pattern is met by the moral indignation of those individuals who are involved in the system and who are aware of the failure. . . . Differences of degree relating to the second source of indeterminacy will be referred to as differences in the *sanction aspects* of the institution or its institutionalization.⁴

Our concern is with the sanction aspect—the application of sanctions for non-conformity to group norms. Although our usage of sanction does not conform precisely with Levy's concept of "moral indignation", there are likely different kinds of moral indignation. Our focus is the extent to which refusal to engage in delinquent activities is likely to result in the loss of popularity. Because popularity is valued so highly by middle-class adolescents, its loss among peers is strongly felt. In this study the loss of popularity for refusing to engage in delinquent practices strongly suggests the application of sanctions for violation of group norms. The application of sanctions for refusal to engage in delinquent practices will be evidence of a major

gathering the data, and the methods and indicators used in establishing the socioeconomic groups of respondents have been reported in Vaz, *Middle-Class Adolescents: Self-Reported Delinquency and Youth Culture Activities*, 2 CAN. REV. SOCIOLOGY & ANTHROPOLOGY 52-70 (1965).

⁴ M. LEVY, *THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY* 104 (1952).

TABLE 1

POPULARITY OF ADOLESCENTS OF ALL AGES FOR REFUSING TO ENGAGE IN SELECTED DELINQUENT PRACTICES

Item No.	Rank	Delinquency Item	Percentage		
			Popular	Not Too Popular	Unpopular
62	1	A boy who will <i>not even try</i> a few drags of a marijuana cigarette with the boys is likely to be.	71.3	17.9	10.1
63	2	A boy who will <i>not</i> "borrow" his father's car without his permission, to drive about with the boys, is likely to be.	56.9	33.7	9.2
57	3	A boy who <i>never tries</i> to get intimate (go the limit) with a girl is likely to be.	55.3	30.9	12.7
64	4	A boy who will <i>not</i> engage in a little "excitement", such as breaking windows, street lamps, letting air from tires, pulling fire-alarms, marking-up walls, etc., with the boys, is likely to be.	48.7	36.0	13.8
59	5	A boy who will <i>not even try</i> to buy a bottle of beer, wine or liquor with the boys is likely to be.	47.2	36.2	16.1
56	6	A boy who will <i>not</i> drive a car once or twice without a driver's license is likely to be.	46.7	40.6	11.8
60	7	A boy who will <i>not</i> skip school with the boys once or twice is likely to be.	39.5	44.2	15.6
54	8	A boy who <i>dislikes</i> fighting or any kind of violence is likely to be.	38.0	49.7	11.8
58	9	A boy who will <i>not</i> take a couple of drinks at a party with the boys is likely to be.	35.3	45.6	18.2
55	10	A boy who will <i>not</i> take part in a drag-race with his friends is likely to be.	34.0	49.6	15.3
61	11	A boy who will <i>not</i> gamble for money at cards, dice (craps) or other games with the boys is likely to be.	32.2	48.1	19.3
65	12	A boy who will <i>not</i> go along with the group in whatever it does is likely to be.	18.4	42.4	38.9

n = 850

dimension of the institutionalization of delinquent acts among these boys.

It should be noted that the subjects were asked to indicate whether they thought that refusal to engage in a particular delinquent practice would make a teenager either "Popular", "Not Too Popular" or "Unpopular" among his friends. The absence of a fourth response category, "It Makes No Difference", is, perhaps, a limitation of this study. However, it may make no difference to some boys whether or not their friends engage in delinquency. For example, less active boys in the youth culture may consider it a disgrace to skip school, while others will applaud the behavior of the absent youth. Still others will care neither one way nor the other. Moreover, requiring the participants to choose between three response categories does not deny them a choice. Rather it "forces their hand" and their responses reflect,

very likely, either a delinquent or non-delinquent orientation. Given the conventional attitude that behavior circumscribed by law is "right" and that which violates the law is "wrong", our use of three response categories is, perhaps, less indefensible. Table I presents the data in order of the frequency of the response to the category entitled "Popular".

Inspection of Table 1⁵ reveals that a large percentage of boys report that middle-class adolescents who refuse to engage in selected delinquent practices are likely to lose popularity among their peers. This means that *middle-class adolescents are*

⁵ All items but one are violations of the law. Of course the considerable discretion given the police officer in handling juveniles will greatly influence whether any particular act is defined as a violation of the law. The items were included in a larger questionnaire; appropriate measures were taken to check the reliability of the responses and to minimize collusion among respondents during the administration of the questionnaires.

TABLE 2
POPULARITY OF ADOLESCENTS OF ALL AGES FOR NOT ENGAGING IN SELECTED DELINQUENT PRACTICES
(CATEGORIES UNPOPULAR AND NOT TOO POPULAR COMBINED)

Item No.	Rank	Delinquency Item	Percentage	
			Popular	Not Too Popular
62	1	A boy who will <i>not even try a few drags</i> of a marijuana cigarette with the boys is likely to be.	71.3	28.0
63	2	A boy who will <i>not "borrow"</i> his father's car without his permission to drive about with the boys, is likely to be.	56.9	42.9
57	3	A boy who <i>never tries</i> to get intimate (go the limit) with a girl is likely to be.	55.3	43.6
64	4	A boy who will <i>not engage</i> in a little "excitement" such as breaking windows, street lamps, letting air from tires, pulling fire-alarms, etc., with the boys is likely to be.	48.7	49.8
59	5	A boy who will <i>not even try</i> to buy a bottle of beer, wine or liquor with the boys is likely to be.	47.2	52.3
56	6	A boy who will <i>not drive</i> a car once or twice without a driver's license is likely to be.	46.7	52.4
60	7	A boy who will <i>not skip</i> school with the boys once or twice is likely to be.	39.5	59.8
54	8	A boy who <i>dislikes</i> fighting or any kind of violence is likely to be.	38.0	61.5
58	9	A boy who will <i>not take</i> a couple of drinks at a party with the boys is likely to be.	35.3	63.8
55	10	A boy who will <i>not take part</i> in a drag-race with his friends is likely to be.	34.0	64.9
61	11	A boy who will <i>not gamble</i> for money at cards, dice (craps) or other games with the boys is likely to be.	32.2	67.4
65	12	A boy who will <i>not go along</i> with the group in whatever it does is likely to be.	18.4	81.3

n = 850

sanctioned variously by their peers for refusing to indulge in delinquency. Failure to participate in each of the selected delinquent practices tends to result in some loss of popularity. The pattern of responses in Table 1 further indicates that refusal to engage in the more "Serious" ⁶ practices is less likely to result in loss of popularity among peers. However, those adolescents who refuse to engage in practices defined as "Not Really Serious" are more likely to lose popularity.

A finer perspective of the data emerges when the

⁶ The delinquent acts were ranked by respondents in the following descending order of "Seriousness": (1) marijuana smoking, 96.7%; (2) borrowing your father's car without permission, 88.7%; (3) vandalic practices, 86.0%; (4) attempting to buy a bottle of liquor, 71.9%; (5) drag-racing, 70.9%; (6) trying to get intimate with a girl, 70.4%; (7) driving a car without a license, 60.1%; (8) truancy, 51.1%; (9) taking a couple of drinks, 41.3%; (10) gambling for money, 38.1%; (11) fist-fighting, 27.7%; (12) not following along with the crowd in whatever it does, 7.7%.

response categories "Unpopular" and "Not Too Popular" are combined in Table 2. Here it is clear that "taking a few drags of a marijuana cigarette with some friends" is the delinquent practice least approved of. Only 28 percent report some loss of popularity for participants. The fear that likely surrounds the popular notion of smoking marijuana, plus the fact that it seriously undermines traditional middle-class values, distinguishes it from most other forms of middle-class delinquency.⁷ In addition, the social organization of the

⁷ This material was collected in 1963. The considerable publicity given the use of marijuana by high school students during the past four to five years suggests an increase in its use, besides a change in student attitudes towards using it. Although there has been much speculation over the incidence and quality of this behavior, what evidence exists is mainly impressionistic; no systematic counting has been conducted. The mass media are not reliable sources of information for scientific purposes, however some change has likely occurred. The extent of this change remains to be established. It

life of the middle-class adolescent and of the community in which he lives often limits his contact with marijuana smokers.

The degree to which norms are more extensively sanctioned among these boys is seen from the responses to the remaining items. For example, 42.9 percent report that "a boy who will not borrow his father's car without his permission" is "Not Too Popular" among peers. However, middle-class boys who engage in this type of practice are not likely to define their acts as being delinquent. Also, their everyday "vocabulary of motives" and the youthful spirit in which such behavior often transpires help mitigate a "delinquent" interpretation of their conduct. While it is true that borrowing the family car does not fall within the commonsense definition of stealing, and that, at worst, it is perhaps "unauthorized use" of the automobile, this practice nevertheless violates respect for the property of others and perhaps mirrors strain in father-son relationships.

The third least sanctioned delinquent practice involves sexual intimacy. About 44 percent respond that "a boy who never tries to get intimate (go the limit) with a girl" will lose popularity among peers. It is commonplace that many of the interests and activities of middle-class adolescents are of a romantic nature, garbed in sexual overtones. However, sexual intimacy among adolescents is by no means socially acceptable to all. Nonetheless, because of the secrecy surrounding this behavior, it may be that more sexual intimacy occurs among adolescents than any study is able to uncover.

Middle-class children are taught early in life the value of property and are strongly condemned for abusing it. Yet the data indicate that half of the boys report that "a boy who will not engage in a little excitement such as breaking windows, street lamps, etc." will suffer some loss of popularity among peers. It is not that property is no longer respected, but rather that the social role of younger adolescents involves behavior unanticipated consequence of which is often the destruction of property.⁸

Over 50 percent of the students report that refusal to engage in each of the remaining nine acts results in loss of popularity. Approximately

is precisely this kind of information that is so important with regard to proposals for changes in legislation.

⁸ See Vaz, *Juvenile Delinquency in the Middle-Class Youth Culture*, in *MIDDLE-CLASS JUVENILE DELINQUENCY* 134-36 (E. Vaz ed. 1967).

53 percent indicate that refusal to "even try and buy a bottle of beer, wine or liquor" results in loss of status. Similarly, 53 percent report that "a boy who will not drive a care once or twice without a driver's license" will lose popularity. As we shall see, both these practices are more prevalent among older adolescents.

A further glance at Table 2 reveals that the probability of losing popularity for refusing to participate in delinquent practices increases progressively with each item ranked seven to twelve. Over 63 percent believe that a boy who will not take a drink at a party will most likely lose some popularity. This highlights the importance of drinking and party games among middle-class boys. Refusal to engage in the remaining activities are even more widely sanctioned.

In order to indicate the relationship between the "Seriousness" with which activities are defined, and the extent to which they are sanctioned, a comparison of the rank of the frequency of responses to both sets of items is presented in Table 3. Calculation establishes a Rank Order Correlation of .833. Inspection of the order of ranked items indicates that the more seriously perceived items are more widely penalized. As anticipated, delinquent practices which the majority of boys consider not too serious are more widely accepted in the youth culture. The loss of approval for engaging in delinquent practices suggests the acceptance of the normative pattern by a large number of boys. To the extent that a normative pattern has become part of the moral consensus of group members, i.e., institutionalized, it becomes a disinterested element in their motivation.⁹ Members will try to conform regardless of the consequences or, as in this case, the "Seriousness" of the act. The pattern is a routine component of their role, reinforced by their everyday vocabulary of motives and by a widespread expectation of the group.

Behavior such as "taking a few drags of a marijuana cigarette", "borrowing your father's car without his permission", "breaking windows, street lamps, letting air from tires, etc." and "attempting to buy a bottle of beer, wine or liquor" are considered relatively "Serious". Moreover, these activities violate middle-class values and are seldom encouraged. The extent to which these practices are sanctioned coincides, for the most part, with the "Seriousness" with which the boys perceive

⁹ H. JOHNSON, *SOCIOLOGY: A SYSTEMATIC INTRODUCTION* 25 (1960)

these acts. However, Table 3 shows that "trying to get intimate (go the limit) with a member of the opposite sex", "getting into a fist fight with another boy", and "drag-racing along the highway with your friends" obtain different ranks on both "scales". In each case they differ by more than one rank. We shall discuss these differences in the order of their appearance in Table 3.

"Trying to get intimate (go the limit) with a member of the opposite sex" is the third least

TABLE 3

RANK ORDER OF SELECTED DELINQUENT ITEMS ACCORDING TO THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH ADOLESCENTS REPORT THESE ACTS, *SERIOUS* AND *NOT TOO POPULAR*

Item No.	Delinquency Item	Rank	
		Not Too Popular	Serious
45	Taking a few drags of a marijuana cigarette with some friends.	1	1
51	"Borrowing" your father's car without his permission to drive about with your friends.	2	2
46	Trying to get intimate (go the limit) with a girl.	3	6
50	Behavior such as breaking windows, street lamps, letting air from tires, pulling fire-alarms, etc.	4	3
44	Attempting to buy a bottle of beer, wine or liquor when out with the boys.	5	4
52	Driving a car once or twice without a driver's license.	6	7
42	Skipping school with the boys once or twice without a legitimate excuse.	7	8
49	Getting into a fist fight with another boy.	8	11
47	Taking a couple of drinks (beer, etc.) at a party with your friends.	9	9
48	Drag-racing along the highway with your friends.	10	5
43	Gambling for money at cards, dice (craps) or other games with some friends.	11	10
53	Not following along with the group in whatever it does.	12	12

n = 850

Rank Order Correlation = .833

sanctioned practice among middle-class adolescents. If middle-class boys were to communicate and share with peers their sexual experiences, especially their sexual adventures with "steady" girls, they would violate the norm of secrecy that governs a boy's relations with his permanent girl friend.¹⁰ Communication about the private aspects of these relationships might damage the reputations of partners and jeopardize an important social pattern. To the extent that middle-class boys conform to the norm of secrecy, it hinders publicity of their heterosexual experiences. Moreover, their early efforts at sexual intimacy often produce "failure" in this pursuit. In such instances boys are not apt to reveal their ineptitude to others. As a result, further institutionalization of this practice tends to be limited.

At the same time, there are at least two reasons why adolescents do *not* consider this practice, relative to others, especially "Serious" behavior. First, a boy has little to lose by attempting sexual intimacy with a girl. His reputation among the other boys and among girls is in jeopardy only if he persists abusively or uses force in his efforts. Second, although a boy's initial efforts in this regard are likely to be awkward, to have had some experience in "getting intimate with a girl", e.g., "getting a girl emotionally aroused", is an indication to himself of his masculinity and sophistication with girls. Under such circumstances, almost any effort a boy makes will likely "improve" his self-image and generate self-confidence. Since the results of his conduct are seldom harmful to either partner, he will not define his behavior as being especially "Serious".

"Getting into a fist fight with another boy" differs by three ranks on both "scales" in Table 3. Fighting is typically boyish behavior, befitting of some roles more than others. Among youngsters, fighting is apt to highlight their developing masculinity and support their self-image as a "real boy". To the extent that boys pursue activities in the youth culture, fist fighting and rougher habits grow less functional. Among older boys fist fighting is seldom encouraged as a means of resolving dis-

¹⁰ A boy's steady girl friend is a "personal" relationship and requires his respect and loyalty. It is internally integrative for the youth culture and therefore it must be supported. Peer-group norms among boys help control a boy's actions towards his steady girl friend. Violation of this code elicits censure from peers. In this manner sexual exploration between steady partners can continue with less risk of discovery, individual reputations are protected, and the patterned relationship is maintained in the youth culture.

putes and is less likely to erupt spontaneously. In addition, repeated contact with girls encourages the acquisition of gentler skills. In both cases continued membership in the middle-class youth culture tends to discourage violence.

The greater the consensus among adolescents concerning the "Seriousness" of a delinquent practice, the more likely it is that participation in the act will be widely sanctioned. "Drag-racing along the highway with your friends" is reported "Serious" behavior by approximately 71 percent of the boys and, relative to other practices, ranks fifth. Yet, the adolescent who refuses to take part in a drag-race with his friends stands to lose popularity among his peers. The practice of "dragging" ranks tenth among adolescents. How might this "discrepancy" in ranks be explained?

Unlike many other delinquent practices, drag-racing contains a real risk of injury. Recurrent publicity of boys who are killed or who suffer injury from "dragging" serves to accentuate the risk involved. Thus, adolescents readily admit the "Seriousness" of "dragging", but perhaps it is this very danger that appeals to them. Drag-racing mirrors their sense of courage, daring, and their search for excitement. Such values are of considerable importance to boys and are likely to gain them status. Furthermore, drag-racing is a form of behavior which lends itself easily to experimentation through ever-increasing speeds. While this progressively increases the danger, it also challenges a boy's courage at each turn. It is precisely this spiral quality that is deceptively dangerous yet treacherously appealing. Finally, as a means of public display and opportunity to impress others, drag-racing holds a special attraction for adolescents. In addition to the speed at which a boy can drive, his skill behind the wheel, his innovating techniques, and the attractiveness of his automobile can gain him status. This helps to further consolidate the norm of "dragging" within the youth culture and strengthens the degree to which it is practiced.

ADOLESCENTS YOUNG AND OLD

Because of their youth and inexperience, younger adolescents do not participate as extensively in the youth culture as do older boys and they differ from older boys in the performance of their roles. Younger boys often develop special interests, play their own games and pursue their own customs. Under close parental control, they are permitted less independence and given fewer prerogatives.

Much of their time is spent indoors and they are less likely to be peer oriented.¹¹ Yet, if the youth culture is to "survive", if recruitment is to continue and if younger boys are to occupy later adolescent roles in the system, the younger adolescents must learn the behavioral protocol befitting such positions.

Early in adolescence a boy is introduced to many of the customs and practices of the youth culture. He attends dances occasionally, gives parties, joins clubs and, in time, becomes acquainted with older boys. He begins to date girls. He develops an interest in cars. The way he looks, how he acts, and with whom he is seen become very important to him. Older boys serve as models of behavior and objects of emulation. In and out of school, on and off the playing field, younger boys show deference to their teenage elders and identify themselves more closely with the older youths.

Younger boys begin to engage in delinquent practices as their participation in the youth culture emerges. Many middle-class youngsters do not have the opportunities of older boys to drink beer, drag cars or smoke "weed". To learn the rules and the secrets of these games takes time and effort and requires the opportunity. Nevertheless, because younger lads identify with older youths, they want to be like them and are eager to learn and anxious to participate. Thus, drinking games, sexual intimacy with girls, and truancy are not altogether strange to the younger teenager.

Although their roles differ, younger boys share with the older youths a community of experience and a familiar frame of reference. Where and when their worlds overlap, they tend to possess a common perspective. They evaluate persons, define situations and pass judgement in similar terms. It is this type of continuity that lends coherence, consistency, and internal stability to the middle-class youth culture.

As anticipated, the data indicate sharp differences in the responses of younger and older adolescents. For example, more younger than older boys consider attempting to purchase liquor a serious offense. Drag racing is thought more highly of among older adolescents. Similarly, among younger boys, those who refuse to commit vandalism are more widely sanctioned. An important consideration in the explanation of these data is the social role occupied by younger and older boys in the

¹¹ See generally Vaz, *supra* note 3.

youth culture. Attendant upon these roles are different sets of expectations, practices and attitudes. That is, there are different criteria by which boys may claim status to their roles. To the extent that a boy conforms to these expectations, his peers will judge him and reward him accordingly.

One thing that influences a boy's participation in delinquent practices is the realistic possibility of his engaging in such activities. For older adolescents, some of the activities are more realistically possible than they are for younger lads and are more readily available as realistic criteria of status. Conversely, for younger boys some practices are much less meaningful in terms of their social roles. For example, smoking marijuana or purchasing liquor are much less likely to be relevant practices for which younger boys may claim status.

As younger boys "grow out" of their roles, they will assume the roles of older adolescents in the youth culture. New roles mean that new expectations, attitudes and practices are required of them. New criteria become applicable in terms of which peers judge them. Depending upon their ego-involvement in their role, the youths will employ those criteria to evaluate themselves. Under such circumstances, older boys will care less about those practices, obligations, and criteria of status that matter to youngsters. What a young boy considers "Serious" an older boy, because of his social role, and differing criteria of status, will define as "kid stuff". Similarly, the delinquent activities that are popular or unpopular among boys occupying different social roles will depend upon the alternative criteria available.

The following data illustrate that, although there are differences in the responses of younger and older boys, they share a relatively common orientation to delinquent practices. They tend to share a common estimate of the "Seriousness" of delinquent practices, and there exists a positive relationship in the order in which delinquent practices are sanctioned.

When the categories "Not Really Serious" and "Not Serious" are combined and the responses are ranked in the order of response for both age groups, a Rank Order Correlation of .952 is obtained. This suggests that younger and older adolescents share common attitudes and a similar perspective toward delinquent practices. Moreover, it implies that an underlying unity exists among adolescents with regard to the value orientations of the middle-class youth culture.

If we look at the frequency of responses in Table 4, two points are note-worthy. First, a generally higher percentage of older than younger adolescents report that engaging in delinquent practices is "Not Really Serious" behavior. This is a logical implication of our theory that increased participation in the youth culture tends to lead to delinquent perspectives and to delinquent behavior.¹² Second, five percent of the younger boys as opposed to only three percent of the older boys report that "taking a few drags of a marijuana cigarette" is "Not Really Serious" behavior. This result appears to be contrary to the role expectations of younger teenagers. These two points are discussed below.

In the first instance, older adolescents are more active participants in youth culture events and will engage more often in various types of delinquent activity. Delinquent practices are more likely to become a regular part of their social role. With an appropriate "vocabulary of motives" comprising their "core of motivation," these boys will conform to their role expectations regardless of the consequences of their acts. The more familiar delinquent acts will be defined "Not Really Serious". However, the roles of the younger adolescent tend to limit their participation in the youth culture. Delinquent practices that are alien to their role will be perceived in relatively "Serious" terms. More familiar practices, albeit potentially delinquent, will be considered "Not Really Serious". Thus, slightly over 72 percent of the younger boys respond that "Getting into a fist fight with another boy" is "Not Really Serious".

"Taking a few drags of a marijuana cigarette" is considered by both age groups to be the most "Serious" delinquent practice. Yet, proportionately more younger than older boys report that this practice is "Not Really Serious". Although the percentages are small, we may speculate on this difference. The publicity given those adolescents who *do* smoke marijuana, and who *do* take heroin and "pep" pills might influence certain younger boys to associate these practices with particular roles among older boys. Who are these adolescents likely to be?

Younger boys are differentially involved in the youth culture. Some boys participate more actively than others; they enjoy greater freedom at home, they date more girls and they associate more frequently with older boys. These youths are apt to

¹² See generally Scott & Vaz, *supra* note 1.

TABLE 4

RANK ORDER OF RESPONSES OF YOUNGER AND OLDER ADOLESCENTS WHO REPORT DELINQUENT ITEMS *NOT REALLY SERIOUS* BEHAVIOR (CATEGORIES *NOT REALLY SERIOUS* AND *NOT SERIOUS* COMBINED)

Item No.	Delinquency Item	Percentage			
		13-14 Years	Rank	15-19 Years	Rank
45	Taking a few drags of a marijuana cigarette with some friends.	5.2	1	2.9	1
51	"Borrowing" your father's car without his permission to drive about with your friends.	8.4	2	11.8	2
44	Attempting to buy a bottle of beer, wine or liquor when out with the boys.	12.9	3	30.9	5
50	Behavior such as breaking windows, street lamps, letting air from tires, pulling fire-alarms, etc.	14.9	4	13.9	3
48	Drag-racing alone the highway with your friends.	18.8	5	31.2	6
46	Trying to get intimate (go the limit) with a girl.	24.6	6	30.4	4
42	Skipping school with the boys once or twice without a legitimate excuse.	28.5	7	53.3	8
52	Driving a car once or twice without a driver's license.	31.1	8	41.3	7
43	Gambling for money at cards, dice (craps) or other games with some friends.	42.8	9	64.9	10
47	Taking a couple of drinks (beer, etc.) at a party with your friends.	44.1	10	61.0	9
49	Getting into a fist fight with another boy.	72.0	11	72.0	11
53	Not following alone with the group in whatever it does.	90.9	12	91.7	12
		n = 154		n = 682	

Rank Order Correlation = .952

be "grown-up for their age", boys who have "out-grown" their younger role in the youth culture. Perhaps they over-anticipate performance of older adolescent roles and identify with the extreme forms of behavior of older boys who are considered to be smart, and sophisticated. This over-identification with older roles is the more likely since it helps distinguish the youngster from his immediate group and facilitates an early transition to his future role.

Table 5 is the rank order of delinquent practices based on the extent to which they are sanctioned in specific age groups. Calculation indicates a Rank Order Correlation of .758. Two major features emerge from Table 5. First, two of the delinquent acts are considerably more popular among younger than older adolescents. Failure to "borrow your father's car" ranks fourth among youngsters and second among older boys, and vandalic practices ranks 10 among youngsters and fourth among older boys. This means that failure to engage in such practices evokes a greater loss of popularity among younger than older boys. The second major point is that nine of the delinquent

practices appear to be more widely sanctioned among younger than older adolescents. This presents the question of how we might explain these two aspects of the data.

Use of an automobile is functionally more important for older than for younger boys in the youth culture. Older boys either own their own cars or have access to the family car. Automobile privileges are often institutionalized within the family. The older boy who "borrows" the family car without permission violates both parental authority and the norms governing family use of the car. The penalty is likely to be complete loss of automobile privileges. Since predictable accessibility to the automobile is especially functional for participation in youth culture activities (and is therefore crucial for status gain), the excessive cost of disobedience will deter him. On the other hand, there is much less cost for unauthorized use of the car by the youngster. Cars are not yet a prerequisite for dating girls and these boys encounter fewer opportunities to experiment with cars. Nevertheless, they do not lose their enthusiasm for having a car. They are aware of the advantages of owning a

TABLE 5

RANK ORDER OF RESPONSES OF YOUNGER AND OLDER ADOLESCENTS WHO REPORT THAT BOYS WHO FAIL TO ENGAGE IN DELINQUENT ACTS ARE *NOT TOO POPULAR* (CATEGORIES *NOT TOO POPULAR* AND *UNPOPULAR* COMBINED)

Item No.	Delinquency Item	Percentage in Age Categories			
		13-14 Years	Rank	15-19 Years	Rank
62	A boy who will <i>not even try a few drags</i> of a marijuana cigarette with the boys.	41.5	1	25.3	1
57	A boy who <i>never tries</i> to get intimate (go the limit) with a girl.	46.1	2	43.2	3
59	A boy who will <i>not even try</i> to buy a bottle of beer, wine or liquor with the boys.	50.0	3	52.9	6
63	A boy who will <i>not "borrow"</i> his father's car without his permission to drive about with the boys.	53.9	4	40.6	2
60	A boy who will <i>not skip</i> school with the boys once or twice.	59.7	5	59.6	7
56	A boy who will <i>not drive</i> a car once or twice without a driver's license.	62.3	6	50.0	5
55	A boy who will <i>not take part</i> in a drag-race with his friends.	62.9	7	65.1	10
58	A boy who will <i>not take</i> a couple of drinks at a party with the boys.	62.9	7	64.0	9
54	A boy who <i>dislikes</i> fighting or any kind of violence.	65.5	9	60.8	8
64	A boy who will <i>not engage</i> in a little excitement such as breaking windows, street lamps, letting air from tires, pulling fire-alarms, etc.	67.5	10	47.9	4
61	A boy who will <i>not gamble</i> for money at cards, dice (craps) or other games with the boys.	72.0	11	66.4	11
65	A boy who will <i>not go along</i> with the group in whatever it does.	87.0	12	80.2	12
		n = 154		n = 682	

Rank Order Correlation = .758

car, the status of car owners, and the facility with which such boys date girls. Moreover, because younger boys are sometimes permitted limited use of the family car, both their self confidence and driving skills rapidly improve. It seems likely that recurrent experiences of this kind will modify a boy's interpretation of the restrictiveness governing further use of the car. His developing vocabulary will assist him in "bending" the rules and lead him to "borrow" the car for a "spin around the block". Knowledge that he is not stealing the car tends to remove the possibility of danger. The more successful their efforts, the more likely it is that such practices will become established. If their efforts should be discovered, they have only to suffer their parents' displeasure.

One very puzzling fact emerges from Table 5. There is little doubt that older boys are more active in the youth culture; we would expect older boys to report more delinquencies. Moreover, we would expect normative patterns of delinquency

to be firmly established among older adolescents, such that violation of these norms might elicit sanctions more often among them than among the younger boys. According to our data, such is not the case. This is an unexpected finding. Nine of the delinquent practices appear more widely sanctioned among *younger* than older adolescents. Admittedly the difference in response frequency is not always large, e.g., 46 percent of the younger boys report that refusal to try and "get intimate (go the limit) with a member of the opposite sex" results in loss of popularity, while 43 percent of the older adolescents indicate this. In other instances the difference is much larger, e.g., 42 percent of the younger boys report that refusal to try and smoke marijuana is unpopular. Only 25 percent of the older boys indicate this. The same is true with respect to refusal to gamble for money and refusal to drive without a license. Apparently, the majority of delinquent norms are more insti-

tutionalized among younger than older boys. How might we account for this?¹³

The concept of identification may help us to explain this unanticipated finding. Identification with others is a normal part of a child's social development. When a boy identifies with the role of another, he attempts to "internalize" the role and to adopt it as his own. He tries to achieve the necessary skills and attitudes and to conform to role norms. In identifying with another, the youth does not become the other (even in imagination); he simply wishes to be like the other by assuming the other's role.¹⁴ The pervading influence of the youth culture promotes role identification among teenagers. Consequently, the older boys gain prominence as objects of identification.

The ubiquity of peers and older adolescents in high school and in the neighborhood comprise, increasingly, the "immediate" world of the younger adolescent. It is here that he develops his allegiances, selects his models and forms his identifications. Though boys identify with teachers, athletic coaches and other adults, contact with them tends to be temporary. If lower-class delinquents emulate delinquent models, among middle-class boys the contrary is likely true. There is no criminal world; there is no community of delinquent gangs, no body of criminal values, malicious attitudes and predatory skills. The young hoodlum, the adolescent thug and the gang leader are not models of legitimate behavior. It is rather the crew-cut and the clean look, the "nice guy" and the high school star who tend to be the role models for younger boys.

Although contacts with older boys also tend to

¹³ We are not of the persuasion that younger middle-class boys experience intense feelings of anxiety over their adequacy in filling later adolescent roles, and thus tend to magnify the imperviousness of the demands and expectations of others and the severity with which expectations of others and the severity with which expectations are sanctioned. This "anxiety" type interpretation seems to be sibling to the "storm and stress" conception of adolescence. Middle-class youngsters must feel relatively secure in a world where it "pays" to be middle class, where high school curricula have been "watered down" to meet their "needs," where extracurricular activities and community structured events facilitate their transition to heterosexual role behavior and where, in part, they enjoy a role in family decision-making. Moreover, while writers deplore the lack of education among middle-class youngsters, they are quick to underline their "social maturity." Finally, community sponsored, parent endorsed activities of the middle-class youth culture give notice to adolescents of their status in the larger society. These conditions are not conducive to generating intense anxiety among younger middle-class boys.

¹⁴ See JOHNSON, *supra* note 9, at 129.

be temporary, they are nevertheless exciting for youngsters. There are things to be learned, stories to hear, events to remember and moments not to be forgotten. These are the boys of the weekend parties, sexual escapades and drinking bouts. These are the boys with adult answers to teenage questions. The youngster envies their status and applauds their skills. More importantly, he learns new attitudes and sentiments and appropriates new gestures. In his "inner forum of reflection", his self-image is inextricably tied to the behavior of older boys. Their words become his motives, their images his property. When he looks at them, he sees himself. Identification, however, is a one-way process, for when they look at him they see a "kid."

Two factors encourage the identification of middle-class boys with older adolescents. First, older adolescents epitomize the very conduct, attitudes and values of which parents approve. Parents are not likely to object to the older boy who attends school, who lives at home, who works in the summer, who is "socially mature", peer-oriented and who is "no delinquent". Second, identification with older youths prepares the youngster for future roles. The behavior and attitudes learned through identification with older boys oftentimes help them meet newly emerging "needs", e.g., "social skills", self-confidence and poise with girls. Thus, as the youth culture creates "needs" for the younger teenager, it also allows of relationships which help satisfy these requirements.

Assimilation of the culture and adaptation to its norms and role expectations are indispensable for the psychological comfort and social well-being of the younger teenager. Failure to adjust may mean isolation. A young boy, eager for acceptance and recognition, is likely to overdefine the situation. Ego-involved, he tends to overestimate the behavior of older boys and over-assess his allegiance. Because identification is largely an "as if" process, boys who identify tend to act "as if" they occupied the roles of those with whom they identify. Thus, they are likely to conduct their behavior "as if" they filled the role of older boys in the youth culture. Due partly to the ignorance of how older adolescents actually behave, they determine their actions "as if" they were already involved. The process of identification permits them the luxury of suspended responsibility for their actions, however extreme these may be. Finally, since the routine acts of middle-class boys