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Twenty ex-members of four juvenile gangs were interviewed in a midwestern college town of 36,000. Semi-structured interviews were tape recorded and the responses coded, tabulated and analyzed to (1) compare the gangs with metropolitan gangs; (2) determine members' perception of their gangs; (3) test gang theory. The author found many more similarities to metropolitan gangs than differences. He considers this research method advantageous in revealing widely discrepant perceptions of gangs by their members. He concludes there is no "best" gang theory in explaining small town gang dynamics, nor is there any totally useless one. A note on community costs of "ganging" is appended.

A more detailed discussion of the data presented in this article appears in his unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Illinois.

This is a summary of a 1964 study of four youthful gangs which had formed and disbanded in Freeport, a midwestern community of 36,000. Since several authors have stated or implied that juvenile ganging is primarily a metropolitan phenomenon, and since a review of gang literature revealed no studies specifically of small town gangs, these four gangs were selected as research subjects. Objectives of this study were three: (1) To compare small town gangs with metropolitan gangs, and to ascertain reasons for similarities and differences insofar as possible; (2) To view gang structure and dynamics as perceived by the gang members, and to determine where possible reasons for discrepancies in these perceptions; (3) To ascertain how the findings square with modern gang theory.

SOCIOCULTURAL BACKGROUND

Freeport is not presented as a typical American city; it is, in fact, considered rather atypical, and the generality of these findings should be assessed accordingly. It is a white-collar town; except for a couple of feed mills it is completely devoid of industry. Though it once boasted two railroad depots, one of these has been abandoned along with the railroad; the other is scheduled for razing. The entire economy of the community is built around a public university and two private colleges and the various services necessary to maintain these. The community is also atypical in its class structure. The upper-upper and lower-upper classes are virtually missing; there are simply no big businesses capable of creating upper-class wealth. The two middle classes are disproportionately represented by students, faculties, clerical, technical and sales staffs of the three colleges and small businesses. But these in turn constitute a spurious social class; since there is the traditional schism between town and gown, little communication between middle-class faculty and middle-class townfolk exists. Construction, maintenance, and service workers make up the upper-lower class; the lower-lower is largely unemployed or partially employed Negroes.

The median family income in 1960 was $5,616. There were 544 families with incomes under $2,000; 107 families over $25,000; none with known incomes over $50,000. For every 100 high school

graduates there were 77 college graduates; to include those with one to three years of college would triple the number of high school graduates.

Historically the county was settled largely by Anglo-Saxons migrating westward, with a scattering of Dutch, German, Polish, Scandinavian, and a few southern French. The Negro-white ratio closely approximates the total United States ratio; in this the town is typical. The county was once a slave-holding area, and a number of the farms of this region still have slave cabins, now used as farm sheds. Freeport is a bit more Protestant than the United States as a whole. Although the citizens traditionally vote Democratic, the community has a remarkable history of conservatism. There are two newspapers, one published by the university's journalism department. With practically no exception, any civic project or legislation supported by the university press is sure to be voted down by the citizenry as a matter of principle.

Yet business hinges on the university; it enters a dormancy period with the summer exodus of students, and revives each autumn with their return. This is the sociocultural milieu of Freeport's gangs.

RESEARCH METHOD

Three of the four gangs had disintegrated at the time of the study; the fourth had fragmented and was soon to disintegrate. A "post mortem" study then was necessary. Twenty ex-gang members were interviewed in semi-structured interviews. Prior to the interviewing the question schedule was administered to members of three gangs in a neighboring city as a "dry run", to assess the instrument; revisions were made and the process repeated a second and third time. The interview schedule of 107 questions, which were read verbatim, constituted the basis of the interview. The 107 questions were categorized in ten subdivisions: gang formation; schools and ganging; effects of prior membership; delinquency and ganging; induction into gangs; structural elements; status outside gang; dating; activity since disbanding; and retrospect. The interviewer felt free, however, to pursue any tangential subject beyond the questionnaire as he saw fit; consequently the interviews ranged from 1½ to 3½ hours in length. Mean interview time was about two hours and ten minutes.

Nine of the twenty members were institutionalized at the time of the interview; interviews were

conducted in the institutions, in the interviewer's office, in homes, and one in a fishing shack. Two of the gangs were Negro; two were white. The members ranged from age to 14 to 25. Sixteen boys and four girls were interviewed. All subjects outside institutions were paid $1 per hour for interview time; for administrative reasons those in institutions were not paid.

All interviews except one (a refusal) were tape recorded. As soon as practical after the interviews the tapes were played back and the responses to each question were coded and tabulated. The unstructured portions of the interview, which did not correspond to the pre-established coding system, were recorded in longhand; consequently the coding and recording process required from six to fifteen hours per interview. Notwithstanding the time-consuming nature of the unstructured portion of the interviews, if the study were to be repeated the researcher would include more unstructured and open-end questions, and fewer structured ones. It was in the *ad libitum* portions of the interviews that the richness of material and deepest insights into gang dynamics were revealed. Merton gives a word of support for this method: "disciplined empirical observation ... sometimes leads to serendipity, the discovery through chance by a theoretically prepared mind of valid findings which were not sought for."[1] To cite one example of this process: the members related repeated instances of beatings, provocations, rape and other hostile acts against college students. This may or may not support the position of several economic theorists who hold that class and economic differentials account for such acts. So a question was routinely inserted at this point: "Do you think the guys were mad at the college students because they all came from poor families, and the students were more well-to-do?" The reply was invariably: "Naw, they just acted like they was big shots—they was all from out of town and they just tried to take over like the town belonged to them." Such questions could not have been included in the original schedule since the basic information was not yet available; unstructured interviewing was necessary.

Hogrefe and Harding believed that participant observation is the only effective method to study gangs; interviewing and testing are ruled out.[2]

[1] MERTON, SOCIAL THEORY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE (1957).
[2] Hogrefe & Harding, *Research Considerations in the Study of Street Gangs*, 6 APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY 21 (1967).

This researcher questions whether there is a single "best" method, and suggests that the post-mortem interview has some advantages (and disadvantages) not found in participant observation.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF METHOD

(1) Use of a tape recorder reduces the researcher's perceptual distortion. A score of experimental studies have demonstrated that our perception is highly vulnerable to distortion through set, expectations, group influence, and emotional factors; we see and hear what we wish or expect to see or hear. This was emphatically demonstrated in the present study. The researcher would obtain a certain conception of a gang's structure or dynamics from two or three gang members; in subsequent interviews these conceptions perseverated to the point that the interviewer frequently recorded "Yes" when the subject said "No", plus numerous lesser distortions—and this in spite of the fact that the interviewer had fifteen years' experience in interviewing delinquents! This could be corrected only by replaying the tape. It is the belief of this researcher that this process of perceptual distortion is at work in participant observation as much as in interviewing, and that observers as well as interviewers need recording devices or other checks upon their observations. And considering that field observations must usually wait until the day's end to be recorded, it would seem that a recording device is even more essential to the participant observer.

(2) It has been the researcher's experience that when a question is directed to a small group of delinquents, a single reply, ostensibly representing group consensus, is elicited—usually from the group leader. A second advantage of the individual interview is that discrepant replies are common, which force the researcher to dig deeper to reconcile or explain these discrepancies. Such discrepancies were frequently found in the present study.

(3) It is well documented that our perception of an event changes with time; we tend to recall the pleasant and ego-enhancing experiences and forget the unpleasant. At first glance this would appear to be a disadvantage of the post-mortem method. But there were several evidences that gang members' recall was more candid and realistic, now that their gangs were *kaput*, than was their initial perception. There were frequent comments: "Oh, we'd brag and lie to each other about the big deals we'd pulled"... "I really thought I was a big shot then, but it seems like kid stuff now"...

"Yeh, sure I was scared, but I'd never admit it to anyone then." In this researcher's experience, such candor is rare in discussing present behavior with juveniles; we find instead a host of defense mechanisms. This is a third advantage of the post-mortem method.

(4) In field observation one may infer, but never really know, another person's subjective feelings, impressions, and perceptions without asking him. The phenomenologists, in fact, hold that such subjective variables are the determinants of behavior. Thomas and Thomas, though sociologists, give considerable support to this view:

"[E]ven the highly subjective record has a value for behavior study. A document prepared by one compensating for a feeling of inferiority or elaborating a delusion of persecution is as far as possible from objective reality, but the subject's view of the situation, how he regards it, may be the most important element for interpretation. For his immediate behavior is closely related to his definition of the situation—'as if' it were so." [3]

This is a fourth advantage of the interview method. The present study is a study of ex-gang members' perceptions of their gangs, the reasons for discrepancies between these perceptions, and the relationship of such perceptions to gang activity.

(5) In being able to replay a tape several times one can pick up subtle nuances not evident in a one-shot interview situation. One boy, a peripheral member and somewhat less delinquent than the others, repeatedly used the word "we" when describing gang parties and good times, but always used "they" when describing gang depredations. The researcher did not pick this up until the second or third time through the tape. This is yet another advantage of the method.

(6) A sixth advantage lies in the semantic problems of communicating with gang members. Regional differences in idiom produced considerable semantic problems, notwithstanding the researcher's prior experience with delinquents. The interviewer had to drop the term "initiation" because most of the gang boys used this to mean disciplinary action against an accredited member. They used the term "respect" much as we use "fear." Concerning access to a car, one boy was asked if he could borrow a car from friends or relatives; he became angry that we should imply

[3] THOMAS & THOMAS, THE CHILD IN AMERICA (1928).

he would steal from his friends. The researcher used the term "sluff" school, a regional expression for truancy; they had never heard the usage. Even more difficulty was encountered in getting straight answers to many questions. Consider the following exchange, taken verbatim from the tape of an Invincible:

Q: Do you think the Drag Demons were tighter organized (than the Invincibles)?

A: Well, I wouldn't say they did. I'd put it like this: I think *if* the Invincibles had— had went all out for what—I mean for what they was doing, I'd say they had a lot—most of the gang that this other gang had (caught or taught). They had boys in their gang that did a lot of thinkin', y'know. This other gang was just there to be doin', y'know. They did mostly stealin', but they didn't have too much trouble.

Admittedly longer acquaintance with a gang, as in participant observation, would reduce some of these errors of communication, but to reduce it completely would require more time than the average researcher has to spend. Having access to tape recorded expressions for precise transcribing, being able to compare them in context, and being able to get other's interpretations of these expressions constitute a final advantage of the method.

The method is also subject to several disadvantages, some already mentioned: (1) Distortion of the subject's recall through time; (2) Faulty memory: "I don't remember exactly—it was so long ago." (3) Outright lying or "snowing" the researcher (this appeared to be a relatively small source of error); (4) Limited ability to check on past events.

FINDINGS

Many more similarities than differences between small town and metropolitan gangs were found. Some observed differences were:

(1) The size of the primary unit ranged from six to thirty-four members, which compares with most metropolitan studies; however, huge alliances and federations of several hundred members were not found.

(2) There were no clear examples of satellite or "junior" gangs as reported in the big town; neither were there any "ladies auxilliaries" as satellite groups. Girls were incorporated into the gang as members of full or partial standing.

(3) There was no example of a territory or "turf" claimed by a particular gang, with this exception: the town of Freeport itself was off limits to gangs of neighboring towns; two erstwhile enemy gangs might join forces against outlanders.

(4) There was no evidence of police or political corruption as reported by most big-city gangs, notwithstanding all members interviewed were cop-haters.

(5) There were no examples of full-blown gang fights or rumbles; however, there were numerous petty squabbles.

(6) Notwithstanding the community's history of slaveholding, there was complete absence of racial hostility between white and Negro gangs. The researcher was, in fact, impressed by the respect they demonstrated for each other. In one instance a white gang member had threatened a Negro boy with a shotgun. The Negro boy reported this to his gang leader; the Negro leader requested a conference with the white gang leader; it was judged that the white boy was the offender and he was duly disciplined by his gang. In nearly fifty hours of interviewing the word "nigger" was never heard once, although Freeport's adults used the term freely.

SIMILARITIES TO BIG-TOWN GANGS

Some of the more common similarities to metropolitan gangs were: (1) The intense emotional investment of the members in their gangs; (2) Predatory and delinquent activity, ranging from petty theft to brutal beatings, sex orgies, rape and murder; (3) Endless thrill seeking, idleness, horseplay, cruising around in search of excitement; (4) Wide variation in the degree of gang structure, ranging from extremely loose, haphazard organization to tight, well integrated and formalized structure and by-laws; (5) A hierarchy consisting of a core or leadership elite, then a circle of "regulars" or full time members, and an outer circle of hangers-on, fringe or peripheral members. An anomaly not mentioned in the literature was peripheral adults—a few adult hangers-on who dabbled in gang affairs and exploited them to their own advantage, but were not accepted members. Their role appeared to be somewhat different from that of adult hoods and fences described in other studies; they were essentially peripheral members; (6) Alliances and formalized enmity with other gangs, though much smaller alliances than in the big town. One member reported a staged battle— or perhaps a show of force—involving several

hundred boys assembled from several towns, but the rumble never quite materialized; (7) A set of gang norms and sanctions separate from those of the parent culture. However, careful examination revealed that these norms resemble lower-class norms more closely than appears at first glance; (8) Mutual support in status-enhancing activity. This is related to, but not identical with the following: (9) A strong in-group sense, developed through mutual support, bragging, etc. It is axiomatic that where strong in-group feeling is found, there also is found strong out-group feeling; (10) Status-enhancing value of a penal record. At the time of interview there had been twenty-three incarcerations among the twenty members interviewed; (11) Compulsive accumulation of weapons. Considerable status was derived from large and diversified arsenals of weapons, and boys accumulated enormous collections of weapons well beyond human capacity to utilize them. Except for light dog-chains, however, these were rarely used in fights; (12) The rapidly shifting nature of the gang. Observed discrepancies between stories of different members often led the researcher to suspect one or both boys of fabrication; however, investigation usually revealed that both informants were right— it was the gang that had changed; (13) Stylized dress and emblems; (14) Initiation rituals; (15) Status-enhancing value of fighting and physical courage; (16) Infiltration by school failures, job failures, and social failures; (17) Disdain of school; (18) Heavy use of alcohol (but not narcotics).

THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL VIEW

When perceptions of different members are compared, a number of phenomena come to light. Members rarely agreed on the size of their gang— in fact, this was the area of greatest discrepancy. Two members of the Tyrants insisted that there were only five members, although the researcher had personally met thirteen of them; other estimates of the Tyrants ran as high as twenty-two. Questioning revealed that some members included only the leadership elite; some included the rank-and-file regulars, others included peripherals.

Everybody claimed to be a charter member of his gang, though this was chronologically impossible. This would seem to indicate that they still valued gang activity. In this study school dropout cannot be attributed to ganging; in 18 of the 20 cases ganging began *after* dropout had occurred. Practically all members were delinquent before, during, and after ganging, but a patterning of de-

linquency was observed. All delinquency except homosexuality and vandalism increased with ganging; all delinquency except drinking and heterosexual activity decreased when the gangs broke up. Members who perceived of themselves as less delinquent described their gang's activity as less delinquent; more delinquent members defined a more delinquent gang. Members of the leadership core perceived of their gang as better organized than did rank-and-file members, and rank-and-file members more than peripherals. The girls told much more credible tales of valor than did the boys.

The four gangs—Invincibles, Prowlers, Tyrants, and Drag Demons were rated on a scale of organizational structure according to twelve criteria: having an identifying gang name, definite membership, freedom from adult supervision (autonomy), a gang emblem, stylized clothing, stylized haircuts, stylized weaponry, a system of norms and taboos, formalized structure for initiation and indoctrination, structure for rule adoption, formalized sanctions, and titled officers. In total rating the least structured gang was the Invincibles (Negro), a very nebulous and loosely-knit "near-group." Next was the Prowlers (white), then the Tyrants (white), and at the top the Drag Demons (Negro) with highly formalized hierarchy of officers, well-defined functions, and a written constitution. These same ordinal positions of the four gangs were found when rated on each of the above criteria separately. Structure and size of gang were unrelated. This wide diversity of gang structure is at least equivalent to that found in a random sampling of metropolitan gangs.

Girls held a different status in each gang. In the Prowlers they held full membership; in the Drag Demons they were called full members but had only partial membership privileges; in the Invincibles they were regarded as girlfriends only. Discrepant responses by the Tyrants cloud their status: their leader did not recognize the existence of females, while several girls claimed full membership.

The most common taboos were those against "snitching" (informing), "blabbing" to outside youths, "holding out" on loot, and making advances to another member's girl. All of these taboos were violated, and in the researcher's opinion, to about the same extent that our own norms are violated. Dating, as defined by middle class custom, was rare. When there was patronage of commercial entertainment, "Dutch treating" was more common than in middle class courtship.

Although the leader's power varied remarkably from one gang to another, in all cases this power was held fascistically and dogmatically. Although all members expressed fond memories of the gang, several thought that membership had limited their opportunities for jobs, marriage, social acceptance, credit ratings, and military service. To the question "If you had a chance to do it over again, would you join the same gang again?" only six members gave an unqualified Yes or No. The ambivalent feelings of the majority were reflected in ambiguous replies. Only one boy (the youngest) planned to start a new gang. A number of members showed remarkable insight into the determinants of ganging. They attributed ganging to psychological factors more than to sociological, as narrowly defined, although they acknowledged many of the latter.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

No single theory provides adequate explanation for the dynamics observed in this study; conversely there is no theorist who does not make some unique contribution. Perhaps this conclusion results from the researcher's bias favoring eclecticism; perhaps it is a reality. The contention of the economic theorists (Cloward and Ohlin,[4] Miller,[5] and Cohen[6]), that ganging is class related is supported. All members came from lower-lower or upper-lower class homes; fourteen came from abject poverty. Opportunity deprivation, as Cloward and Ohlin suggest, was abundantly evident; however, there was little expression of resentment or even awareness of its existence. All of the gangs were delinquent (stealing and depredations), all were aggressive (fighting and assault), all were retreatist (drinking), which tends to refute Cloward and Ohlin's notion of three discrete typologies. Contrary to Cohen, vandalism was one of their least common delinquencies. Rather than defying middle-class norms, as Cohen suggests, there appeared to be considerable respect for and support of these norms, even applauding members who aspired to middle-class achievements. In describing Eddie, leader of the Tyrants, Julie relates an incident wherein several tyrants were at a drive-in hamburger shop when Wes, a peripheral member, approached with a new girlfriend:

"Now like Eddie'd say, 'Here comes Wes

and his date; let's move out.' We'd all get up and leave before Wes and his date come in, because if Wes talked to us then naturally his date would want to be introduced. Then if she was introduced and saw the kids that he ran around with like that, and if she was a nice kid and Wes had a chance to get in with a good girl for once, then Eddie didn't want to mess the thing up . . . Eddie was just a good Joe all around. He mighta got in a lot of trouble, but he was decent."

Sutherland's concept of differential association with delinquent or conforming primary groups[7] is supported. But there is little support for his contention that delinquents aspire to become adult hoods. They rarely aspired more than a few hours ahead; immediate kicks—Cohen's "short-run hedonism"—was their major concern. Further, when they did speak of local adult hoods, it was always with disdain. Rahm and Weber's assertion that entrance to the gang occurs casually by "just hanging around with them"[8] is verified; however, there is no semblance of their narcotic gangs. Fascistic leadership as described by the New York Youth Board,[9] and the Youth Board's assertion that gangs do not forcefully recruit members, are both confirmed; however, two of the boys had previously been members of metropolitan gangs, and both reported forcible recruitment there. Fifteen of the members had previously belonged to other gangs, but *in no instance* was there any evidence of borrowing structure, behavior or other patterns from a previous gang. This calls into question Sutherland's assertion concerning transmission of delinquent modes.

Havighurst[10] and Hollingshead[11] found that cliques played a central role in the lives of small-town adolescents, which is confirmed; however, they report the school as the center of clique formation, contrary to the findings of this study.

There were good examples of a close relationship between a boy's self-concept and delinquent behavior (Reckless[12]), but the evidence indicated that the delinquency caused the self-concept as often as vice versa. Sykes and Matza describe a

[4] CLOWARD & OHLIN, DELINQUENCY AND OPPORTUNITY (1960).
[5] Miller, *Lower Class Structure as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency*, 14 J. SOC. ISSUES 5 (1958).
[6] COHEN, DELINQUENT BOYS: THE CULTURE OF THE GANG (1955).
[7] SUTHERLAND, PRINCIPLES OF CRIMINOLOGY (3d ed. 1939).
[8] RAHM & WEBER, OFFICE IN THE ALLEY (1958).
[9] NEW YORK CITY YOUTH BOARD, REACHING THE FIGHTING GANG (1960).
[10] HAVIGHURST, *et al.*, GROWING UP IN RIVER CITY (1962).
[11] HOLLINGSHEAD, ELMTOWN'S YOUTH: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL CLASSES ON ADOLESCENCE (1949).
[12] Reckless, *et al.*, *Self Concept as an Insulator Against Delinquency*, 21 AM. SOC. REV. 744 (1957).

process of "neutralization"—rationalizing and justifying delinquent acts—which must occur in order for a boy to become an indoctrinated delinquent.[13] Instead, this researcher was impressed with the candor, the absence of rationalization that was found (though rationalization may have been present during gang activity).

One of the best confirmed concepts is a rather old one—W. I. Thomas' Four Wishes.[14] The most concise expression of these boys' needs which were fulfilled in ganging are found in his Wishes for security, recognition, new experience, and intimate response, notwithstanding Durkheim's assertion that sociological phenomena cannot be explained by psychological dynamics.[15] The interviewer asked Hank, a member of the leadership core of the Invincibles, what additional questions might be included in the interview schedule to obtain a better understanding of why kids form gangs. He replied: "Ask them about feelin's of bein' wanted at home; ask them about feelin' left out; ask them about the gang makin' up for some of these things they didn't get at home, y'know; ask them about the gang makin' them feel important, feel wanted, needed. Ask them about the feelin' of security that it gives you, always knowin' you got the guys backin' you up. Ask them about the feelin' of importance that they get from bein' in a gang."

By far the least productive section of the questionnaire was the subdivision concerning "Status Outside Gang." Very few meaningful responses were obtained from this section; it appeared that the reason for this was that they had never, until this interview, given much thought to how outsiders viewed them; whatever rewards were inherent in status, these rewards were derived from within the gang, not without. This might be variously defined as subculture, as alienation, anomie, or communication breakdown.

The two most helpful theorists in this study were Thrasher[16] and Yablonsky.[17] Both confirmed the three-level hierarchy of leaders, members, and peripherals as was consistently found in this study; yet there was no mention of peripheral adults. Thrasher emphasized the normalcy of ganging, Yablonsky the pathology, especially of gang leaders. This study found both: the two healthiest and the two most disturbed boys were both gang leaders. Further confirmed was the

aimlessness, the constant kick-seeking, the "chameleon" character of Yablonsky's gangs; also the off-again-on-again alliances and enmities. Yet certain intergroup relationships were found which are not described in gang literature. Neither was there support for Yablonsky's thesis that stable slums produce stealing gangs while unstable slums of ethnic clash produce fighting gangs. There was simply no clear-cut relationship in Freeport. Rather than "paranoid" leaders, as Yablonsky suggests, it appeared that the leaders often invented enemies and fabricated threat in order to integrate their gangs. Thrasher's finding of a wide range from loose to tight gang structure is well supported.

The findings of several factor studies (Hart,[18] Glueck and Glueck,[19] Hewitt and Jenkins,[20] and Wattenberg and Balistrieri[21]) were well supported: poverty, family disorganization, parental neglect, immorality, indifference and lack of supervision, as correlates of delinquency and ganging. The origins of three separate gangs (two included in this study) were traced to the home of one boy whose mother and two sisters were engaged in prostitution. Boys and girls could come and go as they chose, stay as long as they chose, engage in any activity they chose except smashing furnishings. This extreme laxness and indifference to cultural norms was the most common finding of the factor studies. Only two of the twenty subjects were living with both natural parents at the time of interview; only one was in school—and that due to a suspended court order of commitment.

Several sociologists have incorporated or "sociologized" certain psychoanalytic concepts: Parsons,[22] Cohen,[23] Blanchard,[24] and Bloch and Niederhoffer.[25] None of these neo-Freudian concepts proved particularly illuminating in this study, again due perhaps to the researcher's bias.

The fact that Glenn of the Tyrants and Hank of the Invincibles had previously been members of

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[13] Sykes & Matza, *Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency*, 22 AM. Soc. REV. 644 (1957).
[14] THOMAS, THE UNADJUSTED GIRL (1923).
[15] DURKHEIN, DIVISION OF LABOR IN SOCIETY (1947).
[16] THRASHER, THE GANG (1926).
[17] YABLONSKY, THE VIOLENT GANG (1962).

[18] Hart, *et al., Multiple-factor Analysis of Traits of Delinquent Boys*, 17 J. Soc. PSYCHOL. 191 (1943).
[19] GLUECK & GLUECK, UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY (1950).
[20] HEWITT & JENKINS, FUNDAMENTAL PATTERNS OF MALADJUSTMENT (1946).
[21] Wattenberg & Balistrieri, *Gang Membership and Juvenile Misconduct*, 15 AM. Soc. REV. 744 (1952).
[22] Parsons, *Certain Primary Sources and Patterns of Aggression in the Social Structure of the Western World*, 10 PSYCHIATRY 167 (1947).
[23] COHEN, *supra* note 6.
[24] BLANCHARD, *The Group Process in Gang Rape*, 49 J. Soc. PSYCHOL. 259 (1959).
[25] BLOCH & NIEDERHOFFER, THE GANG: A STUDY IN ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR (1958).

gangs in metropolitan areas (cities over 1,000,000) gave an unusual opportunity to compare small-town and big-city gangs. The same interview schedule of 107 questions was followed. Similarities between Freeport gangs and these two metropolitan gangs were: constant thrill seeking and hedonistic activity; predatory behavior; use of "pull" in gang hierarchy; the emphasis on fighting, drinking, theft, and sex; the similarity of rules and taboos; the strong sense of in-group and out-group, Observed differences in the big city were: more formalized, complex structure; less predatory behavior for kicks, more for profit; satellite gangs; greater accommodation techniques between police and gangs; common use of narcotics; coercive recruitment of new members and coercive retention of old ones; even more fascistic leadership than in the small town.

One of the metropolitan areas described was Riverport, a hundred miles or so from Freeport. Here Glenn had been a member of the Counts, named after their leader. Here he describes an anomaly not mentioned in the literature: vandalism and assault for pay:

" ... Then we'd just do things in Freeport for kicks—*there* (Riverport) it was all for profit. We all had cars in Riverport. In Freeport I was the only one who had a car. In Freeport we never busted up anything or beat up anybody for pay. Nobody ever does that in Freeport. In Riverport that was the main reason for gang fights—Mexican kids wreckin' somethin' in our territory for pay."

Q. Did you do quite a bit of this smashing and destroying property where you got paid for it?

A. Yeh, most of it was stuff we got paid for.

Q. Why would a guy want to destroy property—to put a competitor out of business?

A. Yeh, competitors. And to collect insurance mostly, I guess. They never did tell us why; the less we knew the better. They played it real safe so they'd be in the clear. Like if it was a car they wanted smashed up they'd take the keys out of it and roll up the windows and lock it so's we'd have to break in. Or if it was a store they'd leave it locked up and we'd break in and wreck it—really tear it up. We'd break into the cash register or else take it away so it would look like the place had been robbed. Sometimes they'd burn it.

Q. What do you consider the most serious thing you did like this, in the Counts?

A. It didn't bother me none to burn or steal, bust a place up, smash a car, and so on. The worst—the one I hated most—was beatin' up a woman. This guy came in and wanted her beat up—he said he wanted her hurt bad. There was four us had to do it.

Q. How come he wanted this particular woman beat up?

A. I dunno. Like I say, the less you know, the better. I heard later she used to be his wife or somethin'. She was about 22 or 23. Then he come back later. He was mad because we really hurt her.

Q. Even though this was what he asked you to do—

A. Yeh, he said he wanted her hurt bad. We done what he wanted. But he was mad. Said we shouldn't have hurt her so bad. I didn't like that job. But ole Count, he—Count kinda enjoyed it. He was a kind of a nut—like he was out of his head. He just liked to see people get hurt, or hurt them. I seen him one time take a motorcycle chain and like to kill a guy with it.

Q. Who was the guy?

A. Just a stranger walkin' down the street—some guy we'd never seen before. He knocked him down with that chain— laid his head open—then just kept hittin' him with it. He was really a mess—blood all over. Then he liked to beat up women. I think he was capable of anything. That's why I wanted out.

WHY GANGS?

It is well confirmed, as Spaulding avers,[26] that people form in small intimate cliques from childhood through adulthood, and that adolescents are in no wise unique in this respect. Yet it appears to this researcher that the emotional investment in the primary group is considerably greater during adolescence than at any earlier or later period. Several members reported, for instance, that their gang frequently would stay together, day and night, for three or four days on end. We rarely hear of such intensive fraternization among adults. Why is this so? Why are adolescents more "groupy" than older or younger persons? Teh writer believes that many (but not all) of the social and psycholog-

[26] Spaulding, *Cliques, Gangs, and Networks*, 32 SOCIAL. & SOC. RES. 928 (1948).

ical pressures and pulls, needs and drives are more intense during adolescence, due to: (1) the nature of this period as a time for establishment of identity, self and sex-role, as an emancipation period, as a time of ambiguous and undefined status, all these intensified by rapid physiological and psychological change; (2) the fact that certain cultural demands impinge upon this age, *e.g.*, vocational and academic choice, mating choice, dropping or continuing school, and military service; further that adolescence marks the height of social class awareness and snobbery; (3) the fact that other modes of need satisfaction are available to children (*e.g.*, nurturance, non-competitive play) and to adults (marriage, jobs, enonomic self-sufficiency). If all these factors were held constant, we may still find more clique formation in adolescence; perhaps there are still other determinants unknown to us (*e.g.*, a genetic factor, as suggested by Redl[27]). The author's view is that most of the variance in ganging can be accounted for by the above variables.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTROL

A word is in order concerning costs of gang control. A legislator recently hooted because the proposed cost of a delinquency-control program would cost more per boy than a year in college. Let us take a look at the cost of gang delinquency in Freeport. Nine of the gang members were currently locked up at a cost of about $22,500 per year, an average imprisonment of two years: $45,000. There had been fourteen previous incarcerations, somewhat shorter, but more costly; another $55,000. With current recidivism rates we can expect a minimum of another $60,000 cost.Two of the boys, I suspect, will spend their lives behind bars—another $175,000 (since this is only the author's prediction this figure is not included below). It is difficult to estimate the cost to the community in thefts and depredations; $40,000 is a conservative guesstimate. Further difficulty is encountered in assessing in monetary terms other consequences of this ganging: *e.g.*, three illegitimate children of these members are known to the researcher, and likely several more. The average A. F. D. C. mother receives welfare for a little over four years: add another $18,000, plus $6,000 A. F. D. C. for the family of a man who was murdered by a gang leader. Another $12,000 is estimated for court costs

[27] Redl, *The Psychology of Gang Formation and the Treatment of Juvenile Delinquents*, 1 PSYCHOAN. STUD. CHILD. 367 (1945).

and parole supervision. No attempt is made to estimate direct costs of these youths who will find themselves and families on welfare in coming years. These figures total up to $236,000 for twenty youths—a year of college, indeed! If a street gang worker, for instance, could have redirected the life of only one of these twenty youths, his salary would have been amply justified.[28] If our prediction is correct concerning the two life-term prison candidates, and if only two or three of our boys spend a year on welfare, which is a conservative prediction, the costs of these four gangs could easily run above half a million dollars for the community of Freeport, and we could well afford the salary of a person who could redirect the life of one youth out of fifty. Let us emphasize that except for the last two projections, the above figures are based on *known* costs, *known* sentences, and *known* recidivism rates, and that the sampling of twenty out of 80–90 members was considered fairly representative.

SUMMARY

Twenty ex-members of four juvenile gangs in a small, atypical midwestern town were interviewed in semi-structured interview situations. Interviews were tape recorded, replayed and carefully analyzed, coded, tabulated and recorded. Focus of the interview was primarily on gang structure and dynamics. Findings were compared with studies of metropolitan gangs and with modern gang theory. The author concludes that there are many more similarities than differences between small-town and big-town gangs; that no single theoretical system adequately explains the observed dynamics, yet every theorist makes some unique contribution to the understanding of ganging.

[28] The charge has been made that street gang work is uneconomic because of the long time required to establish contact with a gang. I believe this day is past. I was with a youth worker following a youth dance which his group had sponsored. He fell to talking with a Negro boy of about fourteen, and shortly identified himself as a youth worker. Then:
"I bet you belong to a gang, dontcha?"
"Yeh, sure, man."
"What's the name of it?"
"Rattlers."
"How many guys you got in it?"
"About fourteen."
"Pretty good gang?"
"Ain't none better."
"Where do you hang out?"
"North Oak Street, by the gas plant."
"I'd sure like to meet your guys. Could I come over some night?"
"Sure, man. Come on over any night."
It struck me that he had accomplished in ten minutes what we used to spend three or four months doing.