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Deviant Self-Concept Among Marijuana Dealers: Examining the Applicability of Labeling Concepts

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APPROVED BY MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

Don C. Gibbons, Chairman

Barry D. Lebowitz

Joseph E. Jones

Chapter I of this thesis is an introduction to the study, summarizing

the purpose and intent of the research.   Chapter II provides a general over-

view of current deviance theories and perspectives along with a relatively

detailed discussion of the labeling perspective of deviance.   Chapter III

contains a discussion of the research problem and the methodology utilized

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field research for this study.

DEVIANT SELF-CONCEPT AMONG MARIJUANA DEALERS:

EXAMINING THE APPLICABILITY OF LABELING CONCEPTS

by

CYNTHIA MADARIS

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TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH:

The members of the Committee approve the thesis of

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this thesis is dope dealing in marijuana. However, the main interest in this topic is not centered on unique behavior patterns of persons engaged in this illegal activity nor is it much concerned with the activity itself. Rather, this study was designed to investigate empirically claims of labeling theorists and deviance theory. Through focused interviews with dealers of marijuana, an inquiry was made into deviant self-concepts on the part of those persons. More specifically, attention centered around the variables of type of dealer (lid or small quantity pound); length of time in dealing business; and contact with formal sanctioning agencies as possible conditioning or influencing factors in self-concept formation. The research was intended to examine, in a field situation, concepts that have to this point received more theoretical explication and discussion than empirical scrutiny.

Chapter II of this thesis provides a general overview of current deviance theories and perspectives along with a relatively detailed discussion of the labeling perspective on deviance. Chapter III contains a discussion of the research problem and the methodology utilized to address that topic. Chapter IV analyzes specifically the data uncovered in the study while Chapter V endeavors to examined more generally linkages of the findings to the propositions of the labeling perspective. The last

chapter, Chapter VI, is concerned with problems that were faced in doing the field research for this study.

CHAPTER II

THE ANALYSIS OF DEVIANCE

I. INTRODUCTION

As long as there have been societal rules, norms, and expectations,
there have been people who violated them. These violators or deviants
from the rules of a society or norms of a subgroup are the principal objects
of study in the sociology of deviance. Inquiry about deviance represents
a relatively new area of sociology which is still markedly given over to
conceptual formation and elaboration (Gibbons and Jones, 1975). In its
historical development, the study of deviance has involved a variety of
theories and formulations. Deviance has been examined in terms of biogenic,
psychogenic and various sociogenic perspectives. However, most recently,
some new views often designated as the labeling perspective have gained
prominence. The study reported here is located within the labeling orien-
tation in that it examined hypothesized societal reaction influences upon
drug dealers, their careers, and their self-concept patterns. In order
to place this research within past and present viewpoints on deviance, it
is necessary to begin with a brief review of major lines of argument on
deviance.

Early criminologists strongly favored biological hypotheses of
deviant and criminal behavior which arose after the publication of Darwin's

Origins of the Species in 1859. These views centered around the notions
of inheritance of criminal tendencies and physical inferiorities. Too,
some criminologists suggested the existence of a relationship between body
type and predisposition toward criminality.

Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) was one of the first criminologists to
utilize the biogenic perspective in his work. His basic contention was
that criminals are throwbacks to primitive men who were, in his view,
violent and asocial. Later, in the 1930's Hooton, an American anthropolo-
gist, added to the biogenic literature with a study of alleged physical
inferiority among criminals. By comparing incarcerated offenders with a
population of non-criminals he concluded that the former are drawn from
the population sub-group of the hereditarily and physicall inferior.
Another study concerned with body types and criminality was the rather well-
known classification scheme of William Sheldon (1940). He maintained
that persons vary in body type, being predominately mesomorphic, endomorphic,
or ectomorphic. Bodily structure, in turn, was held to determine the
individual's temperament and propensity to deviance or conformity.

Although continuously popular with the lay public, scientific interest
in biogenic theory waned until a recent revival. This renewed attention
can be seen in the hypothesis that the XYY chromosome pattern is signi-
ficantly over-represented in the population of violent criminals. In this
disorder, the proponents claim, it is the patterning of the chromosomes,
not the person, that is abnormal. Evidence has shown, however (Gibbons,
1968:148) that the XYY chromosome syndrome while slightly more apparent
among incarcerated criminals than among non-criminals does not appear with

enough frequency to play a large role in causation of lawbreaking. Also, it has been shown that the people with the XYY chromosome disorder are not markedly agressive.

Biogenic theory has been used in the past as a defense of racist views. For example it was utilized as a scientific rationalization for propounding and maintaining the inferiority of Blacks and Indians. Apart from these overtones, the most serious criticism may be its inability to account for fluctuations in deviance in a single gene pool from one period to the next (Sagarin, 1975:88). As a theory of deviance, then, even if certain claims were verified, biogenic theory would be of limited usefulness. At present, biogenic theory is being scientifically examined with relation to the genesis of alcoholism. Too,research has been done on the biological factors in criminality (Shon & Roth: 1974).

Another body of thought, termed psychogenic theories of deviance, is in one respect similar to the biogenic view, in that it also incorporates the assumption that there is something peculiar or "wrong" with the deviant and that causes his nonconforming behavior. In psychogenic views, attention is concentrated upon mental problems of deviants and peculiarities in their backgrounds with societal variables given only secondary consideration. It was argued by early psychogenic theorists that there must be something mentally or psychologically wrong with the deviant to prompt him/her to commit the deviant behavior in the first place. Later studies, however, have turned up evidence that deviants are no more distrubed than those who were considered "normal" (Gibbons, 1968:162-73).

As with biogenic theories, personality theories can also be easily twisted to serve the purpose of those who wish to use them as a "deceptive

form of name calling" (Gibbons and Jones, 1975:115). The judgment of normality or abnormality, for example, can often be biased and made out of context.

Freud, a great intellectual influence in the 20th century, initiated the psychoanalytic approach to some forms of deviance. He believed that people are born with drives and needs that demand to be satisfied. These needs, though, operate purely on a subconscious level in the adult person and are held in control through learned social behavior. Flaws in the learned behavior or disturbances during the learning process can propel people to commit deviant acts. To Freudians, then, deviance often grows out of personality disturbance.

Vold (1958:119) summarizes the Freudian/psychoanalytic view of deviance by stating that deviant behavior is viewed as some "form of symbolic release of repressed complexes. The conflict in the unconscious mind gives rise to feelings of guilt and anxiety with a consequent desire for punishment to remove the guilt feelings and restore a proper balance of good against evil. The criminal then commits the criminal act in order to be caught and punished."

While many studies have been conducted that discount psychogenic arguments, there is agreement (e.g. Gibbons and Jones, 1975:116-117; Inkeles, 1964:54) that psychological characteristics do, indeed, often play some part in individual deviance. In addition it is felt that personality factors often play a part in influencing the particular type of activity in which the deviant engages.

II. SOCIOGENIC THEORIES OF DEVIANCE

Sociogenic approaches to deviance embrace a variety of theories that view social processes as being the source of deviance, rather than personal characteristics of the norm violator. Anomie theory, an early sociogenic argument, was developed by Emile Durkheim in his study of suicide (1897). To Durkheim, anomie, referred to a lack of ties to society on the part of the individual, giving rise to personal tensions and anxieties that lead individuals to suicide or other deviant acts.

More recently, Merton (1938) modified Durkheim's formulation and concepts in his theory of deviance and anomie. He advances the argument that there is disjunction in many societies and social systems between the goals toward which people are socially induced to strive and the means available to them in their efforts to achieve these goals. This conflict creates a weakening of the norms that hold the person in conformity. Socially unacceptable means may then be employed to achieve the desired but otherwise unattainable goals.

Anomie theory has been criticized on many points including its postulation of a single societal value system to which persons conform or from which they deviate. At best, it appears that this theory has only limited applicability to certain types of crime and deviance. Also, few actual research applications of the theory have been made to specific instances of deviance. Gibbons (1968:187-188) points out that a further weakness of anomie theory is its lack of explicitness with regard to its boundaries or scope. The theory is relatively unclear regarding exactly what forms

of lawbreaking are covered by it and what forms are not included.

The social learning approach to deviance, as advanced by Edwin H. Sutherland (1937, 1974) asserts that as with any social behavior, criminal behavior is learned and taught by association with those already involved in it.[1] While the notion that nonconformity is learned is a valuable contribution to the understanding of deviance, this approach fails to explain among other things fluctuations in crime and the development of conditions that must exist in order for a person to become deviant.

III. LABELING ARGUMENTS

The labeling perspective is the newest set of ideas in the deviance literature and one that has generated much controversy. Labeling notions call for the study of the social consequences of deviant acts rather than emphasizing the specific acts themselves and/or their origins. In addition, these formulations stress the processes through which acts become defined and regarded as "deviant" in the first place. Emphasis is put also upon the reactions of formal sanctioning agencies to deviant actors and the effects of these reactions upon self-concepts and identities of the labeled "deviants" (Schur, 1971:3; Gibbons and Jones, 1975:122). The main focus of this approach, then, is on interactions between norm violating actors and social audiences. Consequently, labeling theoriests identify deviance as processual in nature. Schur (1971:7-8) enumerates a central tenet of labeling theory as: "deviance and social control always involve the social definition... (deviance) is viewed as a continuously shaped and reshaped outcome of dynamic processes of social interaction."

The labeling perspective is not a unified body of thought that can be properly called a theory. Rather, it is a set of broad themes or a loose perspective that is shared by a numer of sociologists (Gibbons and Jones, 1975:122). But, even though this orientation is incomplete it has become increasingly important in the deviance literature.

Labeling arguments began with the writings of proponents who effectively urged a major shift in emphasis away from traditional views of deviance. As these views gained in acceptance, the adherents amplified upon the original concepts both in theorizing and research. In the 1960's and early 1970's attention shifted to critiques of the perspective. Thus, a number of critical reviews of labeling notions have appeared, pointing out the limitations of this orientation and modifications that must be made in the developing theoretical position.

Because so much of the orientation is founded upon the work of a few key figures, some of the basic concepts of labeling arguments as articulated by these scholars and later writers ought to be identified and discussed.

Edwin M. Lemert's _Social Pathology_ (1951) was the first textbook exposition of the labeling approach, although some have detected roots of the "labeling" orientation well prior to 1951(Sagarin, 1975:122). Polsky (1967:195), for instance, sees the beginning of the labeling viewpoint in 1611, at the time of the Inquisition. Social scientists writing before Lemert had already drawn attention to the relative nature of societal definitions of the situation (Thomas, 1923) and to societal reactions to the criminals and the resulting reactions of the criminals to social "tagging" (Tannenbaum, 1938).

In his 1951 book Lemert argued that deviance from societal rules is processual in character. If an initial non-conforming act comes to public attention, social audiences then may label the person a deviant, i.e. as someone "bad" or different from "normals". Those social reactions are followed by the individual's response to such labeling. Often, repeated social reactions ultimately result in lowered self-image, the defenses against which often push deviants into more severe, secondary deviance. Deviance was viewed as a process, with social reaction often being a major but not sole part of this interactive pattern. That is, Lemert did not argue that social reactions always lead to further involvement in deviance nor did he attend only to social responses as crucial in deviant careers. He declared only that some deviation "sets off a chain of social reaction." Moreover, deviation is "one of the factors, but not a direct determiner of the societal reaction" (Lemert, 1951:47).

Howard S. Becker is another sociologist who has written extensively of labeling notions and who, along with Lemert, was influential in the development of this perspective. One of his early essays (1953) dealt with the learning process involved in becoming a marijuana user. However, it was in another essay later reprinted in The Outsiders (1963) that he presented his views on labeling in detail, emphasizing the role of negative labeling in the development of stable patterns of deviance over time. Deviance, he felt, is created by societal groups that formulate behavioral rules and then selectively apply these rules to alleged deviants.

Although the labeling perspective is centered within the field of sociology, some of these themes have been expressed in other disciplines as well. A number of theorists in mental health and psychiatry have offered labeling arguments. For example, Thomas Szasz (1960) argued that

"mental illness" is often a label or social definition applied to persons who exhibit annoying, troublesome, but non-pathological conduct.

While there is no single version of the labeling perspective, there are a number of central ideas held in common by many deviance theorists. One of the main themes is that deviance reflects patterns and processes of social definitions, not simply acts of wrongdoing or departures from norms. As Erikson (1962:308) argues:

> Deviance is not a property inherent in certain forms of behavior: it is a property conferred upon these forms by the audience which directly or indirectly witness them. Sociologically, then, the critical variable is the social audience. (emphasis in the original).

Thus labeling theory deals with the origins and ramifications of deviance as identified through social definitions rather than simply with the characteristics of deviating acts or actors. This perspective also views deviance as a social process of interaction between non-conforming persons (and alleged non-conformists) and the responses of others to this real or imputed deviation.

Another major theme is that norm-violations are usually situational or relative rather than being always a set of static acts whose meanings are consistently the same at all times and everywhere. Also, the labeling position posits value pluralism as characteristic of modern societies, rather than postulating one main value system or common cultural structure. That is, there are a number of subcultures or value systems, at times conflicting, from which the actor must choose as guidelines for his behavior or toward which he may direct his actions. Accordingly, persons do not simply select between clearly deviant or non-deviant alternatives to a societal value system. Rather, they often drift into behavior that carries the risk of being labeled deviant. Lemert (1967:11-12) makes this point:

> Deviation ... becomes merely one possible outcome of these actions but it is not inevitable. It hinges rather on the turn of circumstances or convergence of external factors.

Lemert has elaborated upon the varied sources of deviance and upon degrees of commitment to nonconformity exhibited by different persons. He identified individual, situational and systematic origins of deviance (Lemert, 1963:23). Individual deviance arises from idiosyncratic characteristics within the actor, while situational deviance develops out of stressful situations, with few special attributes of the individual and personal eccentricities being involved. Systematic deviation refers to a number of individual behavior patterns that become organized into a specific subculture or system:

> When communication carries specific content, when rapport develops between deviants and common rationalizations make their appearance, the unique and situational forms of deviation are converted to organized or systematic deviation (Lemert, 1967:23).

A third common theme concerns the stages in the process of being labeled as a deviant. The first stage, as identified by Lemert (1967:17-19), is primary deviation which is polygenetic, i.e. it may arise from any of a wide variety of sources: biological, psychological, social and/or cultural. Primary deviation refers to initial acts of nonconformity that are viewed by the actor as atypical of his "real" self, as inconsequential or as unimportant. By itself, primary deviation does not lead to "symbolic reorganization at the level of self-regarding attidues and social roles" (Lemert, 1967:17). As a result of officially sanctioned reaction to this primary deviance, a discrediting label is sometimes placed on the individual. The consequence of labeling, particularly repeated instances of it, is usually the emergence of secondary deviation, that is: "a special class of socially defined responses which people make to problems created by

the societal reaction to their deviance" (Lemert, 1967:40). These re-
sponses become the organizing factors of the person's life, creating
certain roles and attitudes. In secondary deviance, the societal responses
become more important than the primary deviance that led to these reactions
in the sense that the individual becomes enmeshed in a deviant role, with
a deviant self-image and adjustment patterns centering about his deviant
status. In addition, according to labeling views, the assignment of the
stigmatizing label and the public identification of the person, usually
acts to reinforce or "fix" the individual in that status (Sagarin, 1975:129).
Secondary deviance, in turn, facilitates the development of a deviant
career insofar as the offender becomes incarcerated or ostracized from
the rest of society. Along this same line, Becker (1963) developed the
concepts of deviant career and sequential models of deviance as tools
for discussing the orderly changes in the actions of the deviant over time.
(Gibbons and Jones, 1975:129-130).

IV. CRITICISMS OF LABELING VIEWS

In the many criticisms that have appeared regarding labeling con-
cepts, two main critical positions have emerged. Some critics eschew the
entire viewpoint, seeing little value in it, while others have opted for
modification of several of the conceptual areas, salvaging fundamental
portions of the approach. In the discussion to follow, a number of the
lines of criticism aimed at labeling will be looked at within the frameworks
employed by Schur (1971) and Sagarin (1975). The discussion will include
the criticisms most often directed against the labeling perspective.

Labeling Is Not A Full-Blown Theory

One of the fundamental criticisms of labeling views was offered by Gibbs (1966:11) who asserted that it was not clear whether the perspective was intended to be a "substantive theory of deviant behavior (i.e., an explanation of the phenomenon) or a conceptual treatment of it." Gibbons and Jones (1975:134) agree with Gibbs when they state that "labeling views represent embryonic theory at best" and that the perspective seems to "operate more as sensitizing claims than anything else." A number of critics, in other words, have argued that the labeling orientation is not a fully organized, logical theory from which specific, testable propositions can be derived.

Failure To Distinguish Adequately Between Deviance and Non-Deviance

Gibbs (1966) sees another flaw of the orientation in that the line between the deviant and the non-deviant is a hazy and shifting one. He claims that the labeling perspective fails to identify the degree of social reaction that is required before an act or individual is to be considered deviant. As Gibbons and Jones have noted (1975:131), some theorists give the impression that they feel that deviants and non-deviants are differentiated from each other by societal reaction alone, that is, that "deviants" and "non-deviants" are nearly alike in terms of the actual behavior they exhibit. They cite Scheff (1966) as one of these theorists who writes of mental illness as being but a label attached to "residual rule-breakers." Residual rules, according to Scheff (1966) are forms of conduct for which standard and explicit labels are lacking. He sees societal reactions as

serving to convert selected residual rule breakers into "deviants." The "mentally ill" are those residual rule-breakers who have been singled out by social audiences. According to Scheff, nearly all people are involved in residual rule-breaking, hence "mental illness" constitutes a social label rather than behavior that distinguishes the person from "normals."

This criticism revolves around the relativistic orientation of the perspective. It is necessary in labeling "that the sociologist view as problematic what he generally assumes as given -- namely that forms of behavior are per se deviant" (Kitsuse, 1962:248). While most critics (e.g. Gibbs, 1966) concede that this is one of the major strengths of the labeling perspective rather than a weakness, many of them have also pointed to theoretical complications that holding such a view entails. Consider Simmons' statement (1956:225) that "almost every conceivable dimension of human behavior is considered deviant from the normative perspective of some existing persons and groups." This omnibus definition of deviance[2] however, requires the sociologist to consider such a wide range of social activities as deviant as to defy orderly examination or scrutiny.

Narrow Focus of Labeling Arguments

Various critical comments have been offered on the narrow focus of labeling views. One criticism pertains to the supposed neglect of labelers of the problem of etiology due, it is said, to their preoccupation with the social psychology of the deviant and the impact of labeling upon him/ her. Mankoff (1971:211) sees this defect as the most serious theoretical shortcoming of this perspective. He avers that adherents of the labeling orientation assign minimal importance to the causes of initial rule breaking.

Another aspect of this criticism is that labeling theorists put "stress upon the ascribed aspects of deviant status at its supposed failure to consider deviant motivation adequately" (Schur, 1971:19). Schur regards this as a valid criticism and perceives ambivalence present in the labeling viewpoint: "On the one hand, the actor is viewed as largely at the mercy of the reaction processes; what they are determines what he is to become. At the same time, the approach incorporates from symbolic interactionism a view of the actor as significantly shaping his own projects and lines of action." (1971:19).

Yet another version of this criticism is that labeling denies attribution of independence and responsibility to the actor. While Akers (1968:141-52) concedes that labeling creates some deviance, and even often operates to increase the probability that certain stigmatized persons will commit further deviance, the "label does not create the behavior in the first place" (emphasis in original). Similarly, Sagarin (1975:136) argues that labeling arguments do not recognize that the original societal identification and reaction were brought forth by the norm-violating behavior of the individual. He charges (1975:136) that these theorists "turn Durkheim upside down" and "downplay the acts that brought forth the outrage and then emphasize the outrage that created the deviant character of the behavior although not, of course, the behavior itself." The investigation of deviance, Sagarin contends, must include both the act and the hostile reaction which followed it, given that the societal reaction usually is a response to the unacceptable behavior of certain people.

Failure to Explain Certain Forms of Deviance

Some critics charge that labeling arguments are too broad and sweeping, being offered as fitting all sorts of deviance. Critics and

contemporary exponents of the perspective both have noted that little work has been done in the areas of ordinary crime and have agreed that some deviant acts are more difficult than others to account for in labeling terms (Schur, 1971:2). There have been some exceptions to this inattention to ordinary crimes, notably Quinney's work (1970) and his attempt to extend labeling arguments to this phenomena.

The labeling literature is often restricted to analyses of such actors as prostitutes, stutters (Lemert, 1951), unruly boys (Tannenbaum, 1938), marijuana smokers, dance hall musicians (Becker, 1963), juvenile delinquents (Matza, 1969), homosexuals (Schur, 1965; Kutsuse, 1962), and abortionists (Schur, 1965). Some of these "crimes" are more on the order of what Schur labels (1965) "crimes without victims" rather than so-called ordinary crime which includes both crime of violence and property. Sagarin (1975:130) suggests that activities such as the former are ones for which "...one can make a reasonable case for there being nothing inherently 'wrong' or anti-social about the act but is the way in which man sees and defines the act that brings about the social harm." He continues by commenting that such a criticism of labeling views is not necessarily an argument against labeling phenomena but only an acknowledgement that labeling arguments may have to be confined to certain types of deviance.

Mankoff (1971:205), too, recognizes this weakness in the labeling perspective. He sees this failure to articulate some boundaries to the application of labeling as a serious shortcoming which prevents evaluation of the significance of the work done within the area.

> While labeling theorists may think they are only applying the
> principles of the labeling perspective to one form of deviation,
> their incidential endorsements of generalizability to other
> forms of deviant behavior make the critic wary of "straw men"
> arguments when he attempts to project the implications of
> specific research for general theory (Mankoff, 1971:205).

Processing As A Turning Point

A major criticism of the labeling perspective is directed toward

one of the basic contentions of this view: that the negative public

labeling of a deviant becomes the pivotal point which pushes him into

further, secondary deviance. Most critics hold that while this may be

true in some cases, it is not true in the majority of them. In an early

essay, Garfinkel (1956) saw public labeling as a "degradation ceremony"

that led to the development of a deviant identity. Mankoff (1971) main-

tained that labeling experiences do not necessarily lead to career deviance

and that deviants can be induced to relinquish their rule-violating behavior

by the labeling process. Modifications related to this point of process

and secondary deviation have been offered by Thorsell and Klemke (1972)

who argued that labeling experiences may have different outcomes, depending

upon other factors in the specific situation in which labeling occurs.[3]

They elaborated on this argument and identified a set of elements that

should be taken into account when assessing the varied effects of labeling

experiences on persons. A few of these additional considerations are,

for instance, the relationship of the deviant to the labeler, the immersion

or commitment of the person in the activity at the time of apprehension,

and the ease with which the label can be removed or denied. They contend

that various career outcomes are possibly dependent on these diverse

situation contingencies.

Labeling Generates An Underdog Ideology

Some critics of the labeling perspective claim that adherents to

the view take the side of the deviant and tend to structure their studies

accordingly. Sagarin (1975:132) asserts that labelers see the deviant as

victimized by society and that sociologists "...bend every effort to show

the deviant in a light in which condemnation will be alleviated."

Further, he declares that much sociological research is "ideologically

motivated, designed to establish that evil does not inhere in the deviant

nor in his acts but is generated in the treatment by the hostile society."

Bordua (1967) holds to this same view of labeling as championing the

underdog:

> The deviant as underdog seems to be coming into his own, and,
> correlatively, "due process" seems to be replacing earlier
> welfare-oriented shibboleths. In any event, it seems easy for
> this perspective to turn into a kind of witch-hunt in reverse --
> the witches now being the decision-makers rather than the
> deviants (1967:162).

Gouldner (1968) is another critic of this aspect of labeling notions,

alleging that in taking the side of the deviant rather than the decision

making and rule enforcing agencies, attention is diverted from the fact

that these very agencies and institutions are the true cause of the

deviant's suffering. The labeling approach, Gouldner contends, does not

question the role of societal institutions in causing deviance, rather,

it views persons from a "normal" conforming perspective. That is, people

reluctantly deviate from societal mores and, given the chance, most of

them would gladly return to conformity. This labeling view of things

deflects attention away from criticisms of the master institutions of

society and the role they play in generating deviance, particularly among

the socially powerless and socially victimized (Liazos, 1972).

Labeling Turns Away from Rehabilitation

One aspect of this objection to the labeling perspective is related

to the assumption that any societal reaction directed at deviants leads

to the development of a deviant career pattern. For example, regarding

a deviant's experiences with penal institutions and mental hospitals,

a strict interpretation of the labeling perspective would imply that

such experiences can only lead to further, deeper involvement with law-

breaking. However, conflicting evidence both supporting and negating this

claim of the labeling perspective is available in the deviance literature.[4]

Sagarin (1975:139) feels that there is a flaw in the biases of the

labeling theorists against institutionalization as a control policy. He

holds that labeling theorists view the solution to deviance as:

> Not to correct people who are disobeying rules but to stop stig-
> matizing, condemning and casting them out. The problem is not
> what activities on the part of the inmate led to institutionali-
> zation, nor how he can be changed, but what the institution does
> to dehumanize him. There is here an inherent assumption that if
> only one were to cease oppressive stigmatization, people would be
> relatively happy in their former deviant ... roles.

He then argues that this view is inappropriate to predatory and

violent crime and contends that there are harmful aspects of deviance that

are ignored in labeling views. For instance, not dealt with is the possi-

bility that violent and predatory crime may attract people who are already

disturbed and the possibility that role-gratification may sometimes

accompany social stigma.

Labeling Has Not Given Enough Attention To Secret Deviance

Gibbs (1966:14) has argued that many labeling adherents hint that deviance can be identified in terms of norms but then go on to talk only about deviance defined in terms of societal reaction. In this way of thinking, there can be no secret deviance or undiscovered violation of rules. One cannot be consistent with social reaction notions if he speaks of deviance which is undetected and has received no social reaction.

An illustration of Gibbs' point can be seen in Scheff's (1966:33) arguments, where he utilizes Becker's separation of rule-breaking and deviance:

> Rule-breaking will refer to a class of acts, violation of social norms and deviance to particular acts which have been publicly and officially labeled as norm violators.

Sagarin (1975:143) notes that when Becker writes of the deviant as one to whom the label is successfully applied, such usage would omit from attention a large number of people highly regarded by society. Becker however, is inconsistent in his definitions, for he explicitly recognizes the category of "secret" deviant (1968:20-21).

Insufficient Emphasis On Social Control And Social Conflict

A serious limitation of labeling notions, identified by Davis (1972), is that the perspective has become preoccupied with deviants "frequently at the expense of examining exchange systems between the deviant and his audience." Labeling to Davis, has tended to disregard the organizational side of social control while focusing almost exclusively on the actor. She feels that the starting point of research should be the policies and decisions of the reactors, rather than the reaction of the labeled person.

V. SUMMARY

This chapter has presented an overview of the various lines of deviant analysis. Too, a number of criticisms against the labeling perspective, one of the newest perspectives in deviance analysis, have been discussed. The general thrust of this chapter has been that deviance theories, particularly labeling arguments, need much logical and conceptual clarification. Additionally, a good deal of research is in order on the various propositions sketched out in the labeling perspective. It is to this latter need that the study reported here was addressed. Chapter III outlines the research problems of this thesis along with the methodology that was employed in conducting the study.

Footnotes:

1. See Akers (1973, for a recent example of the learning approach to studying deviance,

2. One example of a sociologist who has utilized an omnibus definition of deviance in his work is Lofland (1969),

3. See Gibbons and Jones (1975) Chapter VIII for discussions relating to this point,

4. This criticism of the labeling perspective is discussed by Gibbons and Jones (1975:151-64) in greater detail.

CHAPTER III

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

I. INTRODUCTION

The research reported here was intended to examine certain labeling arguments through an exploratory investigation of self-concepts and patterns of deviance among people dealing marijuana. The main focus was upon two types of dealers (the lid dealer and the small quantity pound dealer) with specific interest in the length of time each dealer had been in business and whether or not the person has had any contact with a formal sanctioning agency. Through focused interviews with dealers who exhibited differing combinations of these variables, it was possible to investigate some of the assertions of the labeling perspective regarding the development of a deviant self-concept, particularly those assertions holding that degree of involvement in deviant conduct patterns and contacts with defining or sanctioning agencies are likely to result in deviant self-images and "secondary deviance." Then too, the study sheds some light upon the extent to which dope dealing is pursued either as an occupation or avocation by certain people, and in turn, the relevance of that variable upon formation of a deviant self-concept.

II. DEFINITIONS

Definitions of deviance tend to vary from one exponent of the labeling orientation to another. However, the study reported here eschewed

the idea of deviation being identified solely by societal reaction.
Instead, deviance in this research referred to violation of "societal"
norms. Gibbons and Jones (1975:47-48) have examined the societal defin-
ition of deviance and have noted that this interpretation focuses on
behavior that: "1) presumably violates culturally widespread conduct rules,
2) arouses strong societal reactions, 3) results in formal social control
activities directed at it by the police, correctional bureaucracies and
the like, and 4) often leads into 'secondary deviation', that is, a
deviant role career." The activities of persons involved in an illegal
occupation or illegal avocation would usually satisfy the above criteria.

The notion of self-concept, too, has been variously defined. One
relatively concise definition has been offered by Kinch (1963:233) and was
utilized in this study:

> ...an organization of qualities that the individual attributes
> to himself. It should be understood that the word "qualities"
> is used in a broad sense to include both attributes that the
> individual might express in terms of adjectives (ambitious,
> intelligent) and also the roles he sees himself in (father,
> doctor, etc.).

For the purpose of this research, attention was focused upon that
part of the individual's self-concept that relates to deviance and his/
her dope dealing activities. That is, interest centered upon whether or
not the respondents saw themselves as deviant and upon the experiences
that produced these self-concept images. The research examined the
development of the self-concept as a process involving the reciprocal
relationships of the perceptions of others and perceptions of self.

Drug Dealing

The illegal occupation or avocation of marijuana dealing provided
the vehicle for the investigation of the applicability of some of the
basic concepts of the labeling perspective. There has been little re-
search conducted in the area of marijuana dealing, although much has been
written concerning marijuana smoking. Previous inquiry by others and
observations by this researcher into the area of "dope dealing" have
suggested that there are individuals who pattern a portion of their life
and life-style around the dealing of dope (Carey, 1968; Cavan, 1972).
This patterning is central to the distinction between dealing as an
occupation and dealing as an avocation.

Dealing exists on a number of levels. At the bottom of the hier-
archical structure and of prime importance to it is the user, the person
who buys the lids[1] or an occasional pound to divide with a few others.
These people buy these "lids" from a friend who usually confines his busi-
ness to the selling of lids exclusively and perhaps a gram of "hash" from
time to time. This is the first level of dope dealing. The second group
of persons up the scale involves the individuals from whom the lid dealer
buys. These persons sell pounds of marijuana to those who break them down
into lids. The number of pounds in a single sale is usually small. Sales
in single pounds are the rule with an occasional five pound deal. The
next individual in the order is the person who sells in a large quantity
to the person below him. He handles the large sales of five pounds to
ten pounds. In turn, this person gets the dope from the individuals who
usually are immediately involved with the initial shipment of dope into
the country. The quantity is usually in the 20-100 pound range. This,

of course, is a condensed account of the organization of marijuana dealing. Other people can be inserted between these levels who do not do much beyond arranging meetings between those who wish to buy and those who wish to sell. These people take a cut of the profit from the sale for their middle person role either by adding on to the price of the dope or receiving a prearranged quantity of dope.

The study reported here involved only the two lowest levels of dealing: the lid dealer and the small quantity pound dealer. It was necessary to confine analysis to these two groups for a number of reasons, a major one being the sheer availability of people in these levels since they exist in greater numbers than do other types. Additionally, they are more likely to be open and willing to discuss their business than those higher up in the dealing systems because, by necessity, those higher up are in positions of greater legal risk and can ill afford to confide in researchers.

III. EXPLORATORY HYPOTHESES

This research involved the investigation of marijuana dealers to examine concepts of the labeling perspective applied to a real-life situation. The notions discussed in Chapter II of deviance as a process, the part played by the social audience, primary and secondary deviance, and normalization were used to inform the investigation and to provide a basis for analysis. The study involved 22 interviews with dope dealers who fell, more or less, into the categories of lid dealers and small quantity pound dealers. These two categories were broken down further as to length of time in the dope dealing business and whether or not the dealer had had

any contact with any formal sanctioning agency with relation to marijuana.
Comparisons of information therefore will take place both within and be-
tween the two major classifications of dealers employed. In this way,
it should be possible to reach some conclusions as to the probable re-
lationships that exist between deviance and self-concept.

According to labeling perspectives, those individuals who (a) have
become most enmeshed in a deviant pattern, and/or (b) who have the most
extensive contacts with social control agencies, should be most likely to
exhibit deviant self-images. Also, those individuals who are both heavily
involved in deviance and who are heavily involved in agency contact should
show the greatest tendency toward deviant self-concepts. In short, the
argument here would be that involvement in deviance and involvement in
social reaction are both major factors in deviant self-concept formation.
When combined, the two factors are thought to be particularly potent. The
empirical possibilities suggested by labeling arguments are indicated in
the table below:

TABLE I

TYPE OF DEALER

| | Lid Dealers | | Small Quantity Pound Dealers | |
| | Agency Contact | | Agency Contact | |
Length of Involvement In Deviance	Yes	No	Yes	No
Long Time	X	Z	1	Z
Short Time	X	8	X	Z

X = Likely to view self as deviant   1 = Most likely to view self as deviant

Z = Likely to not view self as deviant   8 = Least likely to view self as deviant

Table I portrays the expected pattern findings relative to the major variables in the study. The labeling perspective suggests a number of hypotheses, including the following: (a) small quantity pound dealers who have been in business for a long period of time and have had contact with a formal sanctioning agency should be the most likely to have been labeled deviant and hence, to have a deviant self-concept. This conjecture is represented by the rank "1" in Table I. Additionally, (b) those dealers least likely, according to labeling concepts, to have a deviant self-concept are those lid dealers who have been in business for a short period of time and have had no contact with any formal sanctioning agency. Beyond these two hypothesized results, labeling arguments would suggest that all the "x's" in the Table, representing dealers who have had contact with formal sanctioning agencies, would be more likely to exhibit deviant self-concepts than the persons identified by "z", who have had no contact. More precise ranking of the members of these cells in the table can only be done empirically. It is expected, therefore, that this study may also be useful in clarifying the relationship and relative importance of involvement in deviance and contact with agencies to the development of a deviant self-concept.

IV. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

To implement this study, a diverse collection of people was sought in order to uncover the extent to which the eight categories of dealers actually exist among those who deal. Initially, dealers were contacted through acquaintances of the researcher who, in turn, introduced other dealers and so on.

The interviews that were conducted with the dealers were informal and non-standardized although they were, of course, directed towards definite information areas. This method hopefully obtained a quality of information that is difficult to gather by means of a standardized formal questionnaire (Goode and Hatt, 1952). Some sociologists aver that such an unstructured interview is better oriented to exploratory studies (Macoby and Macoby, 1951). The interviews were structured around some basic questions through which the researcher attempted to discover the process involved in the construction and/or maintenance of the respondent's self-concept with relation to marijuana dealing. Among the questions that were posed were queries designed to explore what may be a highly pertinent distinction between dope dealers who lived a so-called "deviant life-style" before starting dealing dope and those who did not. The possibility of the presence of a deviant self-concept before getting arrested or before having some sort of contact with an agency is one that must be taken into consideration. In other words, if we merely find at one point in time, socially-identified dealers showing "deviant" self-concepts we could not unequivocally argue that labeling processes produced them, for the self-images may have arisen prior to involvement in the norm-violating activity under investigation.

The following are some of the general questions that were employed in data collection. They are not, it must be stressed, the precise ques- tions that were asked, but are queries that touch on the central issues upon which the interviews/conversations were based. A dittoed copy of the queries was used at each interview, with responses recorded on the form as the subject discussed the conversation area.

To what extent are you involved with dealing?

When did you first start?

What were you involved with before you started?

How long have you been smoking dope?

How often or much do you smoke now?

Before you started dealing?

What made you start dealing?

Did you see yourself as already "different" from others before you started dealing?

How do you feel about it now?

Do you feel that you have gotten more or less involved or deeper into dealing since the time that you started?

What makes you think so?

What experiences -- both negative and positive -- have you had that reinforce your image as a dealer?

Have you been "busted"?

How did that experience make you feel about your illegal activities?

Do you feel any different about it after the bust?

Have you ever had a close call with the police?

Did that affect your thinking any towards dealing?

Does the threat of being busted bother you?

Do you think of it often?

Would you stop dealing if you were busted?

Due to the illegal nature of the activity under investigation, certain precautions were taken to insure the safety of both the respondent and the researcher. Interviews were only carried out in neutral, public places (e.g., restaurants, taverns). The researcher did not seek out or ask

the respondent's last name and place of residence. At no time did the respondent's name appear on any notes taken. The interview was numbered only for the purpose of keeping each interview separate from the others. To further insure the safety of those involved, no tape recorders were used to facilitate the information gathering. Instead, interview notes were written down as the conversation progressed, as note taking did not seem to trouble the respondents or to make the interview strained. In order to try out this method, a few trial runs were conducted in some of the local taverns with people role-playing as dope dealers and the researcher attempting to obtain specific information from them.

The method of research appeared to work well, with respondents readily answering questions about their dealing activities. Information was, on the whole, given freely and the researcher had little difficulty in engaging the dealers in conversation. They were eager to talk about their business and to make their views known.

V. SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed the research problem of the thesis and the methodology that was involved in it. Chapter IV presents the data that were elicited from the interviews with the dealers. This chapter has indicated that labeling arguments can be examined through the examination of the self-concepts and patterns of deviance of marijuana dealers. The study of drug dealers focused on two types of marijuana dealers (lid dealers and small quantity pound dealers) and whether or not the respondents saw themselves as deviant. In addition, the research examined the experiences that produced these self-concept patterns.

Footnotes:

1. A "lid" is anywhere from 1/2 ounce to one ounce of marijuana
    packaged in a plastic sandwich-sized bag.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Before we examine the statistical findings from the dealer inter-
views, let us look at three case studies of dealers who were part of the
sample. Each is felt to be representative of a type of dealer found in
the sample. These case histories are offered in order to provide the
reader with some of the flavor of the phenomenon under study, that is, the
case material should breathe some life into the statistical information
to follow.

I. THREE CASES

Case #1

Dealer A sells pounds to supplement the income from his full time
job. He had only recently gotten out of the service and was both working
and going to school when he started dealing four years ago. He has been
smoking marijuana for eight years and now smokes it daily after work in
addition to the amount he feels he must smoke for business purposes. Not
being able to afford to smoke much at first, he started dealing to earn
himself a "free" stash.[1] Before he began to sell marijuana, A was involved
in the "hippie" subculture and feels that it was this activity that labeled
him a deviant rather than anything to do with dealing. At present A does
not think that he is deviant from societal standards due to his major
involvement in a "straight" occupation. His fellow workers who have know-
ledge of his dealing activities either ignore this information in their

interactions with him or buy from him themselves. In fact, A feels that his dealing gives him a certain status among the workers and he has gotten to know more people through his dealing business than he would have other- wise. He fully realizes the possible consequences of dealing dope but while taking those risks into account through discreet business practices, he says that such threats cannot be allowed to affect all of his actions. If arrested by police he would not stop dealing permanently but would keep a "low profile" for a period of time and then go back into business.

Case #2

Dealer B has been selling lids for the past five years to supplement his income as a musician. Before starting to deal he was heavily involved with his music and the "hippie" subculture. B has smoked marijuana for the past eight years and began to deal both for a free stash and as a way of earning extra money. In addition to material gains, dealing appealed to him because he felt it was exciting and "sneaky".[2]

B asserted that his self-identification as a musician caused him to experience a sense of deviance and uniqueness long before any connection with dope. He sees himself as deviant now in this same context of being a musician and refers to his dealing activities as "commonplace" and "everyday". Dealing has added little to his status among his friends since his role as musician quite overshadows it. The likelihood of being arrested concerns him but he doesn't perceive it as a direct threat to himself or as very likely to happen to him. He contends that he definitely would stop dealing, however, if arrest were to occur, feeling that "it (dealing) isn't worth the hassle." B recognizes that society sees dealing as illegal but personally does not see anything "wrong" with it.

Case #3

Dealer C sells both pounds and lids as his only source of income. He started dealing fifteen years ago at the age of thirteen, shortly after he first started smoking marijuana. At first he did not have enough money to smoke much, thus turning to dealing to acquire a stash. He now smokes daily, usually all day. The "excitement", the "status" and the "dealer image" involved with selling drugs attract him. He claims that as a child he had always felt "different" from others and saw himself then, as he does now, as an "outcast" from society. This feeling is unrelated in his eyes to any of his dealing activities. He knows that he conforms with some of the values of respectable society by holding down a straight job from time to time but sees this job as merely a means of supporting himself when the dealing business is slow. Money, to him, is freedom. There is positive reinforcement of his dealer image from friends but since his "dope bust" his family has responded negatively to all that he is doing. He thinks that his family's reaction has had little effect on him because of his greater closeness to his friends than to his family. He asserts that being arrested for dealing has not changed his thinking toward his business, although he admits to being "nervous" when he occasionally must "hold" a larger quantity than a pound at his house. C has little respect for police and views arrest as being one of the risks that one has to take if one is going to deal. As he observes: "There's risks in every line of work."

II. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Basic Results

Let us now turn to the research material on the twenty-two dope
dealers. Table II contains the classification of subjects by major var-
iables of the study. The subjects were placed in either the "deviant self-
concept" or "no deviant self-concept" category according to the negative
or positive tone of their answers to certain of the questions posed during
the interview by the researcher. More specifically, these questions were:
Did you see yourself as already different from others before you started
dealing? How do you feel about it now? What experiences -- both negative
and positive -- have you had that reinforce your image as a dealer?

A quick glance at the figures in Table II suggests that at least in
the case of the dealers interviewed for this study, whether or not they
have had any experience with being arrested has little to do with presence
or absence of a deviant self-concept. Additionally, the evidence in that
table seems to indicate that the amount one sells is not related to self-
concept, contrary to what might be expected. Accordingly, the working
hypotheses of this study, derived from the deviance and labeling literature
would appear to be unsupported in this case.

Additional Observations

However, there are other matters that are highlighted in this table
that need further examination. While it is apparent that more respondents
exhibited deviant self-concepts than not, we might ask why this should be
the case. In other words, what has been the experience that caused these
persons to acquire deviant self-images if it was not public recognition

TABLE II

SELF-CONCEPT OF THE MARIJUANA DEALERS
IN THE STUDY, BY AMOUNT SOLD AND AGENCY CONTACT

LID DEALERS	NO DEVIANT SELF-CONCEPT	DEVIANT SELF-CONCEPT
Not arrested	2	3
Arrested	0	3
POUND DEALERS		
Not arrested	3	6
Arrested	1	2
LID/POUND DEALERS		
Not arrested	0	1
Arrested	0	1
TOTALS	6	16

as a dealer? In the cases of those who have been arrested and who exhibit deviant self images, we might pursue the question of whether the latter stemmed from the former, or instead, was the experience of being arrested unrelated to the emergence of a deviant self concept? Also, what about those who had been arrested but showed no self image as deviant? How did they remain "insulated" from a self concept as a deviant? In short, there are a number of queries that need to be addressed regarding the matter of presence or absence of a deviant self image that can be explored with the data of this study.

A closely related question has to do with identifying exactly the norms or standards from which these people feel deviant. Stated differently it is the case that relatively little information is at hand in the sociological literature that provides details on what deviants actually do or how they think about themselves. There is a great deal of material, for example, on the social backgrounds of robbers and predatory thieves, but relatively little evidence on the matter of the social organization of robbery behavior.[3] Along the same line, the deviance literature discusses in broad theoretical terms ideas such as primary and secondary deviance, deviant self concepts, and acquisition of self concepts, but at the same time contains scant information on the particular elements of deviant self concepts exhibited by persons engaged in a given activity. An exception to this general situation is research done by Reckless and associates (Reckless, Dinitz & Murray, 1956; Reckless & Dinitz, 1967) in which the self concepts of delinquent and non-delinquent boys were studied in relation to their associations with their parents. However, Tangri and Schwartz (1965) and Orcutt (1970) among others, have criticized this research by questioning the indicators that Reckless and associates used to measure

self-concepts and have pointed to other methodological problems with that work. The results of the research by Reckless and associates show only moderate correlations between self-conceptions held by the boys and their perceptions of the opinions of them held by others.

In the present study, when the twenty-two dealers were asked about their self-concept, sixteen declared that they felt estranged from, more or less, the "mainstream" of society. Despite this verbalized sense of estrangement, they did not see themselves as being different to any great degree from their friends or peer group members. Too, their detachment from the mainstream was not seen negatively but rather it was tinged with positive connotations. That is, the subjects regarded themselves as superior but estranged, rather than as inferior or discredited individuals. There was evidence of positive reinforcement from the peer group in connection with values, morals, and marijuana selling so that all of the dealers talked of feeling quite comfortable in their own environment. It was only when they thought of themselves in terms of a larger social context that they saw themselves as deviant. The point here is that on a day-to-day basis in almost all their interactions with people, the sixteen dealers apparently do not feel great concern about their own deviance. According to assertions, they have no need to interact with those who would negatively label them. They are protected by the surrounding drug use environment in which they are enmeshed. On a daily basis, the people these dealers are in contact with have moral/value structures similar to that they themselves possess.

These observations lead to the next line of questioning -- what caused the deviant self-concept to be formed in the first place? None of the sixteen cases in the study who admitted to having a deviant self-concept

claimed that their self-image was produced by involvement with dope dealing.
Each saw his self-concept as being a product of membership in a "hippie",
drug, or musician peer group. While it is true that six of the sixteen
dealers who had a deviant self-concept had been arrested, the six asserted
that their deviant self-concept came long before any contact with the
police. Their arrest, they claimed, had little to do with how they saw
themselves since their self-identity was formed for the most part before
they even started dealing.

The point must be injected here that the researcher recognizes that
the persons studied in this research do not constitute a random sample of
all dealers. It must be acknowledged that not all dealers are hippies.
The fact that in this sample all twenty-two of the dealers can be said to
be hippies means that these conclusions about dealers probably cannot be
generalized to all dealers.

Dealing and Hippie Subculture Involvement

Before starting to deal, all twenty-two informants reported that they
were involved to some degree in what could be termed as the "hippie" sub-
culture. The notion of a hippie subculture involves a number of dimensions
that emerged in all the discussions with the respondents concerning the
hippie lifestyle. That is, the respondents exhibited a good deal of agree-
ment on the benchmarks by which the hippie lifestyle can be recognized.
However, the way that these central ideas are interpreted and carried out
appeared to vary to some degree with each individual. In other words, it
appeared that within the broad social category "hippie", it is possible to
exhibit one of several role patterns and still view oneself as satisfying
the conditions that makes one a "hippie".

All of the respondents either directly or indirectly mentioned that the term "hippie" primarily designated how one thought about oneself in relation to the mainstream of society in terms of values and morals. They felt themselves to be against much of what they saw as the guiding notions of Western society such as materialism and a Puritanical moral code. This philosophical viewpoint led to a set of values and morals which influence the way "hippies" look and the way that they live. When the respondents talked of being a "hippie" before starting to deal, they meant, as it emerged through further conversation, that they had long hair and were in- volved to some degree in the drug culture. Their dress no doubt differed with the type of hippie they claimed to be at the time (country hippie, city hippie). Too, the degree of their drug taking activities varied in kind from one to another (acid, marijuana or hash, for example) and in in- tensity ("I took acid nearly every day." "I only smoked marijuana and hash, never anything stronger."). Style of living ranged from "living with an old lady" to communal living with a large group of people in a house or a farm. Yet, to repeat, despite these variations, all the dealers saw them- selves as being a "hippie" before commencing any dealing activities. Indeed, even the musicians labeled themselves "hippie musicians" as distinguished from a "straight" musician, identifying first with the subculture and secondly with their role as musician. Through discussion it also appeared that the musician role is one of the viable alternative role patterns within the subculture.

Four of the twenty-two people interviewed were musicians before any involvement with dealing and had first been introduced to drugs and later to the hippie subculture through their musician roles. Seven respondents were students already living what they saw as a hippie lifestyle (i.e.,

using drugs, having long hair, wearing jeans, being a pacifist, etc.) before their dealing began. The remaining seven were holding down regular jobs but felt they were living as a hippie outside of work and were smoking dope as soon as working hours were over. This self-identification as a hippie while working a straight job involved a network of complex reasonings and explanations in which the seven job holders readily admit to participating. They reported that they smoked dope, etc., similarly to their non-employed friends but justified the difference of their straight employment to themselves and others by saying that they "needed a guaranteed amount of money every month" because of a wife and/or child. One respondent reported that his friends did not see him as being a "true" hippie because of his job but he felt that he was one anyway.

For sixteen of the people interviewed, dealing began only after smoking dope for a length of time. In the case of six of the respondents, however, early smoking experiences and initial involvement in dealing occurred nearly simultaneously.

As Table II indicates, the amount that one sells appears to have little to do with whether or not the person possesses a deviant self-concept. Of the eight lid dealers, two did not verbalize a deviant self-image while six did. Four pound dealers did not report having a deviant self-identity while eight did. The comparisons of those with and without a deviant self-concept in the lid dealer and pound dealer categories are quite similar. This parallels the evidence that both being arrested and, in fact, dealing itself has little to do with the formation of a deviant self-concept among the marijuana dealers interviewed.

Some discussion of some other, secondary, variables from the study may illuminate the relationship between deviant self-concept and dope

.dealing.

Type of Dealing and Source of Income

The research subjects of this study consisted of individuals who sell small quantities of marijuana, along with others who are pound dealers. Also, some of the dealers obtain most of their income from dealing while dealing is a supplemental source of income for others. The distribution of cases by dealing status and source of income is shown on Table III.

TABLE III

DEALING AS AN INCOME SOURCE

DEALER TYPE	SUPPLEMENTAL SOURCE	MAIN SOURCE
Lid	7	1
Pound	3	9
Both	0	2

Of the twenty-two marijuana dealers interviewed, eight are primarily lid dealers and twelve sell mainly pounds. Two dealers sell a mixture of pounds and lids, or as one of them said, "whatever is around." Most of the lid dealers sell dope as a means to supplement existing incomes, which in most cases means a "straight" job. On the other hand, nearly all of the pound dealers sell dope as their main, if not sole, source of income. The two who market both pounds and lids do so on a full time basis making what they consider to be the most money they can out of the situation. The income that dealers reported varies with their volume of sales. The lid dealer makes, on the average, $3.00 a lid profit while the pound dealer

usually adds $10.00 to $20.00 on to a pound for his profit. Income can never be predicted; there are dry spells when there is little marijuana around, followed by times when there is an abundance of marijuana available, causing prices to fall. These fluctuations influence the amount a dealer makes in any given time period.

While the profits of lid dealing are smaller, the selling of lids requires less involvement than pound dealing, making it an excellent source of supplementary income. True, achieving one's maximum profit from lid selling entails the selling of a large quantity of lids (about 21 to a pound), the seller however does relatively little to sell his product. Lids are usually purchased by friends or friends of friends who are prepared to put out a small sum of money regularly ($10-$15-$20, depending upon the quality of the dope) for a smoking stash. Business is often done in the seller's home with friends coming by to pick up lids as they are needed. Many times, social visiting and "business" are combined. There is no need for a sales pitch by the dealer to get rid of his lids since he often has a steady clientele who trust his usual product. Too, lid dealing is made easier because there are no large cash amounts at stake. The only large amount involved is the initial outlay for the pound which the dealer breaks down into lids. This pound is often made possible through the salary from the straight job which the lid dealer holds. Lid dealing possesses the characteristics that Wilensky (1963:166) notes in his description of crime as moonlighting:

> The industries in which "moonlighters" found their second jobs were typically those providing opportunities for part-time work.

Polsky (1967:103) adds:

> Most crime fits these descriptions (of crime as moonlighting) perfectly. Indeed, one of the most genuinely appealing things about crime to career criminals and part-timers alike... is that

for most crime the working hours are both short and flexible.

Pound dealers, who make larger sums of money as profit, must handle larger sums of money to make it. This involves a greater over-all commitment to dealing in that it involves more time and "salesmanship" to "hustle" those who would buy the larger quantity of a pound rather than just a lid. The necessary development of "contacts" who will buy from them and the "sources" from whom they get the pounds entails large blocks of time and irregular hours which the person holding down a regular job would find difficult to manage. Too, the pound dealer must be more of a salesperson, ready to compete with other dealers for the relatively limited (as compared to lid buyers) number of pound buyers both in price and quality of merchandise. Pound dealing, then, is more suited to those who do it as a main source of income rather than to supplement one. Those who do sell pounds in addition to having a regular job turn over a comparatively small amount of merchandise, perhaps only three or four pounds per month.

Length of Time Dealing

All the dealers interviewed have been dealing for longer than two years, the majority dealing at least four years. Table IV indicates the period of time the persons in the study have been dealing, classified by lid and dealer categories.

From Table IV it can be seen that most of the lid dealers have been dealing for a period of four to six years. The length of time that the people who sell pounds have been dealing is more varied; however, a large proportion of these people have been dealing between four and over twelve years. The pound dealers, then, have been dealing on the whole for a longer length of time than the lid dealers. The reasons behind this variation

have much in common with the discussion of dealing as a supplementary or major source of income. About three-fourths of the pound dealers first entered dealing through the selling of lids. Lid dealing, compared to the selling of pounds, takes little effort and time commitment on the part of the seller. As time passed, the lid dealer continued to enjoy both the role and/or the money accrued from dealing and so, either by effort or happenstance, acquired a set of sources from whom to buy pounds and a market to which to sell them. As his business starts to grow, the dealer gains experience and knowledge of large quantity selling through friendships with those already established in business and/or through trial-and-error. A person trying to break into large quantity selling without the experience would often find himself in over his head and losing the money with which he started. "Dealing is a business," one respondent insisted, "just like any business: there are certain things you have to learn and know before you can get anywhere." In summary, then, it would appear quite logical for the pound dealer to be in business a longer period of time than the lid dealer given that some time usually must elapse before the dealer builds up contacts, sources, experience and commitment to the business.

TABLE IV

LENGTH OF TIME DEALING BY TYPE OF DEALER

Years Dealing	Lid Dealers	Pound Dealers	Both	Total
1-3	1	2	1	4
4-6	7	3	0	10
7-9	0	4	0	4
10-12+	0	3	1	4
Total	8	12	2	22

The progression of the dealer from the seller of lids to selling pounds can be related to Becker's notions of a deviant career (1963:24-39). This concept refers to the sequence of movements from one position to another that a deviant person must take to become a full member of a deviant sub-culture. The deviant individual "learns in short, to participate in a subculture organized around the particular deviant activity" (Becker, 1963:30). Becker makes the point that the "first step in most deviant careers is the commission of a non-conforming act, an act that breaks some particular set of rules." This career notion can be easily applied to the data of this study which indicated that all of the dealers interviewed were involved in the "hippie" subculture in some form or another. This suggests that being a so-called hippie, involved in non-conforming to the rest of society in some respects, can be a first step towards the emergence of the individual as a dealer.

A word of caution regarding whole hearted acceptance of the career concept in deviancy must be injected here. It is true that it appears to have some application to dope dealers but then the notion was originally developed in Becker's study of marijuana users. Sagarin (1975:137) notes:

> The career concept fails, however, for no one has success-
> fully applied it to other areas and aspects of deviance;
> and hence it remains a theory of marijuana use, or perhaps
> of drug use at most.

Gibbons (1973), however, does utilize this concept to categorize such offenders as shoplifters, check forgers, embezzlers, professional "fringe" violators, sex offenders, rapists and alcoholics.

The question remains, then, of whether the idea of a deviant career pattern is applicable in detail beyond this study, having to do with the area of drug use as in the original study by Becker.

Aspects of Edwin Sutherland's theory of differential association appear to be relevant to the learning process of the lid dealer who aims to become a seller of pounds. Briefly stated, Sutherland theorized that deviant behavior was learned and taught through association with those already involved in these activities. Sutherland's theory contains nine propositions (Sutherland & Cressey, 1973:75-77):

1. Criminal behavior is learned.

2. Criminal behavior is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication.

3. The principal part of the learning of criminal behavior occurs within intimate personal groups.

4. Learning includes the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes.

5. The specific direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of the legal code as favorable or unfavorable.

6. A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of law.

7. Differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority and intensity.

8. The process of learning criminal behavior by association with criminal and anticriminal patterns involves all the mechanisms that are involved in other learning.

9. While criminal behavior is an expression of general needs and values, it is not explained by those general needs and values since non-criminal behavior is an expression of the same needs and values.

The data from this study are consistent with some of these proposi-
tions. The dealer, whether he is selling lids or pounds, must be trained
in the business by someone else. For example, he must learn how to break
pounds down into lids or how to steam the pounds in order to dry and
fluff out the marijuana so the volume appears larger. These are things
that the dealer does not happen upon by himself. The learning occurs
in direct interaction with others who have already gained knowledge of
the business. Usually the learning involves fairly close friends due to
the fact that the business commodity is illegal and caution is so necessary.
Dealing was begun by the respondents of this study only after some involve-
ment with the hippie subculture which included a familiarity with drugs.
This association with drugs and the drug culture, then, had much to do
with the dealer's start in the business because it would probably never
occur to these people to deal marijuana if they were not already so inti-
mately acquainted with it. To conclude, dealing is learned just as any
business, be it legal or illegal, is learned.

Dope Smoking -- Before and After Assumption of Dealing Role

Only five individuals in the sample had smoked dope six years or
less. Nearly half of the individuals in the sample (10) had been smoking
dope for seven or eight years thus placing the initial smoking experience
in 1967 or 1968, the years when the "flower child" or hippie phenomenon
spread through the country. The rest of the subjects had been smoking a
longer length of time: two people for 9 years; three people for 10 years;
and one person each for 14 and 15 years.

TABLE V

AMOUNT OF MARIJUANA SMOKED WEEKLY: BEFORE AND AFTER STARTING TO DEAL

Days Smoked
Per Week
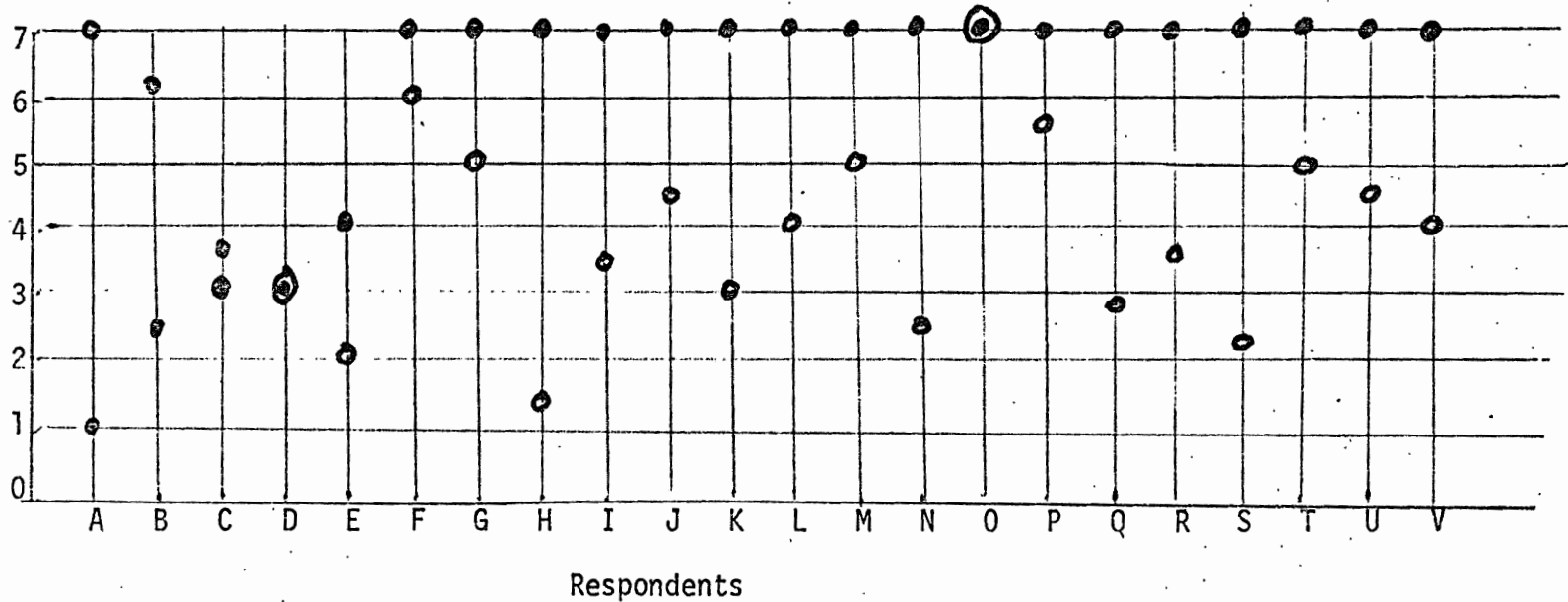
Respondents

Key: 𝗢 = Amount Smoked Before Dealing

● = Amount Smoked At Present Time

Table V shows the changes, if any, between the amount of dope smoked by the respondents before they started dealing and at the present time. Almost universally the dealers explained the usual shift towards greater smoking by contending that before dealing they could not afford to smoke as much as they would have liked. By contrast, dealing makes dope available to them at all times and can be used when desired. A few of the cases mentioned that their business entails a certain amount of smoking with potential customers so that they perhaps engaged in smoking more than they would otherwise. Those who were engaged in regular jobs reported that they usually smoke as soon as they get home from work but that the amount smoked each day or sometimes each week is curtailed due to the necessity of keeping life to a work schedule. All of the dealers who now smoke daily stated that they would not be smoking that amount if it were not for the fact that they are dealing dope.

Cause of Initial Dealing Activities

More than half of the individuals (fourteen) asserted that they started to deal primarily for the "free" dope stash they could acquire. Those two reasons, however, are very much interrelated. When money or stash was given as a primary cause, the other was almost always mentioned as a secondary consideration. The secondary reason behind dealing developed at the time of initial involvement with dealing or after having dealt for a period of time. That is, some people realized only after entering the business that money could be made above and beyond the stash they accumulated and vice versa. Three of the people mentioned excitement as being one of their reasons for being in the business and two saw their involvement as being tied into doing a service for their friends.

A caveat here is that these causes or reasons as to why the indi-
viduals entered into dealing were elicited from the individuals themselves,
and are retrospective. They are, therefore, responses that may have been
colored a certain way by the person and may not be the "real" reason at
all. That is, there might be a vocabulary of motives developing around
several reasons for becoming involved in dope dealing.

Vocabularies of motives encompass both the justifications or excuses
that a person gives to himself and/or others for his activities and the
words in which they are couched. Extended to the field of deviance by
Redl and Wineman (1951) justifications and excuses can be utilized as
reasons for many deviant acts (Scott & Lyman, 1963).[4] Sagarin points out
in his discussion of Sykes & Matza's work (1957) that the "important
thing here is that they (deviants) require the reasons in order to do what
would have been unthinkable or to build a satisfactory self-image after
the fact." A few of the mechanisms he notes that deviants utilize are:
denying responsibility for their act, by saying that society made them
the persons that they are; denying injury has been done to others; be-
lieving the victim to be unworthy; condemning the condemners; and facing
demands from other loyalties. Justifications are formed prior to the
execution of the act. Application of the vocabulary of motives approach
to aspects of deviance suggests a social control view of persons who stray
from the path of the socialized "correct" behavior. Explanation of de-
viance involves accounting for the occurrence of norm-violations and for
mechanisms by which the acts are verbalized by the deviant actors to
themselves and others.

A case for the vocabulary of motives concept can be seen with
relation to a portion of the data from this research. One of the central

beliefs of the hippie subculture to which all the respondents claim to have been a part at the time of their initial dealing experience, is an anti-materialist ethic. Little emphasis was put on money, thus activity designed to make money was denigrated as being "capitalistic." It would seem, therefore, that those who were heavily committed to the subculture would not want to admit to doing something strictly for money. Instead, a more "valid" reason for starting to deal would be to "do a service for friends", as two of the respondents in this study reported that they did. This is not to say that these two people did not actually believe what they were saying but that they needed a justification as to why they were or had become involved with a money-making operation. The same reasoning could be applied to the people who claimed that they started dealing for a "free stash." This meant that they would receive dope for which they did not have to pay cash. This would entail doing some job or service that would pay in dope rather than in money. Thus, the stash is, in this case, a token for money earned in dealing activities.

There is a possibility that degree of present commitment to the hippie subculture has something to do with the reasons given by those interviewed for their initial involvement in dealing. Nearly all of the eight people who claimed that they started dealing primarily for monetary gains referred to dealing as a "business." The nine who asserted that their main interest in dealing was at first the acquisition of a free stash sometimes talked of dealing during the interviews as a business but more often as an activity, something that they just did -- dealing was just dealing and no more. The three who saw themselves as doing a service for friends never referred to dealing as a business, rather, it was spoken of as a "favor." This might suggest that those in the first category, the

"business" people, were less committed or involved with the hippie sub-
culture than they were in the past and so were more open about their
reasons for operating in the dealing role. The second group who report
that they started dealing for a stash might be somewhat more committed to
the subculture than the first group but decidedly less involved than the
third group who deny any association with money at all.

Role Reinforcement Experiences -- Positive and Negative

The respondents were asked to indicate and describe any experiences
they might have had, either positive or negative, that had to do with
their role identification as a dealer. Positive reinforcement came over-
whelmingly from friends and peer groups of the persons interviewed, usually
in the form of an alleged rise in status level as a result of the dealing
activity. For some persons, primarily the musicians, dealing was accepted
by friends without question or comment and had little effect on the status
of those subjects. Apparently the musician status overshadows any recog-
nition received from the dealer role. On the other hand, exactly half
of the sample members received some degree of negative reinforcement. In
almost all of the cases this negative feedback came from the parents of
the dealers and ranged from mild disapproval to, in one case, estrangement
of relations. In all but two instances, however, at the time of the nega-
tive parental reaction, the respondent was not residing with the parents
at their home. The dealers claimed that parental reaction had had little
or no affect on their dealing activity.

This alleged lack of effect of parental reaction may be related to
the involvement of the dealers in a subculture. Definitions of sub-
culture abound and much controversy exists as to whether subcultures
actually exist. Then too, there are various, somewhat discordant notions

of counter culture versus subculture encountered in the sociological lit-

erature.[5] However, for this study, a subculture will simply be defined

as:

> ...a group of people, partially but never entirely removed
> from a larger society of which they are a part, who interact
> among themselves to a large extent and in important sectors
> of their lives, sharing with one another some common values
> and common outlooks on the world which impart to them a sense
> of ingroup similarity not extended to others (Sagarin, 1975:
> 294-95).

Because the subculture is the source of common values and outlooks

and hence, ego reinforcement, it is to the subculture then that the dealer

would turn for feedback on his dealer status. Their peers in the sub-

culture in a sense replace the family as the nuclear unit in their lives.

Hence, positive reinforcement from their peers with whom they live and

have day-to-day interaction would appear to be more important to the dealers

than negative reinforcement from parents with whom they no longer live.

The findings of a recent study on separated women (Farr, 1975) are

consistent with the findings in the present research concerning the importance

of positive reinforcement from friends. Farr found that the most important

social group influencing whether or not separated women have a positive

or negative self-concept was close friends. Thus, it appears for both

Farr's study and the present one that positive reinforcement from close

friends is supportive of a positive self-concept.

Being "Busted" -- Its Threat and Possible Reactions To It

The dealers in this study responded in varying and equivocal ways to

the questions of whether the threat of being busted "bothered" them and

whether it was thought about often. Responses were so varied, in fact,

that it is difficult to summarize them in a dichotomous form. Only six

of the respondents contended unequivocally that the thought of being arrested does not bother them at all and that they never think of it. Various reasons were given for this apparent lack of concern: "the police are too dumb;" and "I'm too careful to have anything happen." Nearly all of the respondents, including both those who were concerned about being arrested and those who were not, made mention of the fact that being arrested was just one of the risks one had to take if one dealt dope. A recognition of this risk was a part of their business from the very beginning. However, to all the contingency of arrest was something quite separate in their minds from their evaluation of drug dealing. That is, the threat of arrest comes from the values of an "outside" society. None of the respondents saw anything "wrong" with dealing or "wrong" with smoking marijuana. They all felt that if condemnation is appropriate, it would center on the narcotics agents who tried to arrest marijuana dealers. Of those in the sample who reported that the threat of being busted does bother them, most stated that they tried not to actively think about it. Their business is routinely practiced with precautions and as much discretion as possible but they try to avoid excessive worrying. However, two respondents admitted that in the past they had felt so threatened by arrest that they let these feelings influence all their interactions, both in and out of business situations. Then, too, the "acceptable" degree of apprehensiveness about drugs was felt to be situational, that is, depending upon the quantity of marijuana in their possession at at any particular time. Increased caution and nervousness was felt to be necessary when large quantities were involved.

Eight persons in the sample definitely said that they would not stop dealing if they were busted, declaring in effect that dealing was too much a part of their life. The other fourteen said they would stop. This must

immediately be qualified because half of these fourteen reported that they would stop only for a while, until they felt that some of the "heat" was off of them and then would continue on as before. The remaining seven asserted that they would definitely get out of the business, that the dealing was "not worth the hassle" of continuing after going through a bust.

The respondent's views of the police and society as being the ones in the "wrong" parallel Irwin's observations concerning thieves:

> The thief believes that he lives in a generally corrupt and unjust society and that he and other thieves are actually among the few honest and trustworthy people. (Irwin, 1970:8-9).

However, once again there is the question of congruence between the beliefs of respondents and what they say they believe. Do these assertions reflect a process of neutralization among the dealers or do they reflect deeply-held views by dealers that what they are doing is morally superior and right? The answer probably is that what is a justification or excuse for one dealer constitutes a true belief for another. The data of this study are insufficient to provide clarification of the possibilities.

III. SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed some of the findings derived from interviews with twenty-two marijuana dealers. The dealers were quizzed as to their self-concepts in relation to the amount that they sold and possible agency contact, their hippie subculture involvement, their type of dealing as a source of income, length of time dealing, their rate of marijuana consumption both before and after starting to deal, their positive and negative role reinforcing experiences, and their possible reactions to being busted. Chapter V continues the discussion of findings with attention to some core

notions of the labeling perspective.

Footnotes:

1. A "stash" can be any quantity of marijuana or any other drug that a person puts aside for his own consumption. It is a larger quantity than the person usually can consume in one day. For example, some people might buy a pound of marijuana in the spring when prices are low as a stash to get them through the summer when prices are higher.

2. See Irwin (1970) and Jackson (1969) for discussions on the positive appeal of deviance. To some criminals the deviant career is seen as more exciting and glamorous than a straight, legal career. It has a certain appeal that involvement in a straight position could ever give them and hence they would be happy if stuck in such a straight role.

3. See, for example, Letkemann (1973), and Eisenstadter (1969).

4. Scott and Lyman have suggested the word "accounts" to embrace both the notion of justifications in which the actor accepts responsibilities for his actions but denies that they were wrong and the notion of excuses in which the actor lessens the severity of both his act and extent of his responsibility.

5. For a more extended discussion of the subculture versus counter-culture viewpoints see Yinger (1960) and Roszak (1969).

CHAPTER V

DOPE DEALING AND LABELING THEORY

I. INTRODUCTION

Several facets of dope dealing behavior have been examined in this
study. However, a primary focus of the research centered about the exam-
ination and evaluation of the impact of labeling and societal reaction ex-
periences upon the self-concepts of the individuals studied.

Gibbons and Jones (1975: 144-45) note that much of the research in the
labeling field is "heavily speculative in character" and tends to "grossly
oversimplify and distort the real world by advancing arguments and proposi-
tions which fail to reflect the richness and diversity of social life as it
is actually experienced." This criticism points out the need for empirical
research on labeling contentions to determine their factual accuracy. Hope-
fully, the present examination will help to clarify the extent and in what
areas the labeling perspective can be applied to the real life situation under
investigation.

II. ALTERNATIVE REACTIONS TO THE LABELING EXPERIENCE --
LABELING AS A DETERRENT OR REINFORCER

A major contention of the labeling perspective is that the experience
of public identification or labeling as a deviant will drive the actor into
further acts of deviance. While there has been relatively little research
validating or testing labeling notions, some of the studies that have been

.done have failed to substantiate this proposition. For example, investiga-
tions of juvenile delinquency have been conducted, producing evidence suggest-
ing that severe handling or official processing bears little relationship
to greater criminality or recidivism. (Sagarin, 1975: 134).

On this point, Daniel Glaser (1971: 42-45) asserts that entrance into
further more involved deviance is not a uniform outcome of the labeling
experience. He avers that there are at least three distinct behavioral dir-
ections that occur as alternative reactions to public labeling as a deviant.
The most common reaction is that the person makes an attempt to modify his
deviant behavior in order that his nonconformist reputation can be either
reduced or avoided. When punishment and/or humiliation connected with the
initial deviance provokes such a response, labeling would be a deterrent
to further deviance. That this logical possibility occurs in the real world
can be seen in Mary Owen Cameron's study of department store shoplifters (1964).
She found that once the lable "thief" was placed on the novice shoplifter,
the person stopped the illicit activity.

Glaser believes that people tend to modify their deviant behavior in
order that the group with whom they are involved will find their behavior
acceptable. According to Glaser, persons need to conform with whatever group
they are interacting at the time. He makes the point:

> Labeling indicates a failure in the segmentation of their deviant
> and conforming lives, which they correct by terminating some
> deviant activities. (1971: 44).

Another, less usual, response to a deviant label is found among those
who, in Glaser's words, "have a stake in non-conformity or who acquire such
a stake as a consequence of labeling" (1971: 44). For these individuals,
being identified as a deviant adds to their status within their own groups

and attracts attention to those who might otherwise be ignored. Personal gratification from the deviant label is only possible however, if there is no resulting destruction of any relationship or self-concept of value to the actor himself.

Glaser posits that a third response to public labeling is one of equivocation and counter labeling. This pattern involves redefinition of deviance by the actor so that the degree of the undesirability of his behavior is lessened both in his eyes and in the eyes of others. Rationalization allows the person to participate in deviant activities while at the same time not identifying with a deviant image.

Data from the present study fail to support the labeling proposition that the labeling as a "dealer" pushes the actor into a further involvement with dealing. However, the data are also discordant with Glaser's formulation of alternative reactions to the labeling experience.

Seven persons in the study sample have been arrested for dealing small amounts of marijuana. None felt moved to become further involved in drug dealing after their experience with the police. All seven "cooled down" their business for a time. That is, they reduced the amount that they were dealing until they felt that some of the "heat" was off them and then resumed the dealing that they were doing at the time of their bust. There is no indication in the data, then, of support for any claim that the labeling experience tends to push people into further, secondary deviance.

Only two of the seven dealers interviewed felt that their dope arrest operated as any sort of behavioral deterrent. They averred that their police experience caused them to be much more "paranoid" about dealing. They reported that they think often of the possibility of going to jail for dealing activities and consequently have cut down somewhat on the quantity that they

deal. One of these individuals is a lid dealer and the other is a pound dealer and both sell drugs for their main source of income. This observation is contrary to Glaser's idea that the labeling experience is most commonly a deterrent to further deviant behavior. Obviously, two persons out of seven who merely lean in the direction of seeing their arrest as a deterrent is hardly an overwhelming majority. Too, none of the part-time lid dealers who most fit the categorization of being "non-professional" dope dealers saw their arrest as a deterrent. Thus, Glaser's other claim that the non-professional is the person most likely to feel a deterrent effect from the labeling experience does not account for this case either. It must be noted however, that while the sample population of the dealers that were interviewed for this study did not include anyone who had been driven out of deviance by labeling, it can not be said that this could never happen. The study only focused on those people who were presently involved with dealing marijuana, not those who did it at one time but were not doing it now. Further research would therefore be necessary on this point.

Glaser's second alternative reaction to labeling, involving people who "have a stake in non-conformity" and who gain in status as a result of the labeling seems at first glance to be applicable to the dope dealer sample. Certainly, many of the dealers see their positions among their peers as elevated due to their dealing role. Yet it must be pointed out that the identity tag of "dealer" placed on these people apparently had nothing to do with the formal labeling experience of being arrested. The dealer designation came before any arrest took place, indeed, it came soon after the person began to build up some sort of clientele and began selling dope on a fairly regular basis. The seven persons who were arrested viewed that experience

primarily as an interruption in their life and as something that only peri-
pherally affected their lifestyle and behavior. One person called his bust
"an accident" which was unlikely to happen again. Another saw it as a
"warning" that he was getting too loose in his business methods and conse-
quently tightened up his precautionary measures. Once again, one of Glaser's
alternative responses to labeling does not seem to match the data from the
study. The elevation in status due to the label of "dealer" was seemingly
independent of the formal labeling experience of being arrested for marijuana.

Glaser's third alternative of equivocation and counter labeling bears
closer examination than the previous two outcomes. Inherent in this alter-
native are the ideas of the vocabulary of motives and subculture. Glaser
(1971: 46) asserts that rationalization of deviant activities is not diffi-
cult to maintain if there is "exceptionally strong support for the deviance
from others, as in a deviant sub-culture." In the data at hand, there are
role-reinforcing groups of peers surrounding the dealers. The notion that
the deviant uses this group to support his "rationalizations" for his deviance
is more difficult to examine in these data. What exactly constitutes a
"rationalization" and how can a sociologist tell that a reason for participa-
tion in a deviant activity is a "true" one or a "rationalization"? Too,
would there be any difference in the actors response to his deviant activity
if the reason were either "true" or not? The important point here, though,
with regard to Glaser's alternative reactions is for him, such rationalization
allows the deviant person to reject a self-image as an unacceptable or deviant
person. However, this is not the case with the dealers in the present study,
for over half of the sample said that they possessed a deviant self-concept.
In addition, every one of these persons is involved to some degree in the
hippie subculture. This situation is more complex than Glaser's portrayal.

The fact that the dealers do not see themselves as doing anything "objec-
tionable" by selling marijuana might be a "denial" of their deviant acti-
vities. Yet they are all involved in a subculture and a considerable
portion of them do see themselves as deviant. Glaser might argue that the
subculture in this case might be atypical, or perhaps there is not even a
subculture existing. But, if the subculture was not operating in the manner
posited by Glaser, then how can all the reports of positive role reinforce-
ment be explained? Perhaps, dealing, then, is only a minor fact in their
deviance. Other elements concerning "rationalization", subculture, and
deviant self-image need to be examined before any correlation can be made
between them and an alternative response to public labeling. Glaser's
notions seem to be too simplified to effectively account for behavior of
deviant actors.

III. POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE OUTCOMES OF LABELING EXPERIENCE

Characteristically, the labeling experience is depicted as being a
reinforcer of deviant behavior and part of the process leading toward further
deviance. However, the research data from this study on dope dealers point
in a different direction. Glaser posited that the labeling experience could
serve as a deterrent to further deviance rather than only being a reinforcer.
While being a plausible notion, it too did not prove applicable to the
present sutdy. Perhaps, though, Glaser did not allow for enough variations
in situational setting and types of deviant behavior in his schema.

Thorsell and Klemke (1972: 393-404) contend that both negative and
positive effects of labeling occur. To them, the negative result of labeling
comes about through the isolation of the deviant from non-deviant social

relationships and the consequent acceptance of a definition of self as a deviant person. Thus, labeling sometimes pushes persons toward further deviance. The positive effect involves termination of ongoing deviance and the cessation of future deviant behavior. Thorsell and Klemke argue that there are a number of conditions that determine whether the labeling process will result in positive or negative outcomes for future behavior. These conditions have received little attention from most labeling analysts. The Thorsell-Klemke propositions that seem to apply to the research subjects discussed here, along with either supporting or non-supporting data from the interviews with dope dealers are discussed below:

1. Labeling process seems to have different effects at various stages. in a deviant career (Emphasis added). (P. 397). Thorsell and Klemke assert that labeling will have fewer effects, positive or negative, after the persons has moved into secondary deviance. This would seem to be patently obvious. According to Lemert (1951:75) there is a sequence of steps that lead from the primary deviance to the assumption of a secondary deviant role:

1. primary deviation
2. societal penalties
3. further primary deviation
4. stronger penalties and rejection
5. further deviation, perhaps with hostilities and resentments beginning to focus upon those doing the penalizing
6. crisis reached in the tolerance quotient, expressed informal reaction by the community, stigmatizing of the deviant
7. strengthening of the deviant conduct as a reaction to the stigmatizing and penalties
8. ultimate acceptance of deviant status and efforts at adjustment on the basis of the associated role.

If this pattern is generally accurate, by the time that the deviant has reached the stage of secondary deviance there could be little condemnation by society that could touch or effect him.

However, what are these societal "penalties" of which Lemert speaks

as being part of the steps towards secondary deviance? Judging from his state-
ments, it would seem that such penalties could be involved in face-to-face
interactions of the deviant with non-deviants or the penalties could refer
to actual societal responses as a whole towards the norm-violator. How
the notion of "penalties" is defined has much to do with how much sense can
be made from Thorsell and Klemke's first assertion.

Lemert (1967: 41) offers some amplification of his views on penalties:

> However, to dwell upon the cognitive dramatic details of face- to-
> face interaction is to grapple with only part of the thorny question
> of secondary deviance. Over and beyond these are the macrocosmic,
> organizational forces of social control through which public and
> private agencies actively define and classify people, impose
> punishments, restrict or open access to reward and satisfactions,
> set limits to social interaction and induct deviants into special
> segregated environments.

These remarks would lead one to conclude that Lemert attaches greater
importance to formal labeling by social control agencies than to face-to-face
interaction by the deviant in public encounters. On the other hand, it is not
clear as to exactly which labeling process Thorsell and Klemke have in mind
at different points in their discussion. If the person has become a secondary
deviant, Lemert's argument would suggest that he has been labeled along the
way by a social agency. Do Thorsell and Klemke have in mind an informal sort
of societal reaction or the more formal reaction of the social agency? It
seems that they refer to both processes in their total analysis but fail to
delineate completely the distinctions between them.

So much for conceptual ambiguity. Thorsell and Klemke state that the
primary deviant seems most vulnerable to labeling and also most susceptible
to the sanctions of larger society. The data from the dope dealer study here
fails to show any evidence of the existence of primary deviance at the onset
of dope dealing in the sense that the individual engages in norm-violating

conduct he regards as alien to his true self (Gibbons, 1973: 209). True, some persons were more involved in the selling of dope than at earlier times in their life, but by the time they began selling dope, their whole life already revolved around a set of morals and values that was different from non-deviant society. The data suggested that the role of dope dealer was one that was socially acceptable to the point of receiving positive reinforcement among the dealer's peer group. There was no need, then, for the dealer to completely reorganize his life-style around the illegal activity of selling marijuana: his life-style was already congruent with it. What was a deviant role to society was a respected one to his peers. The dealers, it seemed, would <u>rather</u> earn money from selling dope than by becoming totally involved in a so-called "straight" business and having one's life revolve around it. This observation related to Mankoff's (1971: 211) criticism that the labeling approach to career deviance precludes the rule-breakers being credited with "freely espousing career deviance as a positive alternative to career conformity."

A much larger question becomes apparent at this time. Could it be that the schema of primary and secondary deviance should be broadened with respect to the deviance of the dope dealer so that membership in the hippie subculture would be seen as the primary deviance and the selling of marijuana and the assumption of the dealer role as examples of secondary deviance? This is an interesting possibility to explore more fully, but one that is unfortunately beyond the realm of the present study.

2. <u>"When a label is assigned confidentially and the person so labeled is a non-professional deviant, there appears to be a greater chance that future deviance will be avoided.</u> (Emphasis added). (P. 398). Thorsell and Klemke differentiate here between public and private labeling. They hold that if the

labeling is done publicly, alienation and differential treatment will be more likely to occur than if it is done privately. In addition, the reactions of alienation and differential treatment are made more likely if opportunities are available for acceptance by a deviant subculture.

Public labeling, in the case of the dope dealer, is done by a social agency which, more often than not, is the police. A person arrested by the police and convicted by the court whether he be dope dealer or safe cracker is faced with social stigma and reaction because of his record. Doubtless that individual, if he desired to operate fully within the boundaries of non-deviant, acceptable society would encounter problems revolving around his public labeling as a deviant. Thorsell and Klemke go on to argue that if a subculture is available that is centered around the activities of the persons' deviant behavior, than the alienation and differential treatment on the part of society will be more likely to happen. Visibility of deviance affects labelling processes in society. If the deviant and his activities are quite visible, then labeling will be more likely and more intense than if the deviant behavior is less apparent (Downes & Rock, 1971). In the case of the dope dealer, Thorsell and Klemke would hold that if the dealer is publicly labeled and belongs to the subculture surrounding drugs, alienation is more likely to occur than if there were no subculture. This is a difficult notion to apply to the study data. In all cases, the dealers were part of the subculture before they started dealing. Those that were busted felt little alienation or differential treatment on the part of society since after their bust, they continued with their dealing activities and thus had little contact with non-deviant society. The idea that societal reaction would have been different after their arrest if there were no subculture of drugs is something that is impossible to ascertain.

3. "When the deviant person has come commitment to and is, therefore

sensitive to the evaluation of the labeler, the effect of the labeling process

appears more likely to be positive than negative." (Emphasis added). (P. 398).

This contention of Thorsell and Klemke can be interpreted in two different

ways. The first interpretation and the one most likely intended by the

authors would view the labeler and the labeled on opposite sides of deviance.

That is, the deviant would be the one involved in unacceptable behavior and

the labeler would be part of the group that is socially approved. The peri-

pheral membership of the deviant with the group or persons whose behavior is

socially acceptable would be a major factor in the reaction of the deviant

to the labeling experience. Thorsell and Klemke maintain that the reaction

most likely in this case would tend to be the discouragement of the future

deviant behavior.

Another empirical possibility exists, however, that Thorsell and Klemke

do not fully discuss. The deviance of the actor can be viewed from the pers-

pective of a labeler that approves rather than disapproves of the behavior

in question. If the deviant had some commitment to the labeler and was

"sensitive to the evaluation of the labeler" then the results would most

likely be, it would seem, that deviant behavior would be reinforced rather

than discouraged. Utilizing Thorsell and Klemke's terminology, this would be

a negative effect rather than a positive one. Data from the study supports

this possibility. The dealer is labeled as such by his peers who have know-

ledge of his illegal activities. He receives positive reinforcement of his

image of himself as a dealer from these people. Those who would be inclined

to label him derogatorily as a dealer are no very likely to know that the

person is even dealing. Due to the necessary secrecy involved with the illegal

activities, only persons directly participating in the business in some way

are acquainted with the identities of others who are also involved in dealing. Therefore, the only way individuals outside the dealing circle with the possible exception of the police would know of a dealer's identity would be through formal public labeling which obviously would not fall into Thorsell and Klemke's idea of the deviant's commitment to the labeler.

Thorsell and Klemke make note of the subcultural supports "which encourage renunciation of the legitmacy of conventional morality" (p. 398). They further assert that the techniques of neutralization that the subculture provides seem to "abrogate any affect, positive or negative that the labeling process might have on a labeled person" (p. 398). Once again, the authors conceptualize the labeling process in terms of labeling by a socially acceptable group of persons directed at individuals whose behavior is socially unacceptable. They overlook the case of interaction that takes place between an individual deviant and a deviant group.

However, Thorsell and Klemke's notion that the subculture insulates the deviant from any positive or negative effect from labeling by a social agency or group appears to hold true for the dope dealer data. The experience of being formally labeled a dealer by being arrested on marijuana charges apparently had little affect on the dealer's identity of himself or on his further illegal activities. In addition, labeling by parents as a dealer seemed to matter little with regard to the person's dealing activities. As long as the dealer received positive reinforcement from the persons surrounding him on a day to day basis, labeling with negative overtones by those involved in conventional societal areas had little effect.

4. "If a label can be easily removed, then the probability that the stigmatized person is likely to move toward conforming behavior is greater."

(Emphasis added). (P. 399). There is little in the research data on dope dealers that relates to this proposition. There are some references in the dealer interviews, though, that pertain to the application of the dealer label within the hippie subculture. Some of the respondents maintained that it is not difficult to stop dealing if one wishes, to cease playing the dealer role and subsequently to lose the dealer label. They claim that ex-dealer's life style is usually little different than before dealing, except for less extra income or dope from illegal activities and the loss of the dealer status position. As there is no stigma attached to this role for the person, it actually makes little difference to him whether or not he has the label. The label does not prevent him from doing anything within his world that he would be able to do if he was not so labeled. Therefore, Becker's belief that given a chance to resume the "normal" activities of a conforming person, the deviant would desire to conform seems inapplicable when applied to this situation.

IV. INFORMAL LABELING EXPERIENCE VERSUS FORMAL LABELING EXPERIENCE

An important point that is frequently overlooked in the labeling literature distinguishes between official, institutionalized reactions and informal reactions of significant others. Many assertions about the reaction of the deviant to societal labeling take on different meanings depending upon the type of labeling that is used for the analysis. Many labeling contentions merely refer to the "labeling process" and do not specify whether one or both types of labeling are being discussed. Indeed, there is usually little reference to the fact that there are two ways that a label can be attached to a deviant.

For the present research especially, such a distinction is highly necessary. Both patterns of labeling can be seen among the dope dealers

.interviewed: persons who were arrested for selling dope experienced formal, institutionalized reactions from the social control agency and others received the label from parents or peers and underwent an informal labeling. These processes contain different steps of execution and therefore, must be viewed by the researcher as possibly eliciting differing sets of individual responses.

V. SUMMARY

Chapter II contained a number of criticisms aimed at the labeling perspective. Some of these criticisms will once again be examined, this time in the light of research findings reported here on marijuana dealers.

Labeling Is Not a Full-Blown Theory

The present study has shown that strict adherence to labeling views would leave a number of areas of a "deviant's" situation and/or actor's situation unexplored. For example, aspects concerning subculture, the actor's behavior that generated the placing of the societal label of "deviant", and informal versus formal labeling of "deviant" are not sufficiently dealt with in the traditional labeling literature. Therefore, the present study appears to substantiate the view held by Gibbons and Jones (1975: 134) that "labeling views represent embryonic theory at best" and that labeling seems to "operate more as sensitizing claims than anything else."

Failure to Distinguish Adequately Between Deviance And Non-Deviance

The study of marijuana dealers decidedly indicates the relativistic aspects of the label "deviant". That is, what is considered "deviance" by one group is considered "normal" by another. A useful theory of deviance to be

truly objective should take all of the various perspectives of "reality" that might exist in a "deviant" situation under consideration. The labeling notions, then, meet this criteria of a useful deviance theory by allowing within its framework for a relativistic orientation of deviance.

Narrow Focus

Labeling theory has tended to emphasize the acts surrounding the placing of the deviant label on an actor by a societal group. However, as the present research has shown, the formal labeling of a person as "dealer" seems to have had little to do with, and has had little effect on, the person's actual behavior. The behavior of the individual both before and after the societal designation needs to be examined. Therefore, the scope of labeling notions should be widened somewhat to include this full consideration of an actor's behavior before the label of "deviant" has been placed on him by a group.

Labeling Generates An Underdog Ideology

The study of marijuana dealers indicated the necessity of viewing the labeling process from both the perspective of the so-called "deviant" and from the perspective of the "non-deviant" who was involved in the labeling. Labeling notions, because they do not clearly define what is deviant, can therefore be utilized as a framework for a study of this type. If applied correctly, then, the labeling perspective would not take the "side" of either the "deviant" or the labeling group.

Not Enough Attention Is Given to Secret Deviance

According to the strict labeling view that rule breaking refers to "a class of acts which have been publicly and officially labeled as norm

violators" (Scheff, 1966: 33), those dealers not arrested or otherwise been involved with a social sanctioning agency would not be considered "deviant". Obviously this has not been the case with the study sample. Therefore, more attention must indeed be given to such so-called "secret" deviance.

This chapter has discussed both the limitation of labeling views and the nature of societal response to deviance with relation to the present study on marijuana dealers. The next chapter will examine some of the problems the researcher encountered while conducting the field research for the study.

CHAPTER VI

THE ETHICS AND PROBLEMS OF FIELD WORK

I. PROBLEMS OF FIELD WORK

Relatively little sociological field research in the areas of crim-
inology and deviance has been carried out even though much has been written
concerning the need for such work. The sociological literature shows a
paucity of research evidence on deviants and lawbreakers "at large". The
studies of Letkeman (1973), Chambliss (1964), Polsky (1967) and Humphreys
(1970) among others have been notable exceptions. Because of the paucity
of data on deviance in natural settings, the question arises as to whether
deviance in "reality" bears much semblance to deviant conduct about which
non-field oriented sociologists write. Perhaps too, there is a discrepancy
between what might be termed formal sociology and sociology in practice.
What is urgently needed for the body of criminological/deviance literature is
studies that focus on deviants, their patterns of conduct, and the reactions
and interactions of deviants in their natural settings, rather than in imagined
situations.

> It is possible to find out what is going on "out there"...
> All we really have to do is to get out of offices and onto
> the streets. The data are there, the problem is that too
> often sociologists are not (Chambliss, 1975:39).

Polsky (1967) too, argues for the importance of field research in crim-
inology. He claims that a major failure of criminology is that a skewed
sample is often depended upon, "studied in non-natural (anti-crime) settings,
providing mostly data recollected long after the event." (1967:122). A

change in research methods is called for to overcome this deficiency.

> This means -- there is no getting away from it -- the study
> of career criminals au naturel, in the field, the study of
> such criminals as they normally go about their work and play,
> the study of "uncaught" criminals and the study of others who
> in the past have been caught but are not caught at the time
> you study them (emphasis in the original). (Polsky; 1967:
> 122-123).

Some sociologists might protest the use of field research in criminology and deem it unnecessary. These researchers would perhaps feel highly uncomfortable doing studies on a face-to-face basis with criminals and so invent arguments as to the undesirability of field research to cover their qualms. Consider, for example, the reasoning that is presented by Sutherland and Cressey (1974: 69). Few researchers, they write "could acquire the techniques to pass as criminals," researchers "must associate with them as one of them" and, moreover, it would be necessary to engage in crime with the other if they retained a position once secured." I would like to note in passing that it would seem that Sutherland and Cressey worry a bit too much. Why should it be necessary for the sociologist to pass himself off as a criminal? Wouldn't a "true" criminal be able to see through the play acting of a "true" sociologist and know that the researcher was not "one of them"? Similarly, if the sociologist was not pretending to be a criminal, there would be no reason that he would be forced to partake in criminal activities with the people that he was studying. William Foote Whyte (1955) makes the point that participation in illegal activity with the criminal under study is usually unnecessary and can, in fact, harm the research. In his own study of street gangs, he realized that he had learned little from actually taking part in the illegal actions of multiple looting with some of the gang members than he could have learned without taking any risk of arrest. Too, he placed in jeopardy his good reputation with the rest of the district.

In addition, Sutherland and Cressey (1974: 69) say of career criminals "few of them would permit interrogations regarding the processes by which they become criminals". This seems to be a rather broad generalization to make; it would appear to be more applicable to certain individuals in certain settings.

I found through my experience in doing research with dope dealers that field research on criminals appears to be much the same as doing any sort of field research -- the investigator must be able to talk, listen and deal directly with people. An important consideration, though, in field research on deviance is that the investigator must work with persons who are naturally more suspicious of outsiders than most subjects who are not involved in illegal activities. The researcher must take pains to explain his position as a social scientist completely disassociated from any law enforcement agency to the potential subjects.

Polsky (1967: 128-36) offers a number of procedures to overcome some of the problems in field research on criminals and to prevent these problems from arising. Some appear to be helpful and basically sound while others seem to be superfluous and naive. They will be presented here with commentary on their utility as applied to this research on dope dealers.

1. "Use no gadgets (tape recorders, questionnaire forms, etc.). Don't take notes in the criminal's presence. This is to lessen the amount of contamination of the criminal environment by the researcher."

This assertion makes good sense. A tape recorder or a questionnaire form would understandably make some people nervous if the gadgets were plainly in sight. This would seem especially applicable to research involving criminals; before their very eyes a record is being made of things they are saying, things that perhaps the police would like to know. Too, the researcher

should avoid contact with the criminal environment as much as possible.
However, Polsky's words "contamination of the criminal environment" are rather
strong and melodramatic. While a gadget as a tape recorder or even the
researcher himself might be out of place in a robber's hideout, "contamination"
appears too strong a descriptive term.

Strangely though, this apparently logical and reasonable "no gadgets"
assertion did not hold true for this research with the dope dealers. I had
initially ruled out using a tape recorder since, after a few queries, I
discovered that few dealers would permit having their voices recorded on a
tape. I had also assumed that no sort of note taking apparatus would be
utilized in the dealer's presence. Instead, I wrote a three page question
guideline of areas of information to be covered during the course of conver-
sations with the dealer. After the completion of the conversation, original
plans were to rush off somewhere to fill the in the blanks on the guideline
form. However, trouble developed with this plan during the first interview
that I did. I met my subject in a tavern and, when the subject and researcher
were seated, coffee was ordered. The dealer, who was drinking beer, urged
me to order the same. I declined and said that I would rather drink coffee.
For some reason, this seemed to make the subject nervous and he spent
another few minutes in insisting that the researcher drink beer with him.
After this rather dismal start, an attempt was made to draw him into conver-
sation about his business. However, nothing seemed to work. The person was
obviously ill at ease in the situation in which he found himself. In desper-
ation, I pulled out a copy of the question guidelines and, placing it on a
clipboard, indicated that I'd like to ask him a few questions and take notes
on his answers. This appeared to immediately put him at ease and the idea of
taking notes on his opinions pleased him tremendously. I have a suspicion, too,

that the use of the clipboard aided in the projection of my image as a sociologist. The interview then proceeded smoothly with the dealer answering each question in detail. I tried the next few interviews by the same method: beginning without any questionnaire form then utilizing it mid-way through. In all cases the presence of the clipboard and the printed questionnaire made for a more relaxed and complete interview and, consequently, I used the questionnaire method for the rest of the study.

2. "Keep your mouth shut -- at first try not to ask questions. You should get the 'feel' of this world by extensive and attentive listenting to their language, likes, dislikes, etc. The result of failure to avert such dangers is that (the researcher) will be 'put on' or more likely, 'put down' and end by provoking the hostility of his informant."

This is a valid suggestion. In other words, don't make a fool of yourself in front of the people that you are trying to study. It would seen, though, that rather than learning about the criminal's world while the study is being done, it would be more reasonable to know something about the people that you are studying before you start. Thus, familiarity with the argot, customs, or whatever would not go unnoticed by the subject and so would make him more at ease in the researcher's presence. I found this to be true in my interviews with the dealers. Having gone through the "flower child" phenomenon of 1967-68 and having been a college student for seven years, I was familiar with the language, dress, etc. of the people with whom I was to talk. This was apparent to the interviewees and helped to erase any doubts they might have had about me being a social scientist rather than a "narc". A person who overreacted to Polsky's advice and only sat and listened to what was going on would no doubt generate considerable suspicion among his potential subjects. Polsky's advice, then, while fundamentally sound must be modified.

3. "You cannot accurately assess any aspect of deviant lifestyle or subculture, through argot alone."

Here Polsky is asserting that the researcher should not try to develop interpretations and explanations of what the argot "really" means and then to use these interpretations to dissect the entire life-style or culture. There is sometimes, it would seem, a lack of congruence between the language of deviants and reality of deviance. The reasons behind why marijuana is referred to as "dope" would no doubt be interesting, but might also be quite useless to a study of dope dealers. Argot of the dope culture is faddish in quality. If a word has a catchy sound and fits a particular situation well, people begin to use it in conversation regardless of any intrinsic meanings.

4. "It is usually easier to get acquainted first with criminals at their play rather than at their work...Initiating such contact means recognizing that criminals are not a species utterly different from you...you do have some leisure interests in common with criminals."

This suggestion involves some assumptions that might not be applicable in all situations. It assumes on the one hand that the criminal that is to be studied is known to the researcher beforehand. The researcher would have to know what the person is interested in and what form of "play" he engages in. Or, if this is not the case, the researcher would have to know where certain groups of a certain type of criminal go for their "play". In either instance, there is the presupposition of knowledge that might be extremely difficult if not impossible to obtain. There is no tavern or club, for example, that I could go to and be sure to run into a dope dealer. That is, there is not a dope dealer hangout that one can go to participate in a dealer's "play activities". While this method might work well in some cases, it would

have been a waste of time for my own research. Then, too, I am more attracted to the direct approach of letting the criminal know who you are and what your research project entails.

5. "If you establish an acquaintance with criminals on the basis of common interest then, as soon as possible, let him know of the differences between you. Let him know what you do for a living, etc. He may have some complaints about the outside world's mistaken view of him that you...might sympathetically understand and correctly report. Or he may want to justify what he does... Or he may be motivated by pride and status considerations."

My research experiences concur with this recommendation of Polsky's. A common interest between the researcher and the person involved in illegal activities creates an immediate area of identification for both. The researcher must establish this bond, to some degree, though, before starting to point out the differences. That is, it would have been of little benefit to me in my interviews to immediately commence with the questioning of the dealer. A few minutes of small talk aids considerably in letting the subject know who and what you are. I made a deliberate effort not to appear too "straight" to the dealer. In order to successfully carry this off, I had to exhibit a familiarity with the argot and subject area. This was most profitably accomplished during that first ten minutes or so after meeting. The dealer then was sufficiently relaxed with me to begin the interview. The fact that I was working on my master's thesis seemed to impress the subjects; they made a considerable effort to help me understand what they were doing in the business and how they felt about it. A few dealers tried to enlist me to champion the cause of dope dealers. One man made a comment that "people write about rock stars, never about dealers. We're just as glamorous." Another dealer wanted me to "finally tell the truth about dope dealers. We're not like heroin

pushers, we just sell marijuana." These people felt some pride in their work, they felt they were making money honestly albeit illegally. On the whole, the people I talked to recognized the similarities between us, but also respected our differences. I feel, however, that had I not made a point in establishing first how we were alike, the parallels would have become lost among the dissimilarities.

6. "It is important to realize that he (the criminal) will be studying you and to let him study you. Don't evade...any questions he might have about your personal life."

Polsky, I am sure, did not intend for the researcher to go overboard in revealing his personal life to the subject. True, the researcher is doing some prying into the subject's life, but this was the point of the meeting of the two. The researcher should be honest and open about his feelings if asked, just as he expects the subject to be, yet I think a certain level in the familiarity must be created and maintained. I directly relate this to the dealer who tried to trap me into some sort of "drugs I have taken" confession and the dealer who kept asking me questions about my sex life. Neither question appeared to me to be relevant to the situation or our relationship and I refused to respond to either one. I consciously attempted to set up certain social boundaries for the interaction between the dealer and myself; a relationship was usually established that was friendly and relaxed but on a business-like plane only.

7. "You must draw the line, to yourself and the criminal. Precisely where to draw it is a moral decision that each researcher must make for himself in each research situation."

Just as one must decide how personal one is to become with the subject, so must one decide upon the nature of the relationship itself. More

specifically, I knew I had to make a decision beforehand on how I was going to handle the situation of a dealer asking me to smoke some dope with him. I knew that if I did, I would most likely obtain a greater deal of information from him than if I didn't. I felt, however, that such an action would lessen my control over the situation and, indeed, compromise my role as researcher. One must seriously consider, as Polsky points out, what one will or won't do for the sake of the study.

8. "There is another kind of compromise that must be made, this by way of keeping faith with informants...in reporting one's research it is sometimes necessary to write of certain things more vaguely and skimpily than one would prefer.

In any type of research involving information that is considered illegal, extreme caution must indeed be taken for the protection of both the informant and the researcher. In the case of the present research it was crucial that I know as little as possible about the person I was interviewing, including home address and any dealing activities above and beyond what I actually needed to know for the study. This was intended as a precaution against the chance that I would be questioned by the police about the dealers I interviewed. If this had ever occurred, I hopefully would have had little of value to them. Too, I also thought that since I would know so little about the individuals, police officers would have small cause to interrogate me. An attorney at the District Attorney's office in Portland discussed my protective measures with me and concurred that I stood in little danger of violating my subjects' trust as long as I held to them."

9. "Letting criminals know where you draw the line of course depends on knowing this yourself. If you aren't sure, the criminal may capitalize on the fact to maneuver you into an accomplice role."

This is directly related to Polsky's more major piece of advice: knowing where to draw the line between yourself and the criminal. If the researcher has a strong sense of what he is doing and who the criminal is, there is little chance that he'll get so swept away by the "glamour" of the criminal's world that he'll do anything to stay in the criminal's good graces. Polsky obviously does not think much of the intelligence of the sociological researcher: this suggestion is somewhat condescending. I doubt that there are many sociologists who would get carred away by "flattery" from someone that he considers a criminal. Admittedly, it does happen. William Foote Whyte (1955), for example, got so involved with his "gang" that he agreed to take part in multiple voting in an election. Despite complements from dealers about how well I "fit in" with them, I felt no inclination to rush right out and start dealing dope. In this case, I do not think that Polsky is giving other sociologists credit for possessing the same good sense that he feels he possesses.

10. "...you musn't pretend to be 'one of them', (but) it is equally important that you don't stick out like a sore thumb in the criminals' natural habitat...often you must modify your usual dress as well as your usual speech."

A basic premise of field research is: blend with the crowd, but don't disappear entirely. A dealer would naturally feel more comfortable talking and meeting with someone whose appearance is in the manner of his own rather than that of a police officer. For my interviews with the dealers, I tried to dress in a way that would be familiar to them yet not so identical that it would possibly negate my researcher status. I tried to dress "hip" without being overwhelmingly "hippie". The jeans I wore were stylishly tailored, pants that could be worn by college student and suburban matron alike. I felt that it would have been detrimental to my research if I had dressed in

either the extreme of baggy overalls or shirtwaist dress and stockings. My mode of dressing blended in with the tavern crowd and did not cause unease for my subject. Language, too, should be modified. If one is used to talking in sociological jargon, for instance, it would not serve the study well to utilize it in conversations with the subjects. It would only confuse, not impress.

11. "A final rule is to have few unbreakable rules."

This advice is of prime importance for field researchers. The researcher must not begin his study with fixed ideas concerning what he wants to find out and the exact methods that he intends to employ in discovering this information. He will either fail totally to obtain any of the right information or else produce a study so biased and narrow that it will be of little sociological interest. Since the field researcher is dealing with people, a fixed interaction formula is difficult, if not impossible to construct. I talked with several types of dealers (e.g., college students, hippies professing love and peace and fashionably dressed dope businessmen) and each required a somewhat varied approach. Too, situations tend to happen that the researcher would never anticipate in advance. Rigid controls, therefore, should not be imposed upon the research by the researchers. Sociologists should be flexible enough to handle real people's reactions to ordinary life situation.

Ethical Problems

There are some definite moral and ethical issues involved in doing a study on people involved in illegal activities. The researcher must, to some degree, be taken into confidence of the illegal acts. He is then faced with a number of related problems: information that he does get from the research

could possibly jeopardize the people interviewed since illegal activities are under constant scrutiny by the police. Too, the researcher must decide what he would do if he were faced with police questioning on the subjects interviewed for the research.

Before embarking on such a study, the responsible sociologist must thrash out for himself his own opinion of the value of the study.

> ...social science has continually ignored, evaded, or assailed conventional limits and taboos by asserting its right to know everything that seems worth knowing about the behavior of human beings. If this poses a threat to privacy, the risk must be weighed against the gain. We now know more about human behavior than has ever been known by any society recorded in history. The question: Is this gain worth the risk? (Lerner, 1959).

Exactly what methods of study does the proposed research entail? Is the researcher or research disguised as something else? Does it involve flagrant ignoring of the rights of privacy?[1] Is the anonymity of the subjects less than well protected?[2]

The question of anonymity is sometimes a difficult one, as Gibbons and Jones note (1975, p. 215-216). Some sociologists are not as careful about the protection of their subjects' identities when the research concerns a power-less group in society rather than individuals who are considered important. Gibbons and Jones feel that the powerless groups in society should be afforded the same maximized rights of protection of any other subjects. "Sociologists have no business treating 'bums,' 'crooks,' or any other outsiders as second class citizens." (Gibbons and Jones, 1975: 216).

Before beginning my research utilizing dope dealers as subjects, I had to consider a number of points relative to ethics. I realized that one must take some sort of risk when doing a study on deviants, but I felt that using people involved in illegal activities was important to discovering the utility

of the arguments of the labeling experience as career contingencies. Therefore, I had to satisfy both myself and the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at Portland State University that I had done everything possible to protect the rights of privacy of the individuals in the study and that the research subjects would give their informed consent prior to participation in the research.

Then, too, I had to come to some decisions relative to the role of a social science researcher with relation to the police. Clearly, it would have been unethical to tell potential subjects that I was only a social scientist if I would, if it were the case, be willing to also act as an informant to the police. I knew that as a sociologist I would not go to the police volunteering information about my subjects nor would I give the police information about these people under subpoena. The topic of my research was, I felt, of sufficient sociological importance that I would be prepared to protect the people who offered me information in exchange for their cooperation. Therefore, I was ready to assure the potential subjects that if the situation arose, I would refuse to give information to the police and was prepared to go to jail for contempt of court.

As a final statement, I wish to emphasize again the importance of doing field research. It is one of the few ways to discover the connection between theory and reality.

Footnotes:

1. Humphreys' (1970) study of male homosexuals is a perfect example of what I would term as ignoring the rights of privacy of others. Humphreys observed, while in a public rest room, males participating in furtive homosexual acts. He then obtained the license plate numbers on their cars and traced these people to their homes. Allowing a period of time to elapse so that he would not be recognized, he then went to the homes of the people under the guise of seeking information of an entirely different nature.

2. Gibbons and Jones (1975:216) note that in Chambliss' study on the vice power structure (1971), the term "Rainfall West" that is used to denote the city is merely a thinly disguised term for the city of Seattle and with little effort it would be simple to identify all the figures about whom Chambliss writes.

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