

THE NONPROFESSIONAL PROPERTY OFFENDER:
A STUDY IN PHENOMENOLOGICAL SOCIOLOGY

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE COUNCIL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1975

To Trixie

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First things first: Due to the whims of academic bureaucracy, there is one important name missing from the signature pages at the end of this dissertation, Professor Charles Robbins. The intellectual and personal debts that I owe to this individual are truly significant. Therefore, I feel it is appropriate to open these acknowledgments with that missing name. Professor Robbins has been one of the major figures in my graduate education. Through his own work and his assistance to me, he has provided the type of interdisciplinary learning that initially motivated me to enroll in a graduate program. He has also shown me that one does not have to be satisfied with empty images of professionalism and public scholarship. If I have a role model, it is Chuck. I wish here to formally thank him for everything that he has done for me.

There is one other person to whom I am equally and similarly indebted, Dr. Charles Frazier. Professor Frazier has consistently demonstrated to me the meaning of sociological scholarship and critical thinking. He is a hard taskmaster, but he is also a meaningful friend. To this Chuck I owe my introduction to, and a great deal of my understanding of, the sociology of deviant behavior. I am

honored by both his friendship and his tutelage, and with Chuck these two relationships go hand-in-hand. Of special import to my personal development has been Chuck's solid commitment to doing sociology as he feels it is best accomplished in order to gain a radical understanding of social action. I shall with pride refer to myself as one of Frazier's students. I hope to be able to do this title justice.

To Dr. Joseph Vandiver, I am grateful for his tolerance of a graduate student whose thinking is far distant from that of his own. Dr. Vandiver's ability to allow me to travel my own path through sociology is a clear example of the strength of his personal commitment to the discipline: Van's friendly advice and personal kindness have greatly eased the institutionalized burdens of graduate school. As every graduate student in sociology comes to appreciate, Van is a friend through it all. I wish to thank him for being a truly kind and concerned person.

Dr. Mary Anna Baden and Dr. E. Wilbur Bock also served on my doctoral committee, and I wish to acknowledge their assistance. They were most helpful whenever I asked for their time and effort. Dr. Bock introduced me to sociological theory and I am grateful for his instruction in that area. Mary Anna read the manuscript of this dissertation and her interest in my work has been both sincere and honest. Dr. Felix Berardo came to my assistance in a

time of need, and I wish to thank him for his aid. Dr. Hal Lewis of the College of Education has served on both my MA and PhD committees as the "outside" member. In Norman Hall, Dr. Lewis is considered indispensable; now I know why. I also wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Barry Guinagh of the College of Education for serving on my doctoral committee.

Two other unrecognized "outside" committee members must be thanked for their kindness to me, Ms. Lynn Frazier and Ms. Lynn Robbins. They have both allowed me to feel like a personal friend rather than merely another graduate student. I also owe a great debt to Dr. David Monsees, the chairman of my Master of Arts committee. He is a close personal friend and an important teacher. Early in my graduate education, David directed my interests and convinced me to continue past the MA level. I thank him for his interest in me.

How can I express appropriate gratitude to my family? Their contribution to my development is the most significant of all. My parents taught me to love to read; that is a gift that can never be repaid. My brother showed me the importance of philosophical introspection, and that too can never be repaid. My lover, friend, and teacher Susan deserves more mention than anyone. She has taught me more about life and thought than any person that I know. All my work is in effect dedicated to her.

Additionally, I owe thanks to Dr. Ray Worley of the Division of Corrections of the State of Florida for granting me admission to the Lake Butler Reception and Medical Center in order to conduct my research for this dissertation. At Lake Butler, I was assisted by Superintendent James Godwin and Mr. T.J. Cunningham. I would also like to thank Ms. Kitty Hinton and Ms. Nancie Lehman for their kindness in typing this dissertation.

Last and surely not least I wish to thank my respondents. I do so with a quote from the poet Robert Frost (1967:315):

I can't help owning the great relief it would be
To put these people at one stroke out of their pain.

And the next day as I come back into the sane,
I wonder how I should like you to come to me
And offer to put me gently out of my pain.

Still, above all this, I am alone responsible for both my achievements and my failures.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the
Graduate Council of the University of Florida in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

THE NONPROFESSIONAL PROPERTY OFFENDER:
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August, 1975

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A full theory of criminal careers must be able to explain the development of criminal behavior through three stages within offenders' careers in crime. These stages are referred to as entry, continuation, and exiting. This dissertation attempts to evaluate the relative worth of two schools of thought within criminology as theoretical explanations of the development of criminal careers.

The study is directed towards three specific objectives. The first is to provide a phenomenological description of the career development of the typical nonprofessional property offender. The second objective is to determine which of two general approaches in criminological theory best explains the criminal career of the nonprofessional property offender. The final objective is to closely examine exiting as a stage in

the criminal career of the nonprofessional property offender.

The two general theoretical approaches examined in this study are deterministic and voluntaristic criminology. The specific content and historical development of these general schools of thought is reviewed. Deterministic criminology includes the explanation of criminal behavior generally referred to as structural strain theory and cultural transmission theory. Voluntaristic criminology includes modern control theory and societal reactionism. During the discussion of these theories, general propositions concerning the development of criminal careers are derived from each school.

These theoretical arguments are evaluated through the analysis of data collected during interviews with 20 prison inmates whose official records display the characteristics common to the nonprofessional property offender. Each of these interviews was tape-recorded. The interviews were then analyzed according to the techniques of phenomenological sociology. This analysis produced a descriptive typification of the criminal career of the nonprofessional property offender. Special emphasis was placed on the oft-neglected exiting stage within criminal careers.

The findings of the study are described separately for each stage of career development. These findings strongly support the position of voluntaristic criminology in general, and control theory and societal reactionism in particular. The findings of the dissertation suggest that the development of criminal careers is the result of reasonable and voluntary choices made by the individual within facilitating social contexts.

Chairman

Co-chairman

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a study in the sociology and phenomenology of criminal behavior. It addresses three research questions pertinent to criminology and the sociology of deviant behavior. The first question is, how does the criminal career of the typical nonprofessional property offender develop and change. The second question concerns the relative worth of two prominent theoretical approaches as explanations of these criminal careers. The two approaches are referred to as deterministic and voluntaristic criminology because they reflect a division based on assumptions about the determined or voluntary nature of social action. Included within the deterministic approach are theories of deviance and crime that traditionally are known as theories of cultural transmission and theories of structural strain. Voluntaristic criminology includes the theories generally termed control theory and societal reactionism. The comparative accuracy of these two theoretical approaches is evaluated by appraising the extent to which their theoretical precepts explain the primary contingencies in career development.

A third research question of the dissertation considers exiting as a stage in the criminal career of the nonprofessional property offender: what social contingencies induce attempts at exiting and, in turn, how do they affect the success or failure of these attempts. All three research problems are interrelated and build upon one another.

The general goal of this research is to develop a typification of the career path of nonprofessional property offenders and then to evaluate the relative utility of deterministic and voluntaristic criminology in explaining three important stages of career development. These stages are called entry, continuation, and exiting and are adapted from Frazier's (1973) categorization of stages in deviant careers.

Frazier convincingly argued that a total explanation of deviant careers should be able to explain behavior at three stages of career development: primary emergence, patterning, and change.

. . . primary emergence directs attention to the factors causing the first instances of deviant behavior. Patterning leads us to consider the forces involved in causing specific forms of deviance to become stabilized . . . Change pertains to the causes of disengagement from a pattern of deviant behavior (Frazier, 1973:2).

The renaming of these stages as entry, continuation, and exiting respectively was done in order to emphasize more

clearly the processural nature of social action and criminal careers. It is thought that these terms connote less permanence than do those used by Frazier. The terms entry and exiting convey a portrait of criminal careers as interdependent paths of action. Exiting is considered to be a less prejudicial term than change. Change may imply the occurrence of personality or identity alterations that may or may not be present in empirical cases.

The Data

The data analyzed in this study were collected through unstructured interviews with 20 nonprofessional property offenders. The interviews were conducted at a correctional institution in the southern United States. The interviews were organized around the criminal careers of respondents selected for participation in the study according to their official criminal records. Inmates whose arrest records displayed a recurring pattern of simple property offenses were asked to volunteer for the study. The interview conversations were tape-recorded, and they resulted in the collection of 20 topical life-histories and criminal careers of the respondents.

The Method of Analysis

The analysis of these data was performed according to the techniques of phenomenological sociology. This style

of analysis is directed to uncovering the social meanings and self-conceptions of the actor. The transcriptions of the interviews were reduced to a phenomenologically constructed typification of the criminal career of the nonprofessional property offender. The typification includes the primary intersubjective contingencies that informed the development of the offenders' criminal careers. This typification was then used to evaluate the relative utility of deterministic and voluntaristic criminology as explanations of the criminal career of the nonprofessional property offender. A more detailed discussion of the methodology used in the dissertation is included in Chapter 3.

The Organization of the Dissertation

The presentation of this study is divided into several interrelated areas of concern. Chapter 2 is basically an analytical review of the current content of criminological theory. Criminological theory is divided into two schools of thought---deterministic and voluntaristic criminology---based on the philosophical model of man that underlies each school. Each general approach is reviewed through a discussion of several important and representative theories of criminal behavior. During this review, the explanation offered by each group of theories for the development of criminal careers is discussed. Then,

general propositions reflective of the consensus within each broad approach concerning the development of criminal careers are presented.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology used in the study. It begins with a preliminary introduction to phenomenological sociology and the general methodological framework used in this research. Other sections of the chapter consider the characteristics of the nonprofessional property offender as an offender type, the selection of the respondents, the format and procedures used in the interviewing of the respondents, and the general development of the research project. The chapter concludes with a detailed discussion of the phenomenological techniques of analysis used in the study.

The next four chapters of the dissertation report the research findings. Chapter 4 provides a description of the initial stages of the career development of the typical nonprofessional property offender. Findings concerning the experience of imprisonment are presented in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 discusses the data bearing upon the process of becoming a semiprofessional property offender. Chapter 7 focuses on exiting from a career in nonprofessional property crime. At the conclusion of each of these discussions, the theoretical implications of the research findings are briefly discussed.

Chapter 8 interprets and organizes the theoretical implications of these findings. A review of the descriptive findings of the study is also conducted in this chapter. Finally, a model for the construction of a general theory of criminal careers is proposed.

Summary

Briefly stated, in this dissertation I attempt to:

- (1) provide a phenomenological description of the criminal career of the typical nonprofessional property offender;
- (2) determine which school of criminological theory best explains the career development of the nonprofessional property offender; and
- (3) provide a close consideration of exiting as a stage within criminal careers.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL CRIMINOLOGY: ASSUMPTIONS AND ARGUMENTS

Introduction

This chapter is an analytical review of the literature. The content of sociological criminology is reviewed in order to identify two general approaches to the study of criminal behavior. Each school of thought is described both in terms of general premises and specific theories that are representative of that school. Explanations of criminal careers representing each theoretical approach are identified. It will be these explanations that will be used to evaluate the relative worth of the two approaches when compared to a phenomenological description of the career development of the typical nonprofessional property offender.

Assumptions in Criminological Theory

The importance of background assumptions for the development of sociological theory has been clearly formulated in the critical reviews of Alvin Gouldner (1970). The insights revealed in Gouldner's reflexive sociology have begun to be realized within modern social thought. However, too few have applied this style of critical

analysis to criminological theory (for one such attempt, see Taylor, et al., 1973). One method of bringing to light the background premises that underlie criminological theory is to uncover the areas of consensual agreement among groups of theory. It is considered axiomatic that in order to comprehend adequately a social theory, one must clearly grasp the philosophical beliefs that form the base of that theory. This is a major point of Gouldner's recent analytical work.

What I am saying, is that the work of sociologists, as well as of others, is influenced by a subtheoretical set of beliefs, for that is what background assumptions are: beliefs about all members of a symbolically constituted domain (Gouldner, 1970:32).

Domain assumptions in sociology describe the core aspects of the individual, or those qualities generally referred to by the ideas of the self-concept and identity.¹ Within criminology, these assumptions are clearly visible in the assumed model of man upon which theoretical propositions are based.

The model of man adopted by a theorist and reflected in his work is useful as a means of classifying social theories. For the purposes of this study, domain

¹The social self is defined by Mead (1934:135-226) as man's ability to become an object to himself. Identity is defined by Erikson (1950:261-263) as an inner sense of continuity and sameness across time and space.

assumptions in criminology are best seen as creating two somewhat overlapping schools of thought. One will be called deterministic criminology and the other, voluntaristic criminology. In this chapter, these schools of thought are used to organize the varied content of criminological theory. As with all classificatory schemes, this one is an abstraction from the specific theories and, in fact, places these schools in their most extreme opposition. Fundamental areas of conflict between the two schools of thought are delineated.

Deterministic Criminology and Sociology

The deterministic answer to questions concerning the nature of the human actor is dominant in contemporary criminology (see, Vold, 1958:38; Matza, 1964:1-27). This dominance is revealed by the theoretical impact of the work of the positive school of criminology from Lombroso (1911) to contemporary theorists (see, for example, Merton, 1938; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960).

The model of the self that is found throughout deterministic criminology is constructed around the suppositions of nonrationality, passivity, and the determined nature of the human actor. The core of the individual is described as primarily reactive in that social action is the result of a relatively passive adjustment to the demands of external, or uncontrollable

internal, factors. Action is created and directed by libidinal urges, conditioners, or internalized norms, values, and roles. Valid explanations of action are found in environmental and biological conditions which generally are beyond the self-conscious control of the actor. Behavior is not reasonably directed or symbolically constructed; rather, it is nonrational and is produced by the social, psychological, or biological structure imposed on the actor.

In fact, the core of the actor, his self, is determined by the spatial and temporal world of the past. The actor cannot transcend the existential conditions of either his body or the external social world. As a result of these views, the deterministic criminologist focuses on socialization and the mechanisms of the social structure and related social roles as general explanations of criminal behavior (Merton, 1938; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Sutherland and Cressey, 1966). Within the deterministic model of the self, socialization becomes a major causal variable.² One behaves as one is socialized to behave. Further, one is what one is socialized into being.

²See Wrong (1961) for an excellent critique of the theoretical use of socialization in modern sociology.

Thus, for the determinist, domain assumptions involve the causal role of heredity or socialization as the producers of the self. The individual is described by this school as a composite of internalized social roles and beliefs that direct the satiation of the biological needs of the organism. These factors produce activity as they are released in accordance with the requirements of the social group. Behavior, deviant or conventional, is the product of a given type of actor formed by the forces of heredity and socialization. There exist deviant, or poorly and inappropriately socialized, actors. Deviance is the result of an inappropriate self-structure which, in turn, is caused by inappropriate socialization.

Origins in the "Italian School"

The earliest forms of deterministic criminology were essentially biological explanations of social deviance. These theories appeared in the nineteenth century and were developed by Lombroso and Ferri. These early criminologists applied physiological theories of behavior to the study of crime. Basically, the theorist proposed that criminal activity is the result of some abnormality in the biological constitution of the actor. That is, the criminal is a biologically different type of actor from more conventional individuals. In fact, criminals are organically inferior to noncriminals, and this inferiority is revealed

in their glandular make-up, anatomy, or other physiological characteristics.

The "Italian school" strongly influenced much of subsequent criminology. Constitutional theories of criminal behavior were proposed by anthropologists (Hooton, 1939) and psychologists (Sheldon, 1949). More recently, the Gluecks (1956) have produced a massive body of research that, to some extent, relies on biological determinism. Even though their approach to the explanation of criminal behavior is broader and more sophisticated than Lombroso's, they also propose the existence of a causal relationship between somatotype, or physique, and potential for criminality (Glueck, 1956:219).

In sum, it can be argued that the form of explanation used by biological determinism proposes that criminals are measurably different types of actors than are conventional individuals. Criminality is considered the result of heredity, glandular structure, or some other biological condition that is reflected in the anatomical characteristics of the criminal type. Hooton (1939:309) concluded his particular argument for deterministic criminology with a statement that is common in most biological explanations of criminal behavior.

Criminals are organically inferior. Crime
is the result of the impact of the environment
on low-grade organisms.

The next section of this chapter will examine specific

sociological theories of criminal behavior that share a set of background assumptions with the "Italian school."

Sociological Determinism³

Modern deterministic criminology has largely rejected the simplistic explanations proposed by biological determinists by stressing the significance of social and psychological factors. Important to the development of sociological determinism have been the ecological theories of Shaw and his collaborators (1929; 1930; 1942), the theory of differential association (Sutherland, 1939), and the structural theories of Merton (1938), Cohen (1955), Miller (1958), and Cloward and Ohlin (1960). All of these theories contain clear implications for the study of criminal careers. However, the fundamental difference between biological and sociological determinism is not the form of explanation used, but the causative factors considered relevant. In modern sociological determinism, the primary causative factors considered relevant to the production of criminal behavior are social or environmental as opposed to biological. In short, these theories emphasize the causal role of the socialization process.

³Criminological determinism includes psychological and psychiatric theory. However, for the purposes of this study the discussion is limited to sociological criminology.

Cultural transmission theories. The ecological approach to the explanation of criminal behavior is best described in the work of Clifford Shaw (1929; 1930). Shaw posits the existence of "delinquency areas" wherein consistently high rates of criminal behavior are common. Generally, these criminality inducing areas are found in the disorganized sections of urban centers characterized by poverty, physical deterioration, and high proportions of ethnic and minority groups. Proposing that deviance is either highly tolerated or informally approved in delinquency areas, Shaw considers these areas to be detrimental to the successful socialization of individuals to the conventional world. The child in these areas is presented with deviant role models and unconventional values and thereby develops a self that is positively inclined toward deviant behavior. To sum briefly, Shaw's theory proposes that certain cultural areas in cities produce criminal or deviant actors who have been socialized into a life style that is in essence criminal.

The theory of differential association developed by Edwin Sutherland (1939) is an attempt to explain the process by which individuals living in socially disorganized areas learn to commit infractions of the law. Attempting to formulate a general theory of criminal behavior, Sutherland proposes that the learning of deviant behavior is achieved through the normal processes of social learning.

Criminal behavior is produced when the individual comes into contact with an ". . .excess of definitions favorable to the violation of the law over definitions unfavorable to the violation of the law" (Sutherland and Cressey, 1966:85). Thus, deviance is a result of being socialized within disorganized communities where unconventional standards are available for internalization.

Sutherland's emphasis on the normality of the learning of criminal behavior is limited to the formal aspects of socialization. Deterministic implications within the theory become manifest when Sutherland describes the content of differential association. It is attitudes, definitions, and motives that are being internalized in differential association. Although the criminal self is structured by a process similar to that of conventional actors, the roles and content of the criminal's self are distinctively different from those of the noncriminal. Differential association postulates the internalization of motives, drives, and attitudes that form a deviant type of actor. Thus, Sutherland's theory is essentially an extension of Shaw's work on cultural transmission within delinquency areas. Certain groups contain crimogenic standards, and association with these groups results in criminal behavior and criminal identities. Here again, the actor is described as being socialized into becoming a criminal; that is, a criminal self is created by the

social environment.

For the cultural transmission theorist, both the emergence and the continuation of criminal behavior are explained by the same set of causal factors. Entry into a criminal career is a result of the internalization of criminal roles and deviant standards. Continuation in crime is simply a result of the continued presence of these factors within the actor's self. Furthermore, similar propositions concerning the exiting stage of criminal careers are also suggested by these theories.

Exiting from a criminal career requires the reconstitution of the individual into a more conventional type of actor. This is achieved through a process of resocialization in which the actor rejects deviant standards and internalizes conventional roles and beliefs. The process of resocialization was felt to be accomplished best by removing the individual from criminogenic environments and placing him in more conventional groupings. Cressey (1955) and others (see, for example, Cartwright, 1969:282-287) have proposed the use of peer group pressure and guided group interaction as resocialization techniques for the creation of change in criminal behavior patterns.

Structural theories. Another influential branch of contemporary sociological determinism in criminology is exemplified by the various structural explanations of criminal behavior. These theories are well represented in the work of Merton (1938), Cohen (1955), Miller (1958), and Cloward and Ohlin (1960).

Perhaps the most significant theory in deterministic criminology is Robert Merton's version of anomie theory. In "Social Structure and Anomie," (1938), Merton posits an essentially deterministic explanation that stresses the presence of structural strains toward deviance. Anomie,⁴ or a disjunction between cultural goals and socially legitimate means for the attainment of those goals, causes individuals to resort to illegitimate avenues for the realization of internalized cultural ends. This structurally produced strain toward deviance is most strongly experienced by those at the lower levels of the stratification system who are most frustrated in their attempts to succeed legitimately. Further, these malintegrated actors develop favored modes of adaptation to anomie; he also implies that deviance results from an internalized tendency of the actor.

⁴The original discussion of the concept of anomie is available in Durkheim's (1933) The Division of Labor in Society.

I assume that the structure constrains individuals variously situated within it to develop cultural emphasis, social behavior patterns, and psychological bents (Merton, 1957:177).

Merton implies that the individual is a passive recipient of deviant tendencies, for one's adaptation to structural conditions of anomie is determined by one's social biography and social position. Even innovation, as a deviant adaptation to structural strain, is not rationally chosen but externally determined. The criminal innovator is described as differing fundamentally from the conventional social actor:

We see. . .that anomics are consistently more apt to engage in deviant behavior than non-anomics. . .anomics are more vulnerable to pressures for deviance (Merton, 1964:238).

Thus, Merton's theory concerning criminal behavior suggests the existence of structurally determined deviant actors. Anomie causes lower class individuals who have internalized cultural standards of success and cannot use legitimate routes to these goals to deviate. Seemingly this is due to the internalized psychological structure of certain actors who are unusually vulnerable to structural strains toward deviance.

The notion that anomic frustrations create criminal behavior through the process of internalization is reiterated in Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) synthesis of

Merton's model with differential association theory. Cloward and Ohlin propose that delinquency is caused by societal conditions that block lower class youths from the opportunity to achieve occupational aspirations legitimately. Frustrated and alienated, the individual perceives that he is a failure in conventional terms and joins with other lower class youths in using deviant acts as an alternative route to social status and prestige. These alienated youths form a delinquent subculture whose specific direction is determined by the learning opportunities available in their neighborhood. Within these "gangs," the individual internalizes deviant roles that require delinquent activity. That is, the role structure of the subcultural group demands delinquency. Once the individual is socialized into such a delinquent subculture, it seems he will remain a criminal actor as long as he finds continued social support for this role. Consequently, if the youth is a member of a theft subculture and lives in an area that provides the opportunity for differential association with adult thieves, he is likely to graduate into adult crime himself.

Like Merton, Cloward and Ohlin explain the entry and continuation stages of criminal behavior by reference to the structural conditions that cause individuals to internalize deviant roles and standards. The lower class

youth does not merely steal; he has been socialized into becoming a thief.

Cohen's (1955) theory of delinquent gangs is a somewhat unique variation of the structuralists' theme. Cohen attempts to combine normal structural explanation with Freudian concepts. Here, criminal behavior is the result of the youth's "reaction-formation" to his own failure in living up to conventional standards of achievement. The major subject of Cohen's theory (as in all structural theories) is the lower class youth who, due to his social position, is predetermined to fail when judged by middle class standards. Such youths protect themselves from this experience of failure by the collective construction of a subcultural system that in effect reverses middle class norms. Within this group, deviant standards and role are internalized by the youths. The delinquent subculture allows, even demands, criminal activities. In sum, Cohen's work abides by the structuralist theme that criminal behavior is the result of the social structure forcing lower class individuals to form subgroups which induce the internalization of deviant roles and values. All that is required for criminal behavior to continue is the individual's consistent possession of these deviant characteristics and associates.

The final structural theory to be considered in this review is perhaps the most parsimonious of all, the

subcultural theory of Walter Miller (1958). Here also, the major causal factor in the creation of criminal action is the process of socialization and the internalization of deviant values and standards. Miller simply proposes that, due to the structural conditions of society, lower class subcultural "concerns" are likely to produce deviant behavior. Lower class youths internalize standards that are largely different from, and in conflict with, the norms and laws of the larger society. Seemingly, for Miller, crime and the lower class culture are essentially synonymous; for as a youth internalizes the expectations of his family and peers, he also internalizes a tendency to break the law. The criminal, or the lower class man, is seen by Miller as fundamentally different from noncriminal actors who have internalized legitimate standards and a more normal self. Criminal behavior is simply a result of the lower class youth's striving to achieve the internalized goals that he has learned from his cultural milieu. The youth will continue in crime until he either changes his social location or is resocialized.

The structural theories reviewed here share a general explanation of criminal behavior. This pattern of explanation initially places significant criminal activity within the lower classes of society. In the lower classes, individuals are described as having been forced by the social structure to internalize deviant standards and

criminal roles and expectations. Most often, the structure effects this internalization of a criminal self through the primary groups of the individual which are often referred to as the delinquent subculture. The cause of this subcultural formation seems to be a shared frustration at failing to achieve conventional goals. All that is required for the individual to continue his structurally induced career in crime is the presence of social support that reinforces the already internalized roles and values of the criminal self. This may be actualized by graduation into adult "gangs" or merely the absence of any diverting factors within the environment of the individual.

Exiting is given a dual treatment in structural theories. At the societal level, the internalization of deviance can be prevented by the appearance of sweeping changes in the social structure. Apparently, these structural alterations would result in the equalization of opportunities and the disappearance of chronic anomie and other strains that lead to criminal behavior. However, at the level of individual criminal careers, the structuralists' propositions for exiting are similar to those of Shaw and Sutherland. That is, exiting from a deviant career is seen as the result of the resocialization of the individual. Entry into a career in crime is the result of the structurally induced internalization of deviant expectations; therefore, individual abandonment of criminality

requires that the actor be resocialized and internalize more conventional roles and beliefs.

Overview

The following theoretical arguments may be used to characterize the explanations proposed by sociological determinism concerning the evolution of criminal careers. Entry into a career in crime is the result of the internalization of roles and expectations that produce initial criminal acts. This process of socialization is described as the result of particular cultural systems or as the product of structurally induced anomie and failure. Continuation in a criminal career and the emergence of patterned criminal behavior is similarly explained by sociological determinism. The existence of a criminal role-self structure and the presence of criminal associates results in the patterning of criminal behaviors.

Exiting, or the disengagement from a criminal career, is described as the result of a process of resocialization. That is, the individual enters into social groupings, structural positions, or some form of therapy program which results in the unlearning of criminal behaviors and values and the internalization of more conventional expectations and beliefs.

Voluntaristic Criminology and Sociology

The philosophical underpinnings of voluntaristic criminology lie in the premise that man is an active subject who creates his reality, rather than a passive object within an objective reality. Voluntarists propose that social realities are meaningfully constructed within, and between, individuals.⁵ The model posits a natural and intentional creativity within the actor as the basis for both social action and social reality.

As mentioned earlier, the core of the human being is most often described in sociology as the self. The voluntarist conceives of the human actor as self-directed, rational, and active. The theoretical foundations of this approach in sociology are presented in the work of George H. Mead (1934; 1938) and more recently in that of Blumer (1969), Berger (1963), and Berger and Luckmann (1966).

For the voluntarist, the human actor is the possessor of mind, thought, and a socially and personally constructed self-concept (see, for example, Mead, 1934). The self is the operative unit in the creation of social action and in the construction of social meanings. The self authors meaningful activity through a process of self-indications and rational decision. This process is

⁵MacIver (1942:291-300) has described the "within process" as "dynamic assessment," and Blumer (1969) refers to the "between" as "symbolic interaction."

characterized by internal interaction between the self and symbolically constructed others abstracted from the individual's social world. The actor symbolically reflects on his biography, his self, and his social world and then chooses between indicated alternatives for action. In other words, the human actor indicates to himself potential lines of action and related consequences as he decides how to act, or how not to act. The actor is capable of reason by the processes of internal reflection and the manipulation of signs and symbols. This ability to use symbols meaningfully allows the individual to mentally consider the external conditions of time, space, body, and environment (see, for example, Mead, 1938).

In sum, the voluntaristic perspective proposes that the core of man is the active social self; thus, man is capable of symbolic thought and self-conscious choice.

Man participates in meaningful activity.
He creates his reality, and that of the
world around him, actively and strenuously.
Man naturally--and not supernaturally--
transcends the existential realm in which
the conceptions of cause, force and
reactivity are easily applicable (Matza,
1969:8).

The human actor has will, choice, and a directing social self. Particularly significant to the understanding of the use of this model in sociological criminology is the proposition that this portrait is descriptive of all social actors including those deviating and those conforming to

the common expectations of the social order. Both socially approved and socially disapproved actions are the products of these fundamental characteristics of the human being.

Origins in the Classical School

The initial application of voluntaristic criminology is found in the early writings of a group of nineteenth century social philosophers. The work of this school was derived from the Hobbesian theory of the social contract (1957) and is best stated in the work of Jeremy Bentham (1823) and Cesare Beccaria (1809). Bentham's contribution to the construction of the classical school is contained primarily in his development of the rational model of man and his support of the philosophical position of deterrence. Bentham proposed that man was rationally hedonistic, directing his behavior to seek pleasure and avoid pain. Assuming man to be inherently amoral, Bentham posited that the operation of this hedonistic calculus was apparent in both criminal and conventional activity. Crime was the result of deliberate decision and rational action for which the larger group could justly hold the individual response.

Using similar premises, Beccaria developed an extensive theory for the sanctioning of criminal acts. Beccaria agreed that crime was the result of the rational decisions of a normal social actor. Consequently, the sanctions for illegal behavior should be organized into an

exact and nearly universal system of punishments. This schedule of punishments was to be calculated with the intention of deterring individuals from the profits and pleasures of crime by attaching the threat of pain to such activity. Thus for the classicists, crime was in itself pleasurable and rewarding, and not a symptom of some underlying pathology or maladjustment in the actor. Beccaria proposed that if sanctions for crime were public, swiftly applied, certain, and not overly severe, rational actors would be deterred from choosing illegal paths of action.

Sociological Voluntarism

Modern sociological voluntarism is built upon the premises outlined above and includes a broad variety of specific sociological theories of criminal behavior. These theories are well represented by rationalistic control theory,⁶ and societal reactionism. Generally, the voluntaristic approach in sociological criminology describes criminal action as the reasonable solution of a self-conscious actor to given situational conditions and problems. Crime is not explained by reference to the internalized social psychological core of the individual.

⁶There are other, more deterministic, versions of control theory; see, for example, Nye (1958), Reckless (1969).

In fact, voluntaristic criminology directly denies the validity of socialization explanations. Rather, the criminal is portrayed as a normal actor, and his illegal behaviors are explainable within the rational model of man used to describe the behavior of conventional groups and individuals. Matza (1969:14) has summarized this approach as follows:

Straying from the path need be regarded as no less comprehensible nor more bewildering than walking it. Given the moral character of social life, both naturally happen, and thus are pondered and studied by sociologists and others.

In short, the voluntaristic criminologist-sociologist defines criminal activity as normal, reasonable, self-directed social behavior.

Reasonable deviance and contemporary control theory. A primary subschool of modern voluntaristic criminology is rationalistic control theory. This theoretical position will be reviewed below as it has been developed through the work of Matza (1964), Briar and Piliavin (1965), and Hirschi (1969). Control theory, following the suggestive leads of Durkheim (1951; 1961), considers deviance to be nonproblematic.

Conformity, not deviance, is what actually demands explanation. Generally these theorists explain conformity by positing the existence of social restraints that bind

the actor to conventional paths of activity. Deviance is seen as a normal, reasonable response resulting from weak or broken social controls.

In Delinquency and Drift, David Matza (1964) has constructed a sociological explanation of lower class gang delinquency. He proposes that the "subterranean convergence" of the dominant culture and the situation of the lower class youth provide the juvenile with "techniques of neutralization" by which he can suspend his ties to the conventional moral order. The "techniques of neutralization" release the youth into a situation of "drift" wherein he is neither constrained by the standards of the conventional social world nor committed to deviance. That is, the actor is free to deviate. The motivating force that can be an impetus to delinquency is the individual's subjective will. The will to deviate is, for Matza, an outgrowth of the actor's situation of desparation or his socially acquired preparation for the commission of infractions of the law. If either, or both, of these factors are present in the actor's situation, the will to deviate is a likely result of the condition of drift. Matza sees deviance as a result of the self-conscious definitions of the youth as he confronts his social world. The delinquent youth has not internalized deviant expectations; rather, he is a normal youth willfully acting within a given social context (1964:191).

Since the early statements of Durkheim (1951; 1961), control theorists have believed man to be basically amoral and that morality is a result of social controls. To this, the modern control theorist has added the proposition that man is fundamentally a reasoning being. Thus, social action, deviant and conventional, can be seen as purposive and rational.

In the sociological control theory, it can be and is generally assumed that the decision to commit a criminal act may well be rationally determined--that the actor's decision was not irrational given the risks and costs he faces (Hirschi, 1969:20-21).

The extension of control theory as a full explanation of criminal behavior is evident in the results of the research done by Briar and Piliavin (1965). Rationalistic control theory provides the basic form of explanation for their work. Here, "stakes in conformity" (see, Toby, 1957) or behavioral and psychic investments in conventionality are proposed as the major controlling factor in the actor's deliberations. If these social investments are absent, and situations arise that contain rewards conducive to deviance, criminal behavior is a likely result. Like Matza, Briar and Piliavin do not refer to the existence of internalized deviant standards. Rather, normal actors may

commit crimes if they lack meaningful reasons to conform and are in a situation that they perceive as rewarding illegality.

The notion of rational commitment has also been used by Travis Hirschi (1969). Hirschi's recent work is perhaps the most clearly argued statement of modern control theory. Building from the Durkheimian model of man, Hirschi views criminal behavior as a result of the conventional social order's lack of control over the individual. Conformity, on the other hand, is produced by the actor's possession of an emotional and instrumental "bond" to the conventional social world. For Hirschi, this social bond is composed of (1) psychological attachments to conventional others, (2) rational commitments to conformity created by social penalties and rewards, (3) individual "investments" and temporal involvements in conventional activities, and (4) acceptance of conventional beliefs. Hirschi proposes that if the bond to conventional society is weak, broken, or nonexistent, deviance becomes a probable avenue of behavior for the individual.

In sum, control theorists have developed a rationalistic explanation of criminal behavior. Crime is a reasonable path of action for the individual who is left uncontrolled by social and psychological ties to the conventional moral order of society. If the social bond remains weak, and the individual is rewarded by his

criminal actions, he is likely to continue along the career line entered as a youth. On the other hand, abandonment of a criminal career is seemingly the result of the acquisition, or reacquisition, of a bond to the social order. This may be the result of the natural maturation of the delinquent (Matza, 1964), the deterrent effect of reasonable penalties for crime (Toby, 1964), or the actor's decision that it is no longer reasonable to continue his criminal behavior (Frazier, 1976). However, control theorists also imply that for these factors to produce long-term changes in the patterns of behavior of the individual, he must be able to develop a commitment to conformity through the acquisition of meaningful "stakes" and attachments within the conventional world.

Interactionism and societal reaction theory. Societal reactionism, as a subschool of voluntaristic criminology, focuses primarily on the effects of attempts at social control on the patterning of criminal behavior. Therefore, its implications for the study of criminal careers most clearly speak to the stages of continuation and exiting.

The founding statements of the labeling perspective lie within the work of Frank Tannenbaum (1938). These initial hints at the effects of social control on deviant careers reveal the interactionist base of most societal reactionism. As an interactionist theory of deviance, the

labeling school focuses on the social psychological effects of certain social and interpersonal situations. Tannenbaum (1938:19-20) states that patterned criminal behavior is a result of:

. . .a process of tagging, defining, identifying, segregating, describing, emphasizing, making conscious and self-conscious. . .The person becomes the thing he is described as being.⁷

Tannenbaum's early suggestions were extended by Edwin Lemert (1951). For Lemert, regardless of the causes of primary deviance, secondary or patterned deviance is the result of the symbolic reorganization of the actor's identity which is often the outcome of being consistently labeled a deviant. After a spiral of labeling and continued deviation, the individual may begin to consider himself as being a deviant being. Thus, the consequence of others' symbolic reactions to the offender's initial behaviors is the creation of a criminal actor. That is, continuation in a criminal career, or secondary deviance, is explainable through the reactions of society to primary deviations. Lemert also describes alternative methods of

⁷This oft-quoted set of remarks by Tannenbaum is in fact deterministic in its description of the actor as a "thing" that passively reacts to others' definitions of himself.

dealing with negative societal reactions.⁸ Acceptance of the label is only one of these. Additionally, the actor may defend himself against the implications of the label or he may "attack." Generally, however, it is the acceptance response that is emphasized by the early societal reactionists. Thus, the work of Tannenbaum and Lemert displays a slant towards determinism in tending to explain patterned deviance by the actor's acceptance of the deviant role.

The recent work of the interactionists within the societal reactionist school⁹ has altered the position of the early labeling theorists by relying more strongly on the voluntaristic model of man. Here, man is believed to be a self-conscious and reasonable being. Human action is described as the product of meaningful decisions and a creative will. The interactionist school of societal reactionism is most clearly apparent in the theoretical work of Becker (1963), Goffman (1961a; 1963a), Lofland (1969), Matza (1969), and Stebbins (1971).

⁸The importance of Lemert's inclusion of alternative responses to labeling will be indicated later in this section. See also the critical work of Warren (1974), Thio (1973), Rogers and Buffalo (1974).

⁹For a good example of recent deterministic labeling theory that stresses the static conception of the self as a composite of roles, see Scheff (1966).

These theorists have more directly considered the varied and problematic nature of the labeling process and its effects on the individual. Labeling may be successful or unsuccessful. Consequently, the individual may become a secondary deviant and continue in crime, he may reform himself, or he may be deterred by the reactions of the agents of social control to his early deviations. Becker (1963:9) has clearly indicated this flexibility and complexity in his classic statement of the societal reactionist definition of deviance:

. . .deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender.' The deviant is one to whom the label is successfully applied. . .¹⁰

The variable nature of labeling is a result of many social factors such as the offender's situation, the audience, and the labelers. Additionally, Becker rejected the early societal reactionists' acceptance of deterministic explanations for primary deviance by observing that most people experience desires to act in a deviant fashion. It is, for Becker, the public acceptance of the actor's status as a deviant that informs the decision to continue a career in deviance.

¹⁰Here Becker implies that the outcomes of labeling are to be considered variable, even unsuccessful labeling is a possibility.

The interactionist approach to labeling has been further extended by the studies of Goffman (1961a; 1963a). In Asylums Goffman (1961) considers both the power of formal labeling and the creativity of the individual. The description of the "mortification of self" that occurs upon entrance to a total institution is essentially a picture of the destructive impact of labeling and its consequences for the reconstitution of the character of the inmate:

. . .it is thus a tribute to the power of social forces that the uniform status of mental patients cannot only assure an aggregate of persons a common character but that this social reworking can be done upon what is perhaps the most obstinate of human materials (Goffman, 1961a:129).

Goffman seems to be arguing that much of the self is a product of external status and social role expectations that are assigned to an inmate during his "moral career," or changes in self.

The moral career of a person of a given social category involves a standard sequence of changes in his way of conceiving selves, including importantly his own (Goffman 1961a:168).

Yet Goffman was aware of the complexity of the self and did not commit himself to deterministic labeling theory. He also recognized the rationality and activity of the human being. This aspect of Goffman's perspective is most clear in his discussion of the processes of

"making out" on the "back-stages" of a total institution. This attitude is particularly evident in his analysis of the inmate's creative use of "secondary adjustments," or:

. . .ways in which the individual stands apart from the roles and self that were taken for granted for him by the institution (Goffman, 1961a:189).

Even in the massively coercive atmosphere of the total institution, the creative potential of man is manifestly evident. Consequently, an inmate may elect to remove himself, become intransigent, or adopt some other defensive stance toward the institution and the label it provides. Through the concept of "secondary adjustments," Goffman provides the labeling perspective with an interactionist portrait of the nature of man.

Our sense of being can come from being drawn into a wider social unit; our sense of selfhood can arise through the little ways in which we resist the pull. Our status is backed by the solid buildings of the world, while our sense of personal identity often resides in the cracks (1961a:320).¹¹

"Secondary adjustments" uncover some alternative responses to acceptance of the label.

¹¹Goffman's conceptual distinction between the objective social status of the individual, his social identity, and the more subjective personal identity of the individual is to become an important set of concepts in the discussion of present research findings.

In Stigma Goffman (1963a) again relies on the notion of "role distance" to illustrate the voluntaristic model of man. He conceptualizes several techniques of identity-management and information control through which the stigmatized individual may attempt to control his social world. Goffman (1963a:143) further portrays actors who voluntarily decide to confront social expectations. This conception of self-conscious deviance is in clear agreement with the voluntarists' premises concerning the self-directed nature of social action, both deviant and conventional. Criminals well may be actors who simply elect to deviate from the law.

The synthesis of the insights of labeling theory and interactionism is achieved in the recent work of Lofland (1969) and Matza (1969). Lofland's Meadian analysis of deviance and the changes in identity associated with the labeling process emphasizes the rationality and will of the social actor. Entry into deviant activities is the result of reasonable deliberations by the situated individual.

If deviant acts are so frequently effective and, in the short term, rational explaining their occurrence may be less a question of understanding why they sometimes occur than of understanding why they do not occur more often (Lofland, 1969:54).

Criminal behavior may be the result of the defensive or adventurous decisions of the individual in certain social

contexts. If criminal activity is both an objectively present and a subjectively meaningful possibility for the solution to a given social situation, the actor may choose to commit an infraction of the law. For Lofland, continued career deviance is also a result of social contingencies and the subjective meanings of the actor. The primary force that leads to continuation is the actor's acceptance of the label proffered by significant others and the agents of social control. Likewise, different social circles and interpersonal others can lead the actor to reject the label and accept an identity as a normal individual (Lofland, 1969:177-202; 248-266). Thus, the workings of the labeling process are variable. Depending on the social context and the will of the actor, the label may create further deviance or deter the actor from deviation and lead to the exiting stage of a criminal career.

Insofar as the Actor experiences punishment, and insofar as he does so under highly attenuated strengths of the elements sketched, the exercise of control likely functions as a deterrent to deviance (Lofland, 1969:302).

Perhaps a more insightful statement of interactionist labeling theory has been produced by David Matza (1969) in his Becoming Deviant: Here Matza uses both the voluntaristic model of man and the perspective of existential phenomenology to illustrate the evolution of social deviance. Although the individual's entrance into deviance is assisted by affiliations and the actor's social context, the decisions

to deviate is the product of human will and reflective consciousness. In his vivid modification of Becker's classic study of marijuana use, he clearly states the role of choice in social behavior; ". . .it becomes apparent that anyone can become a marijuana user and that no one has to (1969:110)." The effects of affiliation and other social conditions are mediated by the actor; that is, entry into deviance requires an act of will by the individual. Like Lofland, Matza explains the continuation of deviance through the effects of negative societal reactions to initial deviations. This is referred to as the process of "signification." Being cast as a criminal and excluded from normal social circles, the actor often is led to a continuation of criminal activity and an acceptance of the label of being a criminal.

However, even after successful "signification," the individual's career in crime remains open.

Even at the conclusion of the signification process - imprisonment and parole - the process of becoming deviant remains open. Reconsideration continues; remission remains an observable reality (Matza, 1969:196).

Again, the effects of labeling are complex and variable due to the rationality and will of the individual. Perhaps the actor will be deterred by the perceived consequences of his actions, or perhaps "signification" will lead to further patterned deviance. Matza's phenomenological

analysis of deviance clearly reflects the assumptions that derive from the voluntaristic approach.

Recently Stebbins (1971) has incorporated the concept of commitment into the societal reactionist framework for the explanation of secondary deviance.¹² Stebbins (1971:xvi) defines commitment in a manner that reflects the basic rationality of the actor.

Commitment is the belief on the part of the committed individual that he is trapped in his deviant role by the force of penalties that appear when he tries to establish himself in non-deviant circles, . . . this concept is to be distinguished from value commitment or positive attraction to a specified belief, attitude or pattern of behavior.

Commitment thus describes a situation where it is no longer reasonable for an individual to conform due to the consistent negative responses of others to his attempts at conformity.¹³ Of course, the possibility of conventional behavior is always available; but at some point, conformity ceases to be the most rational path of action for the

¹²Stebbins' work draws and builds upon the early suggestions of Becker (1963) concerning the notion of commitment to deviance.

¹³It is interesting to note that the notion of commitment that is often used by determinists to explain the actor's compulsion to deviance is redefined by Stebbins and used to indicate how normal actors can rationally decide to perform consistent patterns of deviant behavior within given social situations.

actor. Consequently, he may continue his criminal activities.

Still despite these costs, the individual objectively has a choice between the identity or expectation which brings them and on the identity or expectation which leads him to avoid them. The subjective balance of penalties determines how the choice will be made. . . (Stebbins, 1971:64).

Thus, for the societal reactionist, the actor rationally chooses to pattern his criminal behavior and further develop a career in crime.

The interactionist version of societal reactionism explains the initial appearance of criminal behavior through an emphasis on the choice of the actor made within a facilitating social context. This social context is composed of meaningful affiliational networks, significant others, places, and objects. All of these theorists emphasize that crime is a rewarding form of action consciously selected by the individual. Continuation in a criminal career is generally explained through reference to the labeling process. Ironically, social controls often create the very behavior that they attempt to contain and eliminate. Labeling may alter the personal identity of the individual or it may lead to continuation through

the isolating effects of the social identity imposed on the actor by others. On the other hand, labeling also may lead the individual to reconsider and attempt to abandon his criminal career. The success of such an attempt is seen to be largely dependent on the individual's ability to repudiate the deviance producing effects of the label.

Overview

The following set of statements are presented as a brief summary of the explanations concerning criminal careers which are presented by voluntaristic criminology. Entry into a criminal career is the result of the deliberations and decisions of the actor and is a reasonable form of conduct. Thus it becomes highly probable when the actor is not meaningfully "bonded" to the conventional order and when he is within a social context that he defines as rewarding criminal behavior. The continuation of deviance is the result of the consistent presence of these initial conditions and the added effects of the labeling process which further exclude the individual from conventional society. Exiting from a criminal career is dependent upon the choice of the individual and may also be a response to labeling. The success of exiting is largely contingent upon the actor's ability to deny the label and acquire some form of meaningful tie to conformity.

Career Development in Criminological Theory

As revealed in the preceding review of the literature, the explanations of criminal behavior proposed by individual theories within a general approach are somewhat unique. However voluntaristic theories share some common characteristics which are not apparent in deterministic criminology and vice versa. This discussion will detail these differences and similarities.

Alternative Explanations of Criminal Careers

The reason for the division of criminological theory into two general approaches is founded in the belief that the statements proposed within each school are based on a consensus concerning an assumed model of man. Deterministic theorists describe the core of the social actor, or his self, as the direct result of the internalization of values, norms, and social role expectations. Further, they stress the static nature of the self and the natural permanence of internalized behavioral tendencies. On the other hand, the voluntaristic approach is based on the rational model of man. The self here is both reasonable and creative. These theorists describe the core of the actor as constantly in process.

The importance of these domain assumptions for this study lies in their effect on the explanations of criminal careers provided by each school. Although few of the

specific theories reviewed offer a total explanation for the development of deviant careers, and while many are quite narrow in their focus, it is possible to derive propositions relevant to such a task from each general approach.

Deterministic criminology explains entry into criminal careers by reference to internalized values and roles within the actor. Socialization is the primary explanatory variable in these theories. The actor is socialized so that he internalizes a compelling tendency to commit crimes. Continuation in a criminal career is dealt with in a similar fashion. The existence of a criminal role or self within the actor explains the patterning of criminal activity. To change the actor's career-line from criminality to conventionality, the actor himself must be altered. The deterministic criminologists explain exiting from a criminal career through the process of resocialization.

Building upon the rational model of man, the voluntarists explain the process of entry as the result of the reasonable choice of an actor in a situation which he defines as conducive to the commission of crime. Continuation along the criminal career-line is similarly handled. The patterning of criminal behavior is described as contingent upon the continued existence of a social context, such as the situation of labeling, which makes criminal activity reasonable and rewarding. Since the

voluntarists see crime as the reasonable action of a normal actor, resocialization is not necessary for exiting. Rather, the abandonment of a criminal career can be explained simply as action chosen in a context wherein it is no longer reasonable to continue criminal activities. To question the assumptions that underlie the conflict between deterministic and voluntaristic criminology requires a unique perspective. I believe that the needed methodology is provided by the phenomenology of Husserl (1931) and Schutz (1962). This research employs the phenomenological method in the study of criminal careers in order to arrive at a description of the career development of the typical nonprofessional property offender which is founded upon the subjective meanings within the consciousness of the acting individual. This phenomenological typification provides the basis for a comparison of the relative worth of the explanations for criminal careers offered by deterministic and voluntaristic criminology. A special focus of this analysis is the oft-neglected exiting stage of career development. It is hoped that this style of research will provide new insights within the sociological study of criminal careers.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY: PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Phenomenological Sociology

The phenomenological method applied here was originally stated in the philosophical work of Edmund Husserl (1931; 1973) and was adapted by Schutz (1962) to the discipline of sociology. The specific procedures of the phenomenological sociologist are directed toward the goal of understanding social behavior from the subjective view of the social actor. Generally, that goal is attained in this research by methodological techniques that require the observer-analyst to empathize with, or take-the-role-of, his subjects (see, Cooley, 1902:136-137). This empathetic understanding reveals to the phenomenologist the world of experience as it is given to the individual, and from which the individual constructs a meaningful life-world centered around his reflective consciousness of himself. The method

. . .delivers the analyst into the arms of the subject who renders the phenomena, and commits him, though not without regrets or qualifications, to the subject's definition of the situation (Matza, 1969:25).

However, it is important to note that the investigator

remains the analyst; that is; he is a once removed third party to the actor's life-world and may, indeed must, question the beliefs within the thetic-consciousness of his subjects. The primary aim of phenomenology is to portray the subject's consciousness of the phenomena accurately and to construct analytical conclusions with an awareness of the importance of the actor's perspective.

In short, these techniques reveal the social meanings held by the acting individual. The assumption here is that it is the meanings that others, events, and oneself are defined as possessing which form the basis of social action. It follows that in order to understand social actions, one must first become aware of the contents of the consciousness of the individual. In other words, the observer must attempt to see from the perspective of those he is observing. As Blumer (1969:51) has argued, the sociologist must be able to

. . .place oneself in the position of
the individual or collectivity. . .
to take the role of others. . .

Phenomenological analysis provides a radically empirical means of analyzing social reality from the position of the acting individual. As will be explained later, the observer is able to reach these subjective data by relying on the natural intersubjectivity of social life.

The phenomenological position clearly shares some kinship with the theoretical perspective of the

voluntarists, just as positivistic methods are related to deterministic theories of social behavior. However, these relationships do not preclude the use of phenomenology to test these schools of theory.¹ The conflict between two approaches is not over the premise that meanings are important for the study of social action, but rather the question of which meanings are important for what actions. The fundamental question is whether social behavior is a direct result of the internalized standards of the individual, or whether social action is a result of reasonable choices made by the actor.

The "attitude" of the phenomenologist does not allow him to be enclosed by the conclusions of others. The only proposition with which the phenomenologist enters the field is the belief in the necessity to suspend all theoretical presumptions about the subject under scrutiny. Therefore, although the theoretical conclusions of phenomenological study may propose the existence of "pre-reflexive consciousness" (Sartre, 1953:lii-lix) or a "transcendental ego" (Husserl, 1973), the phenomenological observer must suspend these notions while he is in the field. The phenomenological method is concerned with the

¹Likewise, one can legitimately use positivistic methods to evaluate these theories. For an excellent example of this type of research see Hirschi (1969).

thing itself as it appears to human consciousness. Such a method is clearly applicable to the performance of sociological research.

Analytical Stages

This study addresses three basic research problems. These questions are interrelated and build upon one another. The study begins by addressing the problem of developing a phenomenological description of the career of the nonprofessional property offender. A typification of the nonprofessional property offender's career that includes and incorporates the intersubjective factors which influence and shape career development is presented. Secondly, this typification is used to evaluate the comparative utility of deterministic and voluntaristic criminology as explanations of the career development of the nonprofessional property offender. In short, these two theoretical orientations are pitted against the phenomenologically constructed typification of the nonprofessional property offender's career. Finally, as a related concern, the study examines in depth the process of exiting from a criminal career. This last focus of the research is of special import due to the theoretical neglect of exiting as a stage withing criminal careers.

The data collected for the study resemble "topical life-histories" of the respondents (Denzin, 1970:222-223).

The application of life-history data in criminology is derived from its use in general sociology at the University of Chicago beginning in the 1920's (see, for example, Thomas and Znaniencki, 1927; Anderson, 1923; Shaw, 1930; Sutherland, 1937). In this research, the life-history plan was used only as a means of ordering the collection of the data. Analysis, as has been mentioned, was performed with the tools of phenomenology. The life-history method of data collection was used in order to obtain information concerning the criminal life of the respondent as it was perceived by the actor himself (see, Becker, 1966:v-xviii; Denzin, 1970:202).

Before going further into the specific methods used here, perhaps a statement concerning the flexibility of the research design described above would be helpful. Truth as a social phenomena is socially constructed. In the everyday life of sociology, truth is a result of the conflict of opinions between sociologists and sociological theories. This study is an attempt to advance sociological truth by openly confronting a basic dispute in contemporary criminology. This conception of the social nature of theoretical truths is directly opposed to the idea that the validity of a statement is determined by the method according to which it was made. All types of study--intuition, science, play--may produce a convincing argument and an acceptable truth. The design of this study was

greatly influenced by the need for freedom in sociological research. Concepts were kept fluid, questions were constructed during the ongoing interview, and the interviewer was open to all forms of information. I believe that these procedures add to, rather than subtract from, the credibility of the results within the intersubjective world of sociology.²

Data Collection and Field Procedures

The following sections will describe the rationale and procedures used in collection of the data for the study. The discussion will center on the selection of respondents, and the development of the interviewing process.

Respondents

The men interviewed for this study were a group of twenty felons convicted and incarcerated for the commission of property offenses. These men volunteered to participate in the study and were chosen on the basis of offense patterns as revealed from studying each man's prison file. These files were used to initially select a larger group of inmates (38) who had displayed a relatively long history of officially processed property offenses. Of these thirty-eight men, twenty-two agreed to be interviewed.

²For the founding argument concerning freedom in sociological research, see Phillips (1973), Abandoning Method.

Two of the volunteers were not interviewed. One respondent was transferred to another institution prior to his interview, and the other was in the prison hospital at the time he was scheduled to be interviewed.

The use of typologies within criminology has been common since the early work of Lombroso and Ferri. Presently, the use of typologies is still a common method by which the theorist ties his abstract work to empirical reality (see, for example, Gibbons, 1965; Roebuck, 1966; Schafer, 1969:140-182). The rationale behind the analytical use of typologies in criminology has been succinctly stated by Clinard and Quinney (1973:vii):

Criminal behavior covers a great variety of violations of criminal laws. For purposes of explanation this behavior must be broken down into types.

An adequate comprehension of deviant behavior demands that this category of social conduct be further typified or categorized into specific types of action. The construction of a behavioral type serves to highlight the characteristics and attributes that the observer or the theorist considers to be the boundaries of his study. As Schutz (1962) repeatedly demonstrates, these thetic typifications are built upon the empirical world and are

abstractions from everyday life. They are thus analytical more than they are descriptive.

As with any perceptual tool, theoretical types both clarify and channel perception. That is, typologies, like larger theoretical schemes, are founded in background assumptions concerning the individual and his behavior. For instance, most typologies in modern criminology present a clear deterministic bias by implying that criminal behavior is explained through the inner state of the criminal. Isolated typologies attempt to explain behavior by merely describing the characteristics of the actor.

However, a reflective and consistent awareness of the intrinsic determinism of actor types can result in the conscious use of behavioral typologies as an analytical tool which reaches beyond itself to a full understanding of social action. Criminal behavior is indeed a complex phenomenon; and in order to clearly recognize this complexity, one must first consider analytically separate slices of the whole. Sociological theory is best built from the ground up (see, Merton, 1967:39-73; Glaser and Strauss, 1967); that is, it should proceed from types of criminal behavior, to crime in general, to social deviance. The typological categorization used here has been constructed carefully and with a reflective eye on the deterministic bias of typological explanations. The nonprofessional property offender (NPO) as a type is founded

upon the observable existence of a distinctive pattern of criminal activity. The following is a brief description of the nonprofessional property offender as a behavioral type.

The NPO³ type, as described below and throughout the remaining chapters of this work, is itself a construct that is derived from criminological research. It is an idealization of what actually exists in the first order world of everyday life. In the construction of the NPO type used as a guide for the selection of respondents, reliance was placed on the official portrait of the individual as revealed in prison files and on previous discussions of related conceptions in current criminological literature.

The NPO is similar to the type of offender described by Clinard and Quinney (1973:131-154) as one who commits "conventional criminal behavior" and by Stebbins (1971: 78-80) as "the nonprofessional criminal". It is characterized by a subjectively and officially recognized pattern of criminal behavior which is organized around the repeated commission of crimes such as burglary, robbery, and forgery. In other words, these men exhibited an official record composed of a pattern of relatively uncomplicated

³Throughout the remainder of the study the abbreviation "NPO" will be used to refer to the "nonprofessional property offender."

and unskilled property offenses. The most frequent offense characteristic of the respondents was burglary or breaking and entering, although the actual continuum of offenses ranged from attempted murder to public drunkenness. Additionally, each of these men had experienced several periods of incarceration within penal institutions. Arrest frequencies ranged from five to twenty-seven; but prison terms were infrequent, and when imposed, were usually no longer than five years. Irwin's (1970:24) description of the "disorganized criminal" fits the NPO well.

Disorganized criminals, who make up the bulk of convicted felons, pursue a chaotic, purposeless life filled with unskilled, careless and variegated criminal activity.

Also, the NPO is similar to Stebbins' (1971:74) "nonprofessional criminal."⁴

The nonprofessional, as compared with his professional counterpart, lacks any extensive skills in carrying out his conventional activities, although he is successful enough at the height of his career to make some sort of living by crime.

Nonprofessional property offenders were selected for use here for several interrelated reasons. First, the

⁴In other criminological typologies, the closest category to the NPO has been variously referred to as the "jack-of-all-trades offender" (Roebuck, 1962) and the "Habitual-situational criminal" (Lindesmith and Dunham, 1941).

fact that more felons are convicted of property offenses than of any other category of offense (see, Glaser, 1964; President's Commission, 1968) indicates that study of this type of offender will produce conclusions which are applicable to the largest single class of officially processed criminals. Also, since the property offenders are frequent recidivists (see, Glaser, 1964; President's Commission, 1968), they provide data particularly relevant to the study of stabilized criminal behavior patterns. Third, property offenders are of specific import to the theoretical positions of both determinists (see, Merton, 1938; Sutherland, 1939; Cloward Ohlin, 1960) and voluntarists (Hirschi, 1969; Matza, 1969) in criminology. Finally, the study of respondents with a good deal of deviant experience will be more likely to produce data which pertain to the full evolution of criminal careers⁵ through stages of entry, continuance, and exiting.

⁵It is important to note that at the time of the interviews, all of the respondents were incarcerated in a state correctional institution.

The Interview Format

The unstructured interview was the primary observational instrument of this study.⁶ This style of interviewing is more commonly described by sociologists as the nonstandardized interview (Denzin, 1970:126). In this type of interviewing, the formal content of the interview is not prestructured. The rationale for using this method of observation is that the most valuable data-gathering procedures and questions are determined within the interactional context of each interviewing situation. Questions are formed according to the qualities of the respondent, the content and mood of the past dialogue, and the expanding avenues of interest of the participants in the conversation. Thus, this style of interviewing allows the respondent to indicate freely to the observer the most significant factors as he defines his situation. It is also felt that this unstructured form of interviewing can elicit information on criminal careers without relying on preconstructed questions that might lend support to one or other of the theoretical schools under consideration.

This procedure is of special relevance to this research due to the limitations of more structured methods when they are applied to questions surrounding deviant

⁶Jack Douglas (1967) has demonstrated that interviews contain information which is well-suited for the study of social meanings and actions through phenomenological analysis.

behavior. For instance, many prison inmates, like university students, are quite cognizant of the standard psychological tests and may consciously manipulate them for any number of personal reasons.⁷ Further, the inflexibility of structured instruments assumes a universality of meanings that can not be taken for granted in this research. The more structured methods of interviewing also require that the investigator predetermine his questions on the basis of his conceptual definitions and hypotheses, thereby closing-off unexpected data and responses. Consequently, the observer is not free to learn to appreciate the actor's subjective experiences. Additionally, the fixed structure of most procedures does not allow the observer or the respondent to autonomously follow suggestive leads that unexpectedly occur during the interview. Cohen and Taylor (1972:35) have cogently stated the necessity for unstructured and flexible methods when one is studying those who act unconventionally or are in unusual social situation.

The men knew much more about the territory than we did and to constrain them with our categories would have been presumptuous. . .

⁷In fact, one of the respondents in this study related to me just such an indictment of standard personality tests and the ease with which he and others could sabotage these measures.

These general procedures for the collection of data were chosen in order to obtain the desired information and, at the same time, to minimize the intervention of theoretical bias and preconceptions. In short, these methods maximize the opportunity for the phenomenon-as-experienced to emerge from the interviewing process.

Interviewing Procedures

As mentioned earlier, a list of thirty-eight inmates was selected from a review of prison files. Names of those inmates whose files indicated the characteristics of non-professional property offenders were included on this list. These thirty-eight men were asked to discuss the project in a preliminary interview. In the preliminary interview, the subject was introduced to the study and to the investigator. He was informed that the investigator was an independent research-sociologist who was in no way concerned with the state correctional system. The inmate was also informed about the study. He was told that the research was part of the investigator's doctoral dissertation and that participation in it was voluntary and unpaid. The respondent was informed that the investigator desired to gather information concerning the experiences of the offender from the point of view of the offender. He was informed that the data collected would be analyzed to evaluate the credibility of current criminological theory. The inmate was assured of the confidentiality of the research and was informed of my intention

to tape record the conversation. The inmate was then asked if he had any questions concerning either the research or the investigator. Finally, he was asked if he wished to participate in the study.

If the respondent indicated that he would take part in the study, a date was set for the full interview as soon as was mutually agreeable. Of the thirty-eight men, interviews were scheduled with twenty-two. Final interviews were conducted with twenty inmates.⁸ In total, fifty-eight preliminary and full interviews were conducted. All the

⁸Those who declined to participate did so for two reasons. One was that they did not feel that they could provide the type of information desired by the investigator; and the second was that they were genuinely offended by my presence at the institution. I believe that this latter group of men is quite important sociologically. The manner in which they justified their anger and refusal to participate strongly implied that as an outsider who had come "inside" to study the men there, I was merely another person trying to label them as being different from the rest of society. It is interesting to speculate on the validity of this argument. For example, to what extent does the researcher's sudden interest in the inmate communicate to him that he is considered an "odd" sort of fellow? Can one do research with deviants openly without the latent labeling of them as deviant?

I think not. The fact that you are there studying them reveals to your respondents how unusual you consider them to be. If this were not so, why wouldn't you be studying students or some other group of people to whom access is much easier?

interviewing was done within a vacant office in the classification section of the Reception and Medical Center at Lake Butler, Florida. The length of the interviews ranged from one hour to three hours, and the average session was around two hours in length. All of the interviews were completed in one sitting. As an example of the type of data produced by these procedures, a sample interview is reproduced in Appendix A.

Interview Content and The Process of Serendipity

As mentioned earlier, the only framework applied to the interviewing process was the investigator's persistent intention to organize the conversation around the needs of the research problems. It was expected that the content of the interviews would evolve over time during the data collection stage of the study. However, during the interviewing, a pattern of data emerged that changed the general focus of all subsequent interviews. In short, the interviews uncovered a "serendipity pattern" (Merton, 1957).

As originally conceived,⁹ these interviews were directed toward understanding the impact of different forms of legal sanctions in creating change in criminal behavior patterns. However, as the first few interviews were conducted, two factors emerged which significantly changed

⁹See Appendix B for a reproduction of the original frame of the interviews.

the direction and focus of the research. It became increasingly apparent that the only form of meaningful sanctioning experienced by these men was imprisonment. Thus, these interviews could not provide data relevant to the comparison of types of sanctions for crime. Yet, it was also clear that exiting was manifest as a stage in the careers of each of the respondents. This stage of exiting from criminal behavior patterns became the new guide for the data collection. Therefore, the organization of the interviewing process was changed to one which closely resembled Lemert's (1951:446) outline of the "natural history of the deviant." The investigator's interviewing outline as it developed is reprinted below:

- A. Social background of respondent.
 - 1. Significant events.
 - 2. Significant others.
 - 3. Self-concept.
 - 4. Overview.
- B. Initial acts of delinquency and crime.
 - 1. Review above.
 - 2. Reactions of others.
 - 3. Reactions of self.
 - 4. Reactions of agents of control.
 - 5. Significant changes in life-situation.
- c. Imprisonment.
 - 1. Experience and routines.
 - 2. Reactions of self.
 - 3. Reactions of others.
 - 4. Significant changes in life-situation.
- D. Release.
 - 1. Changes in behavior.
 - 2. Changes in self-concept.
 - 3. Reactions of others.
 - 4. Changes in life-situation.

- E. Repeat, for all significant criminal actions.
- F. Overview, and open conversation.

All of the interviews were tape-recorded unless otherwise requested by the respondent.¹⁰ Immediately after the conclusion of each session, the interviewer made notations of all important nonverbal messages. The final form of the data prior to analysis consisted of the tapes of the conversations, and the observational notes of the investigator concerning the emotional and nonverbal context of the interview.

The Question of Validity

The high degree of nonspecificity of this research design should not indicate that no checks were made on the data in terms of potential manipulations by respondents. The respondent's statements were constantly evaluated for internal consistency and reliability during the course of the interview. Inconsistent accounts were questioned in the manner most integrative with the interview situation as it developed. Generally, this was done in one of three ways: first, the respondent could be directly questioned; second, the earlier information could be restated by the

¹⁰This happened only once when a respondent confided to me for a short period of time concerning involvements with radical political groups that he did not wish to have recorded on tape.

interviewer and presented to the respondent for verification or alteration; and thirdly, unconvincing statements could be reacted to nonverbally with furrowed brow, crossed arms, and other skeptical gestures.¹¹

Further, common justifications for "conning" were not present in the interviewing situation. First, participation in the study offered no advantage to the respondents. Secondly, the investigator had access to official files and prison "jackets" to which he could turn if manipulation or exaggeration were evident. This source of checking was clearly recognized by the inmates. A third factor that discouraged "conning" was that the interviewer was not in an official or advantaged position which might indicate to the respondents that he could be used in order to gain favors from the prison administration.

Data Processing

Approximately thirty-five hours of tape recordings were produced by these interviews. Each recorded interview was fully transcribed prior to the analysis of the data. This resulted in some 600 to 700 pages of transcription,

¹¹ Similarly, "body language" expressive of openness and acceptance was consciously used by the interviewer to gain rapport with the respondents. Specifically, postures that included opened arms and uncrossed legs were used to communicate positive messages to the respondents. The author is indebted to Dr. Clair Martin for the suggestion to use "body language" during the interview situation.

notes, and comments concerning the interviews. As is discussed below, these data were then listened to and read several times during the analysis of the interview results.

Phenomenological Analysis and Data Interpretation

This section is intended to introduce concepts and procedures used in the analysis and interpretation of the data of the study. Hence, its position in this chapter is purposively out of chronological order. However, an understanding of these notions is essential to the comprehension of the later sections of the study. It is important to recognize that the usefulness of these concepts was determined by the data, and that they were not imposed on the data in any a priori sense.¹² At the most, the phenomenological concepts discussed below were merely anticipatory and were not forced into areas where there was no fit between anticipations and the data found in the field.

Phenomenology, as used in this analysis, derives from Schutz's (1962) synthesis of the methodological work

¹²For instance, the usefulness of Goffman's (1961a) notions about moral careers emerged during the analysis of the data.

of Edmund Husserl (1931) and Max Weber (1959). Schutz believed that sociology should be concerned with understanding how individuals behave in everyday life, and what the "mundane world" means to the actor within it. Wagner (1970:44) has clearly formulated the basic question of phenomenological sociology.

What does this social world mean for the observer actor within his world, and what did he mean by his acting within it?

Like Weber's verstehen, Schutz and the phenomenological sociologists agree that understanding is the proper goal for sociology. Schutz further proposes, like Husserl (1931), that such understanding is best achieved by observing the everyday world from the perspective of the actor as he gives it meaning. The result of the actor's meaningful ordering of the social world as it is naturally experienced is termed the "life-world." This study of the life-world then is the optimum path for the sociologist who intends to return to the thing itself.

The basic components of the life-world that are discussed below are best defined as "sensitizing concepts" (Blumer, 1969:153-171). They were not forced on the data by the research design; rather they were determined by the data. These anticipatory concepts include meaning, consciousness, and consciousness of self.

Meanings are fundamental to social action. Weber defines social action as behavior that is subjectively

meaningful to the individuals within a given situation.

Action is social in so far as, by virtue of the subjective meanings attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), it takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its own course (Weber, 1964:88).

Yet meaning, as an analytical concept in sociology, has been largely ill-defined. To define meaning, one must confront questions concerning the nature of human consciousness that are fundamental to Husserlian phenomenology. The phenomenologist believes that consciousness is essentially intentional (Husserl, 1931; Sartre, 1953).¹³ Consciousness is always consciousness of something. Generally, the object of consciousness in the direct nonthetic experience of everyday life can be called the life-world of the actor. This life-world is constructed by the individual through reflection on his biography, by the use of socially provided materials such as language and expectancies, and by projection toward future ends and actions. In sum, it is a personal interpretive construction built upon the flow of the "vivid present" and composed of that flow, past experience, and future possibilities.

It is the process of interpretation, or the making of symbolic indications to oneself, that gives the parts

¹³The same viewpoint is apparent in the work of George Herbert Mead (1938).

of the life-world some subjective meaning. Meaning, then, is the product of the actor's interpretation of the everyday world. The individual creates meaning as he defines his position within given social situations. Further, meaning is constructed by the intentional consciousness of the actor; that is, the actor creates meaningful realities by reflecting upon his own conscious existence in the past, present, and future as a social being.

Things have meaning for an individual, and all meanings are primarily subjective. However, meanings may become intersubjective. They may be at least partially revealed to and shared with others through the actions of the individual, for one may communicate meanings to others through culturally relevant signs, symbols, and actions (Mead, 1934; 1938). The intersubjective quality of social meanings implies that they may be visible to an observer if he empathetically takes notice of the actions and indications of others. Yet, a one-to-one correspondence between objectified and subjective meaning cannot be assumed. Thus, the observer must suspend his cultural beliefs and attempt to take-the-role-of-the-other in order to arrive at the true meanings of things as constructed by the actor.

Sociologists have theoretically proposed the existence of a social self as the central component of one's life-world. However, the phenomenological conception

of this aspect of reflective consciousness is much more complex than the traditional social self of sociology.¹⁴ For the phenomenologist, the self is that complex of meanings that the individual consciously attaches to himself as he existed in the past, as he exists in the present, and as he will have existed in the future. The self is a history, a situation, and a possibility.

The process of reflective consciousness and self-construction is, of course, influenced by the individual's existence in a social world and the intersubjective materials supplied by others. And like any meaningful element of the life-world, the self may be partially communicated to others in one's social world. However, the self is a process. The temporal and spatial variability of the self stems from its interpretive origin. As the flow of the present continues, the focus of consciousness changes and a new perspective on past and future is constructed. Consequently, the self is altered. The self, as with all meaningful elements of the life-world, is created by the given project that an actor is considering at the time. For example, if my project involves social research, then my self-as-a-sociologist becomes meaningful, and my self-as-sports-fan may slip to the background of my

¹⁴Here, I am referring most directly to the conception of the self as a composite of social roles and statuses (see, for example, Biddle and Thomas, 1966).

consciousness. In sum, the phenomenological conception of the self emphasizes that the self is a meaningful, yet always incomplete, construction of human consciousness as it reflects on itself and its life-world within a given project of action.

The idea of the self as a part of the actor's life-world alters the general sociological definition of a social career. Goffman has defined a "moral career" as a standard sequence of changes in the actor's conception of both his self and the selves of others (1961:168). To this idea, the phenomenologist adds the importance of changes in the life-world. As used in this study then, "career" refers to both changes in the actor's consciousness of self and his consciousness of other life-world elements (objects, persons, and events) as they are relevant to the individual's project for action within a certain social context.

The interrelated notions of life-world,¹⁵ self, meaning and the actor's social career are the primary conceptual tools used in the analysis of the data collected in this study.

¹⁵Schutz (1970) has defined the life-world as the subjective sphere of experience of the actor composed of his consciousness of objects, others, events, and himself.

Techniques of Phenomenological Analysis

Phenomenological analysis attempts to describe and produce understanding of the life-world of the actor as it is directly experienced. It strives to uncover the meaningful components of the consciousness of the individual as they are revealed in his behavior and conversation. The reconstruction of the subjectively meaningful world of the actor is accomplished through the use of several specific techniques of analysis. These techniques include phenomenological reduction, eidetic reduction, and intentional analysis (see Spiegelberg, 1969).

Phenomenological reduction is a conscious return to the nonthetic and given aspects of the life-world. It is accomplished through the use of empathy and the suspension of all belief in scientific and mundane presuppositions on the part of the analyst. By placing these beliefs in "brackets," the analyst may return to the contents of consciousness of immediate, past, and future experience within the actor's life-world. As defined by Schmitt (1959-60:240),

It is called 'phenomenological' because it transforms the world into mere phenomena. It is called 'reduction' because it leads us back (Latin, reducere) to the source of meaning and existence of the experienced world. . .

In this process, the analyst's attitude is changed from natural nonreflectivity into one of empathetic study and

reflection. As used here, the technique was applied to reduce the interview transcripts of the experiences and reflections of an other to the other's meaningfully constructed life-world. In other words, the transcripts were read and listened to as given to the investigator.

Theoretical preconceptions were not allowed to influence the perception of the analyst, and the transcripts were reduced to a pure description of the experiential life-world of the respondent. That is, the transcripts were taken back to a description of the events and changes in the respondent's criminal career. Through reflective thought, intuition, and empathetic role-taking, the analyst attempted to reach the other's life-world as it was immediately and meaningfully experienced and constructed. The phenomenological objective is the thing, itself; or, in this case, the meaningful experience of the respondent.

The second step in the analysis of the interviews was a technique most generally referred to as "eidetic reduction." This style of analyzing data attempts to arrive at the essential aspects of the respondents' experiential life-worlds.

Eidetic reduction leads us from the realm of facts to that of general essences (Kocklemans, 1967:30).

This is accomplished by imaginatively and consciously varying the components of the phenomenon in order to

discover the invariant aspects of the phenomenon. These consistent and continuing aspects are the essential qualities of the phenomenon in question.

In order to grasp an essence, we consider a concrete experience, and then we make it change in our thought, trying to imagine it as effectively modified in all respects, that which remains invariable through these changes is the essence of the phenomena in question (Merleau-Ponty, 1964:71).

In this research, the transcripts-as-given were examined over and over again in order to identify the elements within them that were shared across respondents. Thus, the data were further reduced down to the essentially typical elements of the experiences of the men interviewed.

The process of phenomenological analysis is constantly aware of the import of social meanings. The analytical procedure used to uncover the process by which elements of one's life-world become meaningful is called "intentional analysis." Here, the analyst uncovers the manner in which the actor uses social signs and symbols to constitute a meaningful phenomenon through the processes of interpretation, conscious reflection, and conscious projection. Meanings are fully understood only when the analyst can explain their constitution within a given project of action. Here intentional analysis was constantly in use as I studied the transcripts in order to understand the actor's intentional and interpretive reflection upon his situation and his possibilities for action.

Needless to say, these techniques were used together in the analysis of the data. They were applied in order to best realize the goal of understanding the life-world of the respondents as it was directly experienced. To do so, the data were reduced to the shared and essential elements of the life-world of the respondents and to the manner in which these elements were meaningfully related to changes in the behavior of the respondents. As Douglas (1967:256) has written:

The ideal of this approach is to go from what people say and do in the real-world-situation upward toward an analysis of the patterns that can be found in . . .the meanings of their statements and behaviors.

In this study, the life-worlds of the respondents were explored in order to better understand the evolution of the career of a nonprofessional property offender.

Summary

The use of qualitative data has a strong historical tradition in sociology. In fact, the classic works of the field from Weber to Goffman have often been produced from so-called "soft" data. Yet, within sociology, the use of qualitative methodologies remains controversial. I believe that phenomenological analysis provides a radically empirical means for studying the essential aspects of

social experience as they are relevant to the individual himself. The results of these techniques are presented in the following chapters of this work.

CHAPTER 4

ENTRY AND CONTINUATION: A PROFILE OF THE NON-PROFESSIONAL PROPERTY OFFENDER

Introduction

In Chapter 1, I argued that theories of criminal behavior in sociology should adequately consider three stages of development within criminal careers: entry, continuation, and exiting. A special focus of this study is the issue of exiting from criminal careers. However, in order to understand the processes involved in changes of behavior, one must also be aware of the preceding development of those behaviors. Therefore, in this chapter, I will describe the career development of the NPO in order to provide a framework for the consideration of the exiting stage of the NPO's criminal career.

Contrary to the life-history method of analysis, one or two cases are not followed at length throughout the study. Rather, the individual interviews were analyzed in order to arrive at an ideal typification of the criminal career of the NPO. The term NPO is always meant in a generic sense relative to the men interviewed for this study. In all instances, the findings reported here are representative of nearly all the respondents. The

characteristics and contingencies referred to as typical of the NPO were evident in all but one or two of the individual cases. Throughout this and the following chapters, excerpts from the interviews are presented in order to exemplify the shared, or essential, characteristics of the careers of the respondents. In other words, the findings are illustrated through the use of excerpts from cases that are representative of career development of the typical NPO. Each significant factor common to the respondents and their criminal careers will be demonstrated through quotations from the actual interviews. In the presentation of these quotations, I have placed limited editorial comments and contextual interpretations within brackets. These added comments are intended to provide the reader with otherwise unapparent background information important in understanding a respondent's meaning.

The data collected for this study reveal the importance of two primary "career contingencies"¹ that lead to the entry stage of the NPO's criminal career: (1) a lack of strong ties to the conventional social order, and (2) the motivating force of subjectively meaningful needs or desires. Continuation in the career of the NPO is most

¹Becker (1963:24) defines a career contingency as a factor that produces mobility from one stage or position to another within a given career.

directly the result of the processes of societal reaction and the stigma of being a known criminal. As we will see, these findings lend strong support to the theoretical position of the voluntaristic school.

Theoretical Groundwork

The etiology of criminal behavior and its subsequent continuation as a patterned, or recurring, form of activity has been the major focus of criminological theory. All of the major schools of criminology have proposed theoretical answers to the questions of entry and continuation.

As reviewed in Chapter 2, deterministic theories explain the emergence of criminal behavior by reference to biological or sociological factors within the individual. Initial criminal behavior is caused by either the offender's biological propensities for deviance, or the presence of a self-structure that produces criminality as a predictable response to given social circumstances. These deviant "psychological bents" are seen as the result of environmental structures, social learning, and the process of socialization. Thus, due to the internalization of deviant values and roles, crime is compelled by the internal structure of the actor. These theories claim that criminal behavior arises as a result of an affinity for crime that is manifest within the actor.

Voluntaristic theories explain initial infractions of the law by reference to factors external to the actor. Criminal activity is described as a reasonable response to social situations which are defined as allowing criminal behavior. These situations are produced by an absence of social bonding or by interpersonal conditions within a given place at a given time. For these theorists, initial criminal behavior is the result of the actor's decision to use illegal action to deal with an external social situation.² The primary general distinction between these frameworks is that deterministic criminology explains the emergence of criminal behavior by reference to internal predisposing factors, while the voluntaristic school explains this emergence by focusing on the external situation of the actor.

This difference is clearly reflected in the school's respective descriptions of the patterning of criminal behavior. The deterministic criminologists generally refer to the continued existence of internal factors to explain continuation. It is the incorporation of a deviant self that is described as fundamental to the rise of patterned criminality. The actor is a criminal and thus exhibits

²Issues concerning the accuracy of specific theories within these general approaches will be discussed later in this chapter.

persistent criminal behavior. Anchored in his internalized role structure, the criminal's identity compels the commission of crimes. In sum, the determinists propose that criminal behavior continues due to the existence within the actor of a criminal self.

The external reference of the voluntaristic school is apparent in their explanation of the continuation stage of criminal careers. Continuation is the response of the actor to situational conditions that are consistently conducive to criminal action. The actor's self is normal, and continuation is the result of the individual's reasonable response to situations of nonrestraint, or stigma and exclusion from legitimate activity. Criminal patterns, like conventional actions, are rational, voluntary, and meaningful. Voluntaristic theories explain the appearance of recurring criminality as a result of the individual's reasonably chosen response to given social situations that are perceived as rewarding deviance.

The remainder of this chapter describes and theoretically interprets the development and changes within the criminal career of the NPO, as these events and conditions are seen by the offender.³

³A brief note on the concept of career is necessary here. It is best considered as somewhat flexible and as an organizing notion for use in describing the lives of the respondents. Second, third, and multiple careers are not only possible, but are most probable. In this study, these

Entry into a Criminal Career

The first evidence of meaningful criminality in the lives of the respondents usually appeared in the middle teen years (14-18 years of age).⁴ Initial criminal activity most often followed a number of more minor "troubles" such as repeated truancy or running away from home. The first crime committed by the respondents was universally some form of theft. The following two excerpts from the interviews illustrate the typical form of activity that is the NPO's first criminal offense.

I never really had had any big troubles before--you know, fights and things like that, skipping school. The first thing I did was steal. We'd break into places, houses, steal hubcaps, things like that.

I mainly--well, we'd just do anything--got into some trouble. Just like sort of to have an amount of fun. Then I started those B & E's, stores, houses, I don't know, I was about 13 or 14 or 15.

The emergence of these early infractions can be understood by the recognition of two factors that were consistently mentioned by the respondents when they described their youths. These explanatory conditions are: (1) a lack of strong ties or bonds to the conventional social order, and

other noncriminal careers will be considered only when they are significant factors affecting the individual's criminal career.

⁴The age range of the first official offense within the sample was from 8 to 20 years of age.

(2) the motivating force of subjectively meaningful needs and desires. As we shall see, these two contingencies were accentuated and amplified through the presence of similarly situated peers.

Bondlessness and the Situation of Entry

It is quite apparent from the data collected for this study that as youths the respondents did not consider themselves to be members of conventional social groups. In their adolescence, these men experienced few meaningful interpersonal relationships with others who supported and espoused conventional normative standards. This absence of relations with others was evident to the respondents in both familial and nonfamilial contexts.

Generally, the respondents were able to recall few intimate relationships of care and concern with others. For instance, although the family and the school are primary conventional institutions in the lives of most youths, they held little significant meaning for any of the respondents in this study.

My family and me, we never got
along, especially me and my father.
Matter of fact, we still don't get
along. Me and my mother, we never
had no family type of relationship.
I got a brother, but I don't claim
him--in my book, he's just no good.

And I think my biggest problem was,
I never had a real close family tie
with any of my, any of my family.
I just quit school, just wanted to

get out, tired of listening to them teachers and everything. Taking orders from them. I just up and quit.

The lack of close and significant relations with others in the family and school among the respondents was paralleled by a general isolation from conventional others within the wider community. Typically, these men stated that they experienced no close relational ties to others or peers within their home neighborhoods. This relative social isolation was defined as a result of physical and social mobility as well as of other forms of differentiation in society.

I've not lived in one place long enough to know anybody in our neighborhood. Never stayed in one place long enough to really know anybody.

I didn't have friends because I guess I was always agitating, you know, pushing them away from me.

I didn't associate with too many people when I was coming up. I didn't know too many people, very few.

Additionally, the respondents possessed no significant behavioral investments in conformity during their early years. Their youths were characterized by a tendency to invest neither time nor energy in conventional aspirations or involvements. For instance, the respondents consistently indicated that they considered neither educational nor occupational goals to be important considerations for them

when they were young. The following excerpts from the interviews indicate the typical disposition of the young NPO.

I never really considered consequences, only what I wanted at that particular moment, and to hell with the rest of it. I didn't care.

During that time, it was just something to do. Really, it was just something to do. There was no reason not to (break the law) (emphasis mine).

As these two statements indicate, the respondents also were largely oriented to short-term goals and projects. Further, they were also temporally uninvolved with conventional activities and aspirations.

It was like I had time to be by myself, things like this. Like, I sometimes, I would skip school and next thing you know, I would be stealing something.

Finally, the respondents also related that during their teen years they began to question the validity of conventional standards and values. They gradually learned that the legal system in particular was often hypocritical, unfair, and biased in favor the powers-that-be.

Poor man ain't nothing he can do, the law, they gonna get him either way it go. I never gave a shit myself.

I didn't have no respect for the law, just to be truthful. No kind of respect for the law.

In general, then, the respondents characterized their youths as essentially unconventional. Yet, no single case was reflective of a youth that was essentially criminal. These men experienced their early lives as fundamentally unconnected to any social world. As youths, they were generally lacking in meaningful ties to others, and they exhibited no strong conventional aspirations or involvements. They experienced no strong familial or extra-familial relationships with others. They remembered having no truly meaningful temporal or behavioral investments within the conventional social order. Further, they did not believe in the validity of conventional normative standards. In sum, significant youthful ties to the conventional world were consistently lacking. They inhabited a life-world that was essentially characterized by bondlessness.

My family didn't care what I did.
If I wanted to do something I
could do it, they could care less.
They loved me, but they didn't
put me under tow. If I wanted to
slip out at night time, it didn't
bother them, I could go ahead, do
what I wanted to do, they didn't
care. So I just said the hell
with it; "You all don't care about
me, I don't care about me, either."

The theoretical framework that best explains the shared characteristics of the respondents' entries into crime is voluntaristic criminology. More specifically, rationalistic control theory as stated in the recent work Hirschi (1969) receives strong support from the data.

Control theory originates in Durkheim's (1933) description of man as inherently amoral and the allied belief that normality is a product of the social group. This perspective has recently been revitalized by the emergence of modern control theory. Explicitly criticizing positivistic criminology, Matza (1964) constructed a theory of delinquency based on the rational, or reasoning, actor. By symbolically neutralizing his bonds to conventional legal norms, the youth "drifts" into a situation where delinquency is a possible avenue for the exercise of will. Briar and Piliavan (1965) further developed modern control theory through the concept of commitment or "stakes in conformity." Finally, Hirschi (1969) formally put the theory in order by explicating the elements of the social bond and their significance for human action. The results of his reserach clearly illustrate the presence of rational motives for crime.

Our findings indicate that the period of youth for the NPO was largely devoid of the major elements of the bond to the conventional social order. The young NPO was not tied to conventionality by either attachments to significant others who espoused conventional standards, or by commitments and investments within conventional endeavors. As a young man, the NPO gradually lost his confidence in the normative standards of the conventional world. The NPO at

the entry stage of his criminal career was free from social controls, and thus he was vulnerable to deviance.

Thus far, I have described the life-world of the NPO at the entry stage of his criminal career. This situation is fundamentally one of "drift" or bondlessness. Previously, both Matza (1964) and Hirschi (1969) have stressed the import of social bonds to the conventional moral order as a condition of behavioral conformity. Without the constraining effects of these bonds, the NPO may perceive crime as a reasonable project of action. The subjective reasons that typically lead the NPO to commit an infraction of the law are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Meaningful Goals as Motivation for Entry

Lacking social controls, the respondents were tied to neither the conventional nor the criminal world. They were free to deviate if they perceived a meaningful reason to do so. It is important to note that none of the respondents were socialized into crime; but rather, at entry, they were available for deviating from conventional standards. Motivation for criminal activity was provided for the respondents by the existence of relatively unrestrained, yet subjectively meaningful, desires. The choice of a criminal avenue for the satiation of these needs was catalyzed by the presence of like-situated

associates. Unrestrained by ties to the conventional world, the respondents were open to deviation in order to achieve certain ends. Additionally, they could account for their deviations by recognizing the influence of associates.⁵ The findings discussed below indicate that even within the situation of bondlessness, the respondents did not naturally deviate. They did so only when there was some goal, or "in-order-to motive," for which criminal behavior was considered a reasonable response.

The respondents indicated that their early crimes were actualized in order to fulfill subjective needs. That is, crimes were felt to be meaningful, reasonable, and goal-directed actions. The "in-order-to" motivations for the initial infractions of the respondents were both material (money and possessions) and psychic (mastery, the pleasures of skill possession, the thrill of victory, and self-esteem). In fact, most of the respondents referred to some combination of money, self-respect, and "thrill" as the reason for their early crimes.

The respondents began to commit property offenses in order to fulfill subjectively-felt needs for additional

⁵The perspective on motivation used here has been developed by Schutz (1962). Schutz has defined "in-order-to motives" as goals that project from the present into the future, and "because motives" as biographical reasons for actions that derive from reflection on the past.

material resources. None of them related that they stole for primary needs such as food or shelter; rather, they stole for the achievement and maintenance of a subjectively necessary style of living. Unconstrained by conventional concerns and values, this life-style was itself often marginally deviant. However, to the individual, it was psychologically necessary for both status and self-respect.

Many of these desires were defined by the respondents as not presentable to, or sharable with, conventional others. The private quality of these needs operated to close many conventional avenues for their acquisition. Statements revealing this type of motivation were consistently encountered during the interviews.

I really needed the money for things--my parents, I couldn't tell my parents about. They wouldn't give me the money anyway if they knew.

I started running around with some other guys and not knowing the type of persons that they were. Well, I got pretty well involved and the way we were living back then, I needed a lot of dough.

Although objectively these needs were for things considered as luxuries (guns, stereos, clothes), they were strongly desired by the respondents.

I was just stealing stuff I wanted, mainly. I'd see a rifle or something and I'd go get it, or I'd see a tape deck for my car. Things that I wanted myself, not to sell.

Some respondents indicated that goods were sold or pawned in order to get the money needed for clothes and a higher style of life.

I wasn't messing with no drugs or nothing, I just wanted to wear, to wear pretty clothes. I couldn't work and make money to take care of my family and wear nice clothes, drive a new car. So I stole, and got away with it too.

As indicated by the last excerpt, much of the respondents' criminal activity was of a part-time, "moon-lighting" nature performed as a supplement to a conventional occupational career (for related discussions, see Polsky, 1967; Letkemann, 1973:7). Many of the respondents also indicated that they began to steal for social psychological ends; that is, in order to gain self-respect and for the intrinsic gratifications of being skilled in the control of potentially dangerous social situations. The "thrill of victory" was a consistently mentioned reason for theft and other property offenses.

To me, I look at it, I used to look at it as a sport in a way. Just see how much I could get by with. The cops would chase me, I'd enjoy running from them.

I really enjoyed knowing I could get away with it, without being caught.

These pleasures and skills provided the individual with a behavioral source of self-esteem and self-worth. For

all these men, crime was remembered as a meaningful source of youthful success and self-mastery.

I'd feel pretty good about it when I got away. I felt I could go in anywhere if I wanted to go in there. I just felt good.

It's competitive. One wants to do a neater crime than the other. Its sort of a conversation piece.

Sometimes I'd feel good about it; "Wow! I can do that and I'm doing something somebody else can't."

During the interviews, a "because motive" was mentioned by many of the respondents as they reflected on their early offenses. This "because motive" was the presence of delinquent, or equally drifting, associates and peers. The respondents often mentioned the influence of cohorts on their early criminal activities. These associates were described as equally unbound youths with whom the individual discovered theft as an avenue for the attainment of shared goals.

I started mingling with a crowd of guys and we started doing things like breaking into places.

Come to think of it, I started running around with a crowd who were always doing wrong. Skipped school, other things like that.

In sum, the respondents described entry as motivated by subjectively meaningful reasons for the commission of crimes. These motives included a desire for the possession of goods that indicated a valued style of living, and the

psychological pleasure of successfully committing a crime. As was described earlier, in their youths, the respondents lacked strong bonds with conventional activities, others, and standards. Because they were unrestrained by bonds to conventional standards, they were open to deviance. Subjectively meaningful needs and desires afforded the actor reasonable motives for the enactment of illegal behaviors.

Overview

Criminological theory is neatly divisible into two general forms of explanation concerning the occurrence of criminal behavior. The entry stage of the criminal career of the NPO is best described by the voluntarists. Specifically, the theory most strengthened by the findings reported above is rationalistic control theory. In fact, there is only faint support for other theories in these data. None of the respondents were socialized into crime; none displayed an internalized commitment to crime through an identification with criminal norms and values. Only the importance of similarly situated associates as a condition of entry into a criminal career by the NPO is supportive of deterministic criminology (see Sutherland, 1939).

The entry stage of the criminal career of the NPO is well-explained by control theory as postulated by Hirschi (1969). These findings even support Hirschi's

(1969) contention that control theory must be modified to include reference to the influence of associates and meaningful reasons for the commission of crime (see also Matza, 1964).

The theory underestimated the importance of delinquent friends; it overestimated the significance of involvement in conventional activities. Both of these miscalculations appear to stem from the same source, the assumption of "natural motivation" to delinquency. . . . In other words a failure to incorporate some notions of what delinquency does for the adolescent. . . . (Hirschi, 1969:230).

The entry stage of the NPO's criminal career is actualized through the influence of two primary career contingencies: (1) a lack of strong ties to the conventional social order, and (2) the presence of subjectively meaningful reasons for criminal behavior.

Continuation: Initial Considerations

Subsequent to the entry stage and the initial emergence of criminal behavior, or primary deviance, some offenders develop a patterned continuation of secondary deviance.⁶ As defined earlier, continuation within the

⁶Others, of course, do not proceed into a stabilized pattern of deviance. For a relevant discussion of these youths, see Matza (1964). This study is concerned only with those who go on to the second stage of career criminality.

career of the NPO refers to repeated infractions of a non-violent and predatory nature. This includes, most often, offenses such as burglary, forgery and uttering, and theft. To be included in our definition, these behaviors must also be recognized as similar by the actor himself.

Labeling and the Provision of Criminal Status

The primary career contingency that influences the NPO's progress into the continuation stage of a criminal career is the excluding and bond-destroying impact of "having a criminal record." The respondents in this study did not pattern their crimes because they were labeled and then accepted that label. Rather, they continued in crime largely because they perceived that they were labeled and then isolated by others from participation in conventional alternatives that might lead to material and social rewards.

Of primary importance in the respondents' progress into continuation is the effect that being publicly labeled as a criminal had on their perception of their life-chances within the conventional world. The label of "criminal" was formally applied to the individual by the agents of the criminal justice system. By being processed through this system, the respondent felt that he was assigned a record and others were provided with a social typification by which to perceive and evaluate him. The label provided

interaction partners of the NPO with a formally processed and legitimized conceptual category with which to organize and interpret the actions of the offender.

Most of the respondents confronted this process upon their first visible adult offense and formal conviction. For a few, this offense resulted in incarceration; but, more often, the offender was placed on probation. Although objectively these dispositions were not severe, the label's impact on the individual was very significant. For example, the respondents stated that due to their identity as known offenders, they were often denied the major conventional route for the acquisition of material rewards and resources. That is, the respondents believed that they were denied subjectively rewarding conventional employment primarily on the basis of their criminal social identities.

At first, I tried walking around town hunting a job. On every one I was turned down because of my record.

After being refused these opportunities several times, the individual developed a personal sense of the workings of the label given to him by others.

I told him (an employer), "If you ain't got the job open, why ask for someone?" I don't need no lame excuse, they don't want

me because I been busted. I'm
an ex-con.⁷

The respondents also stated that there were numerous less formal interpersonal problems associated with "having a record." Their chances for comfortable interactions and relationships within normal social circles were damaged by their awareness of the use of the criminal label by others within these groups. As a known offender, the respondent felt that he was defined as essentially evil, or sick, and that he was reacted to with an attitude of mistrust and fear. Conventional others expected and demanded that the once-convicted offender be consistently criminal.⁸ These perceived attitudes further estranged the individual from bonds to the conventional world.

Labeling, the Aura of Mistrust

The respondents in this study indicated that most often the social identity as a deviant was applied to them through nonverbal channels of communication. They experienced this message as one of extreme mistrust which further alienated them from conformity. They felt that conventional others were untrusting and fearful that, as a criminal, they might suddenly revert to their preferred form of activity. In fact, even attempts at conformity

⁷Similar findings concerning the labeled offender's employment difficulties have been previously published by Glaser (1964), Schwartz and Skolnick (1962), and Stebbins (1971).

⁸Stebbins (1971) and Shaw (1930) have both published similar findings on this point.

were often interpreted by others as merely a "con-game" perpetuated by the labeled criminal for ulterior motives (see also Matza, 1969:174-175). The respondents perceived that minor errors or shortcomings were seen by others as revealing their true nature. The perceived presence of this underlying alienative mood of fear and mistrust within the life-world of the respondents was consistently mentioned during the interviews.

The majority of people say, "He's an ex-convict, he's mean." Because you survived through a prison. So the general attitude of the convict is that he's supposed to be tough, he's no good.

They won't trust you, they won't give you a chance to pull anything on them. Because they're always on their toes when they're around you. They try not to act like it, but you, you can sense it. They are scared of you.

I mean people talk about you, like they would always say, "You better not lay nothing down in front of him, he'll steal it." This is the way people in the neighborhood would look at it.

The perceived expression of mistrust and fear by others revealed to the respondents that others considered them to be aliens, deviants; and therefore, others did not wish to provide them with normal access to conventional circles. These reactions effectively weaken or break the individual's already meager ties to the social order. He believes that he has become a different type of person in

the eyes of conventional others and, thereby, is alienated from normal rounds of life. These experiences of the respondents are well illustrated by the following statement from Erikson (1962:198).

We are still apt to visualize deviant behavior as the product of a deep-seated characterological strain in the person who enacts it, . . . we are still apt to treat that person as if his whole being was somehow implicated. . . .

Yet the respondents clearly did not accept this public conception of their own being.

Society looks at you different, once you been in prison, they consider you as a criminal, they consider you no good. This is something that makes you feel kind of bad. You never do accept it, they're wrong because I hadn't stole from just anybody. I hadn't really stole that much anyhow. I, as far as criminal records, mine was not that bad (emphasis mine).

Still, regardless of the respondent's inner aspirations and personal identity, societal reaction to deviance, as perceived by the individual, isolated him from alternatives and controlling restraints within the conventional social world. The label and its effects operated to drive the respondents deeper into a career pattern of property offenses.

These people form an opinion of me and they never see me. They really can't tell what I might do or what I'm capable

of doing. They know that I had been in trouble, they would look at you from a different point of view, you was a criminal. You had a record, and they would take that under consideration. They would look at you and say, "He went to jail for stealing," and they feel like I might do something to them. I didn't think of myself as a criminal. I didn't stamp myself as one. So you don't get the job, or you can't get yourself established or nothing like the other men. The thing is people don't look at what you gonna do, they look at what you done done and it makes it hard on you (emphasis mine).

The label was not simply interpersonal; it was also strongly reinforced by the action of the authorized agents of the state. The criminal justice system continued to define the respondents as persons to be treated with suspicion. The mistrust of legal agents advanced deviant expectations and increased the respondent's distance from the conventional world. This process occurred most obviously and most often in increasingly frequent encounters with the police and courts.

To the police, the respondents were known criminals and thus were "suspects." Their legal status as suspects was clearly recognized by all of the men interviewed:

I know I could get a great deal of time easy, because I'm familiar with crime. If we're around a place that been broken into, the police gonna say, "Two ex-cons, take them down and check them out."

It's sort of like a hassle all the time, and then it gets to the place where they know you, they know you by face. So now they'll pick you up just cause of your record.

To these respondents, the suspect position was indicative of the conventional world's fundamental mistrust.

The police don't like you at all. If you done time, I guess they just feel that you're always gonna be out there doing sutfff, breaking into places and like that. I really believe they're down on the ex-convict. Once they find out you got a record, they'll get you. You don't do time and forget it, it don't work that way with cops.

Primarily, these meanings were communicated to the individual through continual contact with the agents of law enforcement.

The respondents often defended themselves against the moral implications of these perceived hassles through the development of an attitude of resentment toward the law and its agents. This resulted in further isolation from the standards of the conventional order.

The way law enforcement itself treated us; it, the law, those guys will pick you up on suspicion. You don't get that suspicion off you. They will find something if they have to go on an unsolved case.

The police didn't like me. They hassled me, trying to get me for something else so they could, wouldn't have me around. I'd always see a cop car somewhere, or following me. There was always someone there

and that would make me uneasy, and damn mad at them all (emphasis mine).

Resentment toward the law was justified by an increased perception of a gap between the ideal and the real operation of justice. Particularly disturbing to the respondents in this study was the commonplace practice of plea-bargaining.⁹ Ironically, although the offender often wins in objective terms by these negotiations (see Newman, 1956, Sudnow, 1965); subjectively, he feels that the negotiations function for, and are a convenience to the courts. Moreover, the respondents are sensitive to the negotiations as an informal means of evading true due process.

And actually I did what I did, and won. I don't deny that, but if the laws are set down for me to follow, they should follow them too.

The state just told me, "Either pick a jury or cop-out." I couldn't go to no jury, I didn't have the necessary funds for the jury for one thing. The lawyer made me see it his way and I go for it, simply because I don't have no other choice.

Through their courtroom experiences, some of the respondents also perceived the public defender as a "double agent" who works for the system and against his client (see also Blumberg, 1967:115).

⁹For discussions of the practice of plea-bargaining in contemporary court systems, see Blumberg (1967) and Newman (1956:1966).

To me if you break a public defender down into a definition, from what I've seen of them, the experience I had with them, I know one thing, they are an officer of the court, they're appointed by the court to represent you and there's the old saying, "You can't serve two masters." Now the public defender, to me, he's in a moral no-man's land because he cannot represent his client and still be part of the court system itself. You go into court, the court is the enemy. And you got a man on the enemy's side representing you.

Even the judge communicated suspicion and mistrust to the respondents by overtly basing his sentencing decisions on the offender's record as a criminal. In general, the respondents felt that they were reacted to by the judge and the other members of the court according to their social identities as criminals.

He sees your record, and loses any hope for you. They put you away because you are considered as a criminal, habitual offender. You will always break the law. You are a menace to society, also a threat to society. So they put you away.

They say your juvenile record doesn't hurt you, but before that time I'd never been convicted of a felony. What I was told everytime I went to court, they said: "Well, this ain't gonna hurt your record, you are a juvenile, you're not responsible for yourself." But then I come up to felony court, they say: "Oh, these are felonies, it don't make no difference whether you

you was 12 years old." So its
sentenced on your past.

The respondents also defined disparities in sentencing decisions as an indication of the injustices and hypocrisy of the contemporary court's emphasis on the individualization of justice.

The courts is the most unfair
system in the world. I come
in here for armed robbery. I
didn't hurt a soul, I put a
man in fear of his life. There's
guys get life for armed robbery,
I got 20, some guys there got 5.

These contacts with the criminal justice system eventually created a bitter resentment within the individual who consequently was more and more removed from the controls of the conventional society.¹⁰ The legal code loses much of its controlling force for the actor as he becomes increasingly convinced of the duplicity of the "system." He experiences a growing sense of resentment and anger towards criminal justice and imposes more distance between himself and the conventional social order (see also Irwin, 1970:50-60).

I don't believe in the law.
One thing, its money, I don't
have enough money to have a
sufficient lawyer.

¹⁰The sense of injustice referred to here seems most destructive of the element of the social bond that Hirschi (1969) has called "belief."

No I didn't try to do something out of my way to get in trouble, but I don't do anything when it comes to cooperating with the police or legal officials. I don't want no part of it.

Societal Reaction and Secondary Deviance

The data collected in this research suggest that societal reactionism is the theory that best explains the typical NPO's progress into continuation. It is apparent that the perception of the formal reactions of the legitimate agents of social control were most frequently the producers of the NPO's patterning of property crimes. The explanatory agents stressed by other schools of theoretical criminology were not significant in the careers of the respondents. There is no real evidence that the respondents were positively committed to deviance. The NPO had not internalized deviant values. Further, there is no indication of the oft-mentioned causal force of criminal identities. To the contrary, the respondents overwhelmingly did not conceive of themselves as criminals. Again, only the emphasis on the effects of association and their provision of some social psychological support for the respondents was found to be important in the career development of the typical NPO.

The stage of continuation in the career of the NPO is most adequately explained through the major thesis of labeling theory--the stigma of being a known criminal.

As Matza (1969:195-196) suggests, the NPO feels that he is defined by many others as the "collective representation of theft." However, contrary to many popular interpretations of the effects of labeling, it is not the personal identity of the actor that is changed by labeling. Rather, it is his social identity and social situation that are altered.¹¹ The data reported here suggest that societal reactionists should place less emphasis on changes in the self of the labeled individual and place more stress on the perceived reactions of others to the offender as he enters normal social circles. This area was recognized by Lemert (1951:93) as the process of "social isolation" and by Matza (1969) and Becker (1963) as "exclusion."

Treating a person as though he were generally rather than specifically deviant produces a self-fulfilling prophecy. . . . One tends to be cut-off, after being identified as a deviant, from participation in more conventional groupings (Becker, 1963:34).

Thus, both formal and informal forms of societal reaction function to lead the NPO to avoid normal social circles and to become isolated from ties to the conventional moral and legal order. As a response to the isolating

¹¹As shall be seen, the effects of labeling are complex. Some NPO's were both deterred by this process and, at the same time, they were led into further crime by the negative effects of labeling.

effects of labeling, the NPO may drift into unconventional, and perhaps criminal, circles and behaviors. He often responds to his perceived exclusion from conventional groups by attaining his aspirations illegitimately. In other words, these findings indicate that the labeling process created continued criminal behavior by amplifying the uncontrolled situation of the NPO. His already weak bonds to the conventional world were not able to withstand the impact of the stigma of "having a record." Although he still experienced common desires for goods, a meaningfully rewarding standard of living, and a necessary degree of self-esteem and respect, now the NPO has been pushed further from ties that might bind him to conventional behaviors.

Additionally, the NPO is often penalized through his stigma for attempting to enter conventional circles and to use conventional routes to desired ends. The individual then often decides to continue in crime. The process of labeling has provided the NPO with negative reasons for entering the continuation stage of a criminal career.

Being relatively unskilled in criminal lines of action, the NPO is often apprehended and convicted of offenses. Hence, he frequently experiences imprisonment. As we shall see in the next chapter, the prison experience is in many ways the exemplar of the labeling process.

Because of the significance of the NPO's prison experience for both his career development and career abandonment, it is to be considered as a separate phenomenon.

CHAPTER 5
INCARCERATION: THE ARCHETYPE OF
LABELING AND ITS EFFECTS

Introduction

The impact of negative societal reaction on the self-image and life-world of the typical NPO is most clearly understood through a description of the offender's prison experiences. Prison is a primary contingency within the career of the NPO. It is society's most dramatic means of reaction to the criminal offender.

The data produced in the interviews conducted in this study indicate that imprisonment effectively removes the offender--both physically and socially--from the conventional world. However, paradoxically, it may also cause the NPO to recognize his deteriorating social position and attempt to change his status. At the same time, it may deny him real means and opportunities for exiting from his criminal career. Prison is both a motive to continue in and a motive for attempts at exiting from patterned criminal behavior.

...felons grapple for alternative life styles and some find them. Usually, however, they do not succeed in them. Often this represents a failure on the part of the official agents whose policies

and acts usher felons along the criminal or deviant path rather than opening up acceptable alternatives for them (Irwin, 1970:2).

It is the dual nature of the prison experience and more generally of the labeling process that will be the guide for the discussions in this chapter concerning the impact of imprisonment on the career development of the typical NPO.

These data also indicate that several specific aspects of the prison world as experienced by the respondents were significant variables that influenced the evolution of their criminal careers. Within the context of the prison, the NPO's life-world underwent some significant changes. The life-world of the incarcerated NPO centered around his social identity as a criminal, the personal deprivations of the abnormally insecure prison round of life, and the struggle of the individual to repudiate the identity-implications of being incarcerated. Equally important to this new situation were the NPO's consciousness of time and his personal identity¹ as a noncriminal. The

¹Throughout this study I make an important distinction between the actor's personal and social identity. This distinction is derived from Laing, Phillipson and Lee's (1966: 3-11) discussion of the significance of "metaperspectives" on one's conception of his own self; social identity is the individual's "meta-identity" composed of his view of others' view of his self. Social identity is a sociological parallel to the existentialist's term "being-for-others" (Sartre, 1953). Hawkins and Tiedeman (1974:243) have recently defined

respondents further described the prison life-world as fundamentally disorganized and unorthodox.

Because exiting most often occurred as a direct or indirect response to the prison experience, an understanding of this experience from the point of view of the respondents will provide a base for the consideration of exiting itself. Therefore, this chapter describes and theoretically interprets the prison experience of the typical NPO.

The Prison World

The Personal Deprivations of Incarceration

Sykes (1958: 63-84) has argued that the experience of imprisonment is pervaded by five "pains:" the deprivation of liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relationships, autonomy, and security. The men interviewed for this study generally concurred with this description of the prison world. The loss of liberty, autonomy, and security were of special interest to my respondents. Additionally, the awareness that others defined them in a negative manner was consistently mentioned by the respondents as a psychological deprivation.

social identity as the "...identity imputed by an audience to the actor." The concept is indicative of more depth and intensity than mere social status. As used here, it refers to the imputation of identity that occurs within the labeling process.

The prison world is set apart by formidable walls between the institution and the "outside" social world. The loss of personal liberty symbolized by these walls was actually experienced by the respondents as a loss of contact with significant others in the outside world. The respondents entered the prison prepared to have their freedom for physical mobility severely limited, but they were not well-prepared for the emotional and psychological impact of the loss of relations with important others. It was the loss of ties with people truly cared for that the respondents considered to be the most meaningful definition of the lost freedom and liberties of incarceration.²

They taken (sic) me away from my family, deprived me of my freedom. I got a new family. More than anything in the world, I'd like to be there.

The state mostly has deprived me of my family, I don't like that. That don't make me feel good.

Man come here and they keep him from his family, the main thing is his family. If you don't have a family, you have someone out there that you care about, and believe it or not that bears on him.

Freedom is social as well as psychological. It was defined by these men as the ability to be in contact with others

²The family ties mentioned by the respondents were most often one of two types. The most frequent concerns were about members of the offender's family of procreation; some also missed members of their family of orientation.

of one's own choice. The loss of this social freedom was a more meaningful deprivation to the respondents than was the absence of physical mobility.

When a men gets to prison, he's got his freedom taken over, you know. A man starts thinking and being locked up ain't that bad. Its your family, those you love, not the fact that you're being locked up, the bars. Its the fact that you're taken away from the ones you love (emphasis mine).

Secondly, the incarcerated offender typically loses control over trivial, yet meaningful, aspects of his self and his behavior. Meaningful social freedom and the more simple elements of personal autonomy were stripped away from the respondents by their incarceration.

The worst thing is the hassles the majority of the time, little things can mount up to so much.

These perceived harassments were attributed so much meaning and felt keenly by the respondents because they occurred with no explanation or obvious indication of their necessity.

Most of what you want is respect. But they harass you and they don't tell you why. You don't get an explanation, you can't understand.

The respondents interpretation of such official practices led to the feeling that they were defined as non-persons. Because they were nonpersons, explanations of accounts were not considered necessary. In this setting, the offenders lost a large portion of their self-respect. (See also, Sykes, 1958:73-76).

It's not really malicious harassment or anything like that. It's just little technical things. Just little things such as not being clean shaven when you go into chow line. You look the wrong way, you do this or that and so on.

Prison is for childs. For instance, you come in the chow hall in the morning and you stand in line, this guard comes up and he gets right up in your face to see that you didn't miss a wisker. He's all in your face, ordering you to button your shirt, cut your sideburns. That stuff makes me mad. In the chow hall, you're sitting there eating and there's a guy walking around, he'll stand over the table and he's looking all in your plate and stuff. They treat you like you're a piece of shit or something. It makes my blood boil.

The forced dependence on the institution that was experienced by these men and the related lack of self-mastery and social freedom introduced the respondents to a new meaning-world that was to be largely a negative experience. Within the prison world, the respondents felt "hassled" and coerced into a child-like dependence on the prison and its staff.³ At the same time, they felt that they were consistently marked by their social identity as "outcasts." That is, the individual believed that he had

³The demeaning nature of this new position is all the more severe due to the obvious low community status attributed to the guards that exert this power over the individual. As one respondent states: "These people are dumb, ignorant slobbs who can get no other job. And he's supposed to rehabilitate me, this guy's supposed to make an impression on me."

been officially redefined by society and its agents as one who was rejected and could no longer be accorded trust, self-control, or even membership within the conventional world (see also Sykes, 1958:62). He was treated as if he were a child whose personal responsibility could not be taken for granted.

They treat you like you in a boy's school. You no longer considered as being a man. Now that I've committed a crime, I got incarcerated, I don't get no respect.

The man wants to be treated like a man, but its not that way at all. You're treated like you are some school-age child.

Nobody likes that, I didn't like being under the gun, or being forced or told what to do. I'd rather to have a man come up and ask me to do something or other. You don't have no freedom.

Not only did the respondents feel they were ascribed the position and rights of a child while they were in prison, they also felt defined and treated as less than normal children. Individually, they felt they were seen as a man-child infected with pervasive criminality and multiple maladjustments. In broad terms, the respondents came to believe that they were identified, or labeled, as objects of moral condemnation.

The guards figure you done something bad against society, so you just a plain criminal in their eyes.

In other words, they would think you has an "attitude." In the meantime

it wouldn't be you had an "attitude,"
 it would be the guards have an "attitude,"
 and they form an opinion that you have
 an "attitude."⁴

Although the respondents related that they were consistently reacted to on the basis of a social identity as criminal, most of them remained unconvinced of the validity of this judgment. The existence of this offered role was painfully apparent to them, but it was not accepted as bona fide. In fact, their treatment by the prison staff was usually considered unreasonably harsh.

They treat you like you was an animal,
 they're not here to give no help, they
 don't give a good goddamn whether you
 change or not. And they're gonna do
 their best to make you worser than you
 are. All they do is aggravate you.
 They look at you like you was a piece
 of shit.

I don't think I am a criminal. Oh,
 I know I've been convicted and they
 thinks a felony is, makes a criminal.

The withholding of normal respectful self-definitions from the respondents was perceived as being correlated with the general abnormality of the prison as a social environment.⁵

⁴This inmate uses the word, "attitude" in two distinctly unique fashions. In reference to himself and other inmates it means a negative or deviant personal identity. But when related to the guards, "attitude" is better defined as a perspective that defined inmates as bad or evil persons.

⁵The distinctiveness of life inside the prison is symbolized by the argot terms, "free world" and "free man" that inmates use to contrast life outside the institution with life "inside."

Inside the prison, the respondents felt that they were constantly being "tested" or otherwise involved with inmates or guards in potentially violent incidents. Because the prison world possesses no real personal security, it was experienced as a social reality infested by the tense emotions of fear and unpredictability. The anxiety and insecurities of this world further degrade the individual's perceived self-worth.⁶ "Inside," normal degrees of security against interpersonal and collective violence could no longer be taken for granted. The life-world of the respondents became pervaded by tension and fear, and for some, terror.

The people that I was surrounded with, that includes the officers too, their was a thickness there. You just knew that if the inmate didn't get you, the officers would.

Well, you're in here in prison and you're scared to death the whole time you're in here. Every human being on that yard out there is scared because you never know what to expect. You don't know if some guy is gonna walk up and stick a knife in your back, or if a riots gonna break out. You don't know if the guards are gonna lock you up in five minutes. There's always fear on that compound (emphasis mine).

This tension was heightened by racial prejudices and fears, and by sexual hostilities.

⁶Sykes (1958:78) also discovered that the uncertainties of prison life were defined as an "ego threat" by the inmates forced to live in the potentially violent atmosphere of the prison.

They sent some kids here. Its about 70-80 percent niggers, and I don't mean black people; I mean niggers. And they're nothing but animals. It was pure racial shit all the time.

They moved him over there and he got raped, gang-banged, two or three time. They got this little kid, they beat his ass down there and raped him.

Accompanying the lack of normal ranges of personal security and social order was the respondents' dismay over contact with other inmates who had been convicted of violent crimes. These offenses were defined as personally repulsive by the men interviewed for this study. In short, in prison the respondents were forced into a social circle in which they had to interact with others whom they had labeled as "real" deviants.

It was the first time I ever go into a place where I've come in contact with people that were in for rape, murder, and so forth. And I seen several beatings, seen several rapes. And to me, it was one of the worst experiences I've ever had.

The Meaning of Incarceration

The prison world--the lack of freedom and autonomy, the insecurity, and the tension--are indicative of the two most significant meanings within the respondents' prison experiences. One of these meanings is the obvious abnormality of prison as a social world; the other is their own position as abnormal individuals cast into that world.

The abnormality of the prison as a social world was clearly evident to the respondents. Their life-world had become less than normal; they could no longer assume a reciprocity of perspectives with normal others. They now existed in a primitive, irregular social context that was physically and symbolically isolated from conventional life.

I feel like I belong outside, I
don't feel like I belong in the
joint. I just, out there is
home, this ain't my home.

This joint ain't normal everyday,
that's a whole new society.
You're cut-off from the free world.
Inside them fences, man, you got a
new world. This is all completely
different. This ain't the same
society as the straight one. This
is two different societies. Prison
is a savage, primitive type society.

The unnaturalness of the prison world for the respondents is illustrated in the manner in which they see time as proceeding. Prison, as a unique life-world, contains a novel flow of time. The respondents related that when imprisoned they could no longer take the passage of time for granted; instead, they had to struggle to find an acceptable way to "build time." Time had become a burden to be lived through, rather than a resource to be used and profited from. Time could be done easily or with great difficulty, but it nevertheless passed more slowly and jerkily than is normal on the "outside."⁷ The strange

⁷For instance, to be given "extra time" in prison is a punishment, while on the outside a gift such as "extra

structure of their internal time-consciousness further revealed to the respondents the fundamental abnormality of the prison world.

Imprisonment forced the respondents to inhabit a social world in which they were defined by almost all other members of the same social context as criminals. Still, they reacted to this situation by struggling to continue to consider themselves as non-criminal beings. Thus, a fight for psychological security was added to the struggle for physical survival.⁸ The general abnormality of the prison world was perceived by the individual as an attack on his conception of himself as a normal noncriminal social actor (Sykes, 1958:79).

A prison is a, when a man is locked behind closed doors its a very cold and lonely feeling that you get deep inside. And it really tears you apart. Get to thinking, you hear them doors lock, look around, you don't see nothing but walls, bars. It's really a cold place, you're now seen as a real animal, a convict.

The Repudiation of the Label

Often, indeed more often than previously assumed by many, the imprisoned actor continues to reject the label of

time" most often would be defined as pleasing and rewarding.

⁸As shall be described later, the outcome of this struggle is variable and problematic.

being a criminal. That is, the findings of this study indicate that the respondents did not come to conceive of themselves as true deviants.⁹ Yet, at the same time, their native confidence in their own status as substantially normal beings was often weakened by the experience of imprisonment. The individual began to question his normality and moral worth, thereby increasingly alienating himself from normal rounds of life and the controls therein. Yet, it is a tribute to the power of the assumed normality of one's self that most of the respondents firmly refused to accept the label. Generally, to himself, the actor remains a noncriminal. He may have lost his natural acceptance of his own normality, but he had not been convinced of any fundamental criminality in his character. The individual becomes confused and uncomfortably aware of the transiency of his social identity and becomes more definitely cognizant of his position between social worlds (see also Irwin, 1970:80).

The refusal to accept the label was accomplished by the respondents through the use of several interpersonal techniques.¹⁰ The most common of these skills are

⁹There is some relevance here of Goffman's (1961b) discussion of "role distance."

¹⁰These techniques are similar in both form and content to what Goffman (1961a) has called "secondary adjustments."

described below as "picking one's group," "rejection of the rejectors," identity apathy, and "playing the game well." These styles of defensive adaptation to the degrading and stigmatizing impact of incarceration were clearly evident in the comments of the respondents concerning their prison experiences.

"Picking one's group" is a defense against the labeling process that functions by including the individual in an intimate primary-type social group that supports its members' conventional identities. These groups are clearly distinct from the more criminalistic cliques within the prison.¹¹ Often these cliques were defined as the principal anchor for the conventional personal identity of the respondents who remained within the cohesive boundaries of the group.

In the joints, you gonna find some of everybody on the streets, you get all types of people. So what you gotta do is just pick your company. You pick your people to be with, you can't be messing with everyone. Some guys will lead you to trouble. There's all kind of charges here, you name it and they are here. They got friendly people here. People, I don't think should be here. To be in their presence, talk with them, they don't seem like criminals. So you just try to pick them to talk with on your own level. You got all levels of people here.

¹¹See Clemmer (1940) for the original discussion of the import of primary cliques inside a prison.

The majority of ones I be around with feels like they want to be straight. I don't talk with those that don't wanna go straight, they looking for trouble. I'm, we ain't no hard-down criminals.

Some respondents defended their self-concepts by rejecting the agents who were trying to apply the label to them. This process has been noticed several times in previous descriptions of adaptations to total institutions (see, for example, Sykes, 1958; Goffman, 1961a). It refers to the inmates' rejection of the tag of criminality by directly denying the authority of those perceived as applying the label.¹² This rejection is built upon the individuals perception of the injustice and hypocrisy of the criminal justice system. The specific forms of this technique encountered among the present respondents ranged from a radical rejection similar to the stance which Goffman (1961a) calls "intransigence" to less extreme opposition communicated through frequent "bitching." The effect of these adaptations was to psychologically strip the definers of their moral qualifications for judging others. The depth of this rejection often included all types of conventional definers.

Believe it or not I meet better people
in prison than I have on the streets.

¹²Otherwise described, the NPO maintains some psychological distance between his social identity as a criminal and his personal identity as conventional and noncriminal.

At least, one thing, the people I know in here are honest with each other, to a stronger degree than on the streets. The only thing I ever got out of people on the streets is, if you don't act like them, you are no good.

So-called righteous community and all those God-fearing people in society, Bullshit! People on the streets, so-called Christians, they'll stab each other in the back for the god-almighty dollar. People I'm with in the joint just try to stay together and help each other. And I've seen more of it in the joint than I have on the street.

Thus, the individual disallowed the qualifications of the system's agents and redistributed moral authority.¹³ The moral authority of the labelers was considered to be illegitimate, and the tag was rejected along with its source.

Another interactional skill used by many of the respondents in order to effect self-defense against the stigma of incarceration was the technique which I refer to as identity apathy.¹⁴ In identity apathy, the individual withholds his identity from being an object of concern within his present situation. The men themselves referred to this process as the adoption of a "give a shit attitude" toward self, others, and one's actions. This technique was often supplemented and highlighted by a belief in the

¹⁴Goffman (1961a) has discussed a similar technique for "making out" within total institutions. He calls this technique "situational withdrawal."

absurdity of prison life and a related perception of the sanctimoniousness of conventional standard bearers.

These so-called righteous society members can all go to hell. They are sick and they're supposed to be reforming me. Boy, these are some ignorant people, it's ridiculous!

I try to be straight and no "jitterbug."¹⁵ If these people give me half a chance, I'll take it. But, if not, no use in me going and beat my brains out, trying to do something I can't do. Hell with them.

I just held off, didn't worry. If any man got any self-respect for his self, regardless of what another person think, he always gonna think highly of himself. There ain't nothing you can do with them, got to accept that.

Perhaps the most significant self-defense resource mentioned by the respondents was the technique of "playing the game well."¹⁶ In playing the game according to institutional expectations, the individual attempts to use the resources available in prison to reconvince himself and others of

¹⁵"Jitterbug" is an argot term used to refer to inmates who are irrationally opposed to the prison staff and consequently involve themselves and others in troubles with the authorities. Sykes (1958:95-102) refers to a similar type of inmate as "ball-busters."

¹⁶Goffman (1961a) has found a somewhat similar style of institutional adjustment to inmate status that he terms "conversion." Irwin (1970) likewise talks of "gleaning." Our concern in this study is with an overtly similar type, but the NPO's intent is less conventional than in "gleaning" or "conversion." The NPO's interviewed used "playing the game" in order to get released as soon as possible, and not to objectively improve their social and occupational opportunities or change their personal identities.

the fundamental conventionality of his character and thereby deny the validity of the institutionally imposed criminal label. Most often, the resources used included therapy sessions, self-help groups, nonvisibility or "sliding by," and impression-management or "being con-wise."¹⁷ Most often, rehabilitation programs were used by the respondents to impress representatives of the conventional world that one would conform if released from the institution. In other words, although he has never defined himself as a real criminal, the actor decides to play the game by seeming to accept the label and then outlining external routes for bringing about a fictitious change in his fundamental self. One example of this technique that was commonly shared by many respondents was the use of Alcoholics Anonymous and other drug abuse programs by nonaddicted inmates in order to impress parole boards and other staff with the individual's personal reform. The inmate "conned" the system by participating in whatever programs were available in order to publically announce his reform.¹⁸

¹⁷Sometimes educational and vocational training programs were used to gather some gain from the prison situation. A few respondents also indicated that they attended and benefited from pragmatically-oriented counseling programs.

¹⁸As we will see in Chapter 6, "playing the game" may extend into the NPO's post-release situation. Even after release from the prison, institutional programs can help to publicly certify the NPO's "reform."

Sure I'm con-wise. I make them think I've just now straightened up. This is a good trait and it got me out of prison two or three times. You got to be smart. I couldn't come into the penitentiary shouting that I'm not a criminal and get out. Because people gonna think, "He's trying to con somebody." So I go to school, show them my whole attitude has changed. You see my objective is to achieve a parole as soon as possible, to get back to normal.¹⁹

Sure they got programs to help you here, but its, most people get into them account of it looks good when you see the parole man. He see that you're in the program, they don't know that you ain't getting nothing out of it. They think you are changed.

In sum, through several behavioral techniques and strategies, the respondents often successfully refused the label of being a criminal that comes with incarceration. Although they had been assigned the identity of a criminal by others, the respondents most often constructed a more conventional personal identity.

The Criminal and Conventional Aspects of the Prison World

The process of formal labeling did have some significant effects on the career development of the

¹⁹The different definitions of "conning" by the staff and the respondent in this statement reveals an interesting misunderstanding. This respondent had described a "triple con" wherein the inmate fools the staff member who is expecting a more ordinary version of conning the system.

respondents interviewed for this study. These effects should be described before we proceed further in the study of the career of the NPO. That is, in order to understand exiting, one should know what it is that leads up to the abandonment of criminal behavior.

As we have seen, the respondents believed that they were publicly defined as criminals. This belief increased their isolation from restraining ties to normal social circles by rewarding them for using the criminal role to order the social context of the prison. These men are well described as adult "drifters" who live in neither the deviant nor the conventional world and who possess a clear realization of the oddity of their situation. Similar to his juvenile counterpart described by Matza (1964), the adult "drifter" is essentially of two minds. He inhabits a life-world that includes elements of both the criminal and the conventional world view.

Labeling did result in increased isolation from conventional places and others for these men. At one extreme, some respondents were pushed to use the criminal role and image as a means of adapting to the prison world. The individual's criminal self efficiently ordered and made inhabitable the criminal world into which he drifted. As the keystone of a criminalistic life-world, this identity made some sensible order out of the prison, and larger, criminal world. While securely inside the institution, the

respondent's social identity as a criminal became the base of a constructed reality or life-world whose relevance was limited to the prison context.²¹ He employed this public identity essentially to gain admission to the available affiliational groups that were perceived as being able to bring some security and intersubjectivity to the disorganized tensions and abnormalities of the prison situation. The respondents thus gained an intersubjective community through inmate groups and the security of the traditional standards of "do your own time" and "don't squeal to the man" (Sykes, 1958). As one respondent described the cohesion of these groups:

We tend to stick together, when
the man come back with that
bullship we all have something
to say.

Another result of the criminal role was that the individuals were introduced to the criminal world view within prison through the learning of the techniques and contacts of the criminal subculture of the area. They stated that while in prison they often developed a "we-relationship" with other inmates in their cliques. Within

²¹In the terminology of the phenomenologist (Schutz, 1962) each identity is relevant to the life-world of the individual in relation to different projects of action. For the NPO's in this study, the course of incarceration represented at least three different projects of action.

these groups, the inmates shared a reciprocity of meanings and expectations that was recognized by them to be "unorthodox."²² These meanings and expectations represented a life-world that was directed toward the opposition of the conventional world, for instance, contrary to the conventional order, this new unorthodox world included within its stock of knowledge an awareness of how to "do a crime."

However, the central element of this perspective was the individual's personal identity as unconventional but yet noncriminal. The actor within this context was a "drifter," without true commitments to either side of the moral universe. This disorganized perspective on one's self was a fundamental result of the processes of formal labeling. In short, the self of the respondents now included some of both worlds; it is well described an unorthodox. That is, the respondents saw themselves as different in that they had been into "some kind of trouble," yet these "troubles" did not imply to the respondents that they were fundamentally criminal.

I just consider myself as an average person, like any other person. But there is a difference, I got into some troubles, I've been in the joint.

²²"Unorthodox" is used to describe the general mood of the NPO's life-world at this time in his career. It is simply the mental result of the individual's realization that he exists outside of conventional and deviant circles, and that his is in fact odd or unusual.

Realizing that they had broken the law, the respondents consistently expressed remorse over their criminal actions.²³ Thus, as Matza (1964:42-44) has recognized in the juvenile drifter, the respondents were clearly not committed to crime as a way of life.

I often think of my past,
I think of the people I've
hurt. It bothers me some.

I never did nothing that hurt
somebody else, besides taking
their property. I know they're
struggling just as hard as I
am. I always try to steal from
a business.²⁴

In fact, many of the respondents were quite proud of their chosen styles of theft. For instance, they were steadfastly nonviolent and, unlike "true criminals," they never carried a weapon and remained nonaggressive "on the job."

I prefer to take somebody else's
property but in the process of
doing this I don't wanna harm
nobody. I put my own life in
jeopardy before I put somebody
else's life in jeopardy. I don't
carry no gun, the other person
got more than me.

However, they also perceived that this distinction was usually not made by others "on the street," especially the agents

²³These feelings of guilt further highlight the NPO's decision not to identify himself with his criminal biography.

²⁴Thus denials of injury and victims are techniques not only for the neutralization of moral binds (Matza and Sykes, 1957), but also for the distancing of one's criminal biography from one's self-identity in the present.

of social control. The respondents felt that, to most people, they were simply criminals.

People in the streets are down on you all the time. Least little thing happen, police gonna come get me for it anyway because I lives in that area and I got a rap sheet.

As we have seen, at this time in their careers, the respondents' life-worlds became organized around a split-identity. Their knowledge-at-hand was ordered into a system of relevancies that uniquely reflected the unorthodoxy of the actor and his situation. The content of the respondents' life-worlds was both intersubjective and inconsistent. It was shared between the respondents and their prison clique and it included both the learning of crime and the learning of conventional conduct. For example, the following excerpt indicates that while in prison inmates shared techniques for committing crimes and locating essential contacts.²⁵

The most thing I've learned in prison is how to do a crime. I've learned how to disassemble burgular alarms, how to open safes four ways. I learned how to steal cars, where to take them to, who to sell them to. Where to get funny money (counterfeit money), contacts all over the state.

On the other hand, the NPO's life-world also made available a conventional stock of knowledge. Even after

²⁵For a related discussion, see Letkemann (1973:117-137).

formal labeling, the respondents remained in drift, outside of both social perspectives. At the same time, the NPO's had acquired an increased understanding of the world of the committed criminal. From this position of general isolation, the inmate who was about to be released began to project a plan for his future. He was open to both conventional and criminal considerations and alternatives. The actor was open to crime and possessed a perspective that could define situations along the lines of a project of theft.

I can walk down the middle of a street at night, just taking a nice walk. I look at a house and all of a sudden it hits me, just like that, go into it. And I usually try to follow that feeling. Maybe its just something that I can do.

If I see a big piece of money, I'm, I would be tempted to take it.

Sometime regular life don't have no meaning for me, I don't have no reason not to steal and plenty of reason why.

Conversely, the respondents were also open to "going straight." They consciously considered returning to a generally conventional life.

I'M just like any other person, looking for stuff like settling down, having me an old lady, couple of kids. All I wants is a little freedom. I don't care about no hell of a lot of money.

I believed that if I got half the chance, I'd make good. I ain't lazy, if I can get a decent job that I like to do, I would straighten up.

The respondents indicated that they saw themselves as essentially normal actors, with normal desires for a conventional style of life.

Us, we don't forget the way we was raised, what you was raised up to you don't forget it. You might not always follow through with it, but you don't forget it. You like the outside world better than this inside world.

Thus, although the perception of labeling was effective in confusing the respondents and in some cases pushing the imprisoned offender into some use of the criminal role, it was not completely decisive. The respondents also conceived plans for exiting from their criminal careers. It was the decision concerning which set of relevancies and which identity that the respondents attempted to actualize upon release from incarceration that determined further career development. This decision will be the topic of concern in the following chapters of this study.

Summary

These findings concerning the prison experiences of the respondents are strongly supportive of societal reaction theory. In effect, they outline a labeling process

that functions to further destroy the NPO's already weak ties to the conventional social order. The NPO feels that he is stigmatized and excluded from normal social groups. This process, as we shall see, makes conventional behaviors that are of subjective worth to the NPO seem impossibly difficult to perform successfully.²⁶

Control theorists argue that criminal acts occur, "... when an individual's bond to society is weak or broken" (Hirschi, 1969:16). This was the case within the histories of our respondents. In describing the continuation stage of the NPO's criminal career, we again found little evidence to support deterministic criminology. Only the possible acquisition of a distinct criminal worldview characterized by some differential association within inmate groups is reflective of the tenets of deterministic theory (Sutherland, 1939). With the inclusion of this finding in the descriptions of the societal reactionists, labeling theory provides an excellent explanation of the continuation stage of the NPO's career (see, for example, Becker, 1963:79-121; Matza, 1969; Stebbins, 1971). Labeling theory also provides the best explanation and description of the prison experiences of the NPO. The labeling process effectively increases the isolation of the NPO from the

²⁶In only one or two of the cases collected for this study did labeling alter the offender's fundamental self-image, and even these incidences were clearly not permanent or irreversible.

controlling world of conventional behavior. Imprisonment, as the epitome of labeling, physically and socially excludes the NPO from normality and leads him to a new world of heightened criminality. The individual often chooses to adapt to the prison situation and hopes to secure some sense of social order by using the preferred criminal identity as the foundation for the construction of a life-world.

Incarceration and the ritual degradations of the labeling process (Garfinkel, 1956) exclude the actor from normal interactions with conventional others and consequently further shatter his attachments, commitments, involvements, and beliefs in the conventional world. As will be seen shortly, after release from the institution, the NPO's stigmatized position as a convicted criminal, or an ex-convict, follows him into normal social circles (Irwin, 1970; Schwartz and Skolnick, 1962). His social identity as a criminal closes off many taken-for-granted alternatives for the achievement of economic and personal goals. More importantly perhaps, it strikes deep into his personal identity as normal and noncriminal. He believes that conventional others see him as less than normal and not to be trusted. He feels that they expect deviant behavior from him in many normal situations. Even the legally appointed agents of the law continue to tag him as a suspect and anticipate that he will perform illegal activities.

In response to this perceived societal definition of his social and moral worth, the NPO constructs an unorthodox life-world that lies outside of conventionality and outside of criminality. He inhabits the disorganized world of the noncommitted, part-time conformist and part-time deviant. On this point, Irwin (1970:24) has noted:

The bulk of convicted felons pursue a chaotic, purposeless life filled with unskilled, careless, and variegated criminal activity.

This is an excellent description of the life-world of the NPO during the continuation stage of his criminal career.

The next two chapters of the study describe the respondents' adjustments to the situation of unorthodoxy. Chapter 6 discusses those who actualized the criminal aspects of the prison life-world. Chapter 7 concerns the respondents who attempted to realize a conventional life-world.

CHAPTER 6
THE SEMIPROFESSIONAL PROPERTY OFFENDER

Introduction

This chapter describes the situation of the few respondents who altered their careers by increasing their involvement in the criminal world and graduating into semi-professional theft. It includes a discussion of the problems encountered by all of the respondents upon their release from imprisonment and one theoretically important manner of adjusting to the reentry situation. The respondents discussed in this chapter differ significantly from those to be described in Chapter 7 in that they did not construct a project for exiting from their careers in crime. Rather, they adjusted to reentry and the stigma of having a criminal record by increasing their commitment to theft and the world of the criminal.

The Reentry Situation: Going Home?

Changing Realities

Upon parole and release from prison, the respondents all faced extensive difficulties in returning to the

outside world.¹ They had to relearn conventional styles of behavior and adjust themselves to a new round of life. Release into the world of conventional everyday life, for these men, was similar to what Schutz (1962:229-234) has called a "reality shock." That is, the individual's attitude and his life-world underwent a radical transition as he entered a social world for which his immediate past and his most recent experiences had left him largely unprepared. In addition, the ex-convict was often required to perform extraordinarily well according to the ideals of this new environment.² To be successful within the conventional world, the respondent had to negotiate a leap from the mood of unorthodoxy to the now strange world of everyday living within conventional social groups. Obviously, this situation was most problematic for the respondents.

The initial change in life-worlds was made even more difficult due to the fact that the men themselves often believed that they would fail to make this transition and thus would be quickly reconvicted. Emerging from a past in which he was consistently reminded of his fundamental deviancy and in which he encountered many recidivists who had failed to manage reentry, the respondent's

¹For a related discussion, see Irwin (1970).

²Irwin (1970) has recently published an excellent description of the overly puritanical standards by which the parolee is expected to live his daily life.

self-confidence was often shaky. Although the identity-implications of formal labeling may have been successfully repudiated, these reactions did create in the individual a reflective awareness that others expected him to fail to be normal. Old associates and new acquaintances were perceived as directly and indirectly anticipating the worst. The perception of such expectations influenced the subjective deliberations of the respondents.

I know exactly what it would take for me to go back to it. Just get around somebody that's always edging me, "You're used to crime." Keep on saying that I will go back and don't give me half the credit I deserve for trying.

Sometimes, their consciousness was such that they expected the worst from themselves.

Yeah, I had a feeling I would get busted, but I didn't know how long I could last.

I know it's gonna be tough. There gonna be people, a lot of people, and things that bring back old ideas and habits. I can't say for sure what's gonna happen in the future. Probably sooner or later, I is gonna get in trouble again. People know it and maybe I know it too.

The respondents clearly felt that people would be watching them closely and that they would be asked to exhibit near perfect behavioral conformity.

First thing they wanna do is convict you because you is a felon, you already got a record.

So that's all they do. Maybe you get into something, they don't say, "Let's let this man stay out, give him a break, he is trying." They give you time because you are a repeater.

This excerpt indicates that the men believed that their social identities as criminals denied them the right to simple errors during the return to the outside world. If they were to err, they would be cast out once more because they were considered essentially criminal.

Disorganization and Insecurity during Reentry

Burdened by these difficulties, the respondent's new world of experience was made insecure. It was disoriented by the actor's own untenured place within normality. He was made self-conscious of his awaited and expected regression into crime. The respondents indicated that the major vehicle of this discomforting awareness was the continued stigmatizing reactions of conventional others. They felt that these reactions were based on their past records as criminals.

The disorganized and split-identity of these men that was outlined earlier often led them to be unsure of their ability to gain acceptance within normal rounds of life. The respondents noted that they became fearful that they would return to their "old habits." The perceived reactions of others, then, may have brought the ex-convict

to a mistrusting of himself. Without a strong self, many of the respondents were unable to develop purposive plans for returning to the conventional world.³ In response to this general disorientation, a return to the familiar world of unorthodoxy learned in prison was a relevant factor on the horizon of the reentry life-world of all the respondents. This aspect of the respondents' life-worlds further added to the shakiness of their position in normality by coming into their consciousness during periods of reverie, deliberation, and reflection.

You're always on edge, you know
if you get in trouble again, even
if you're on parole or probation,
you can't do nothing wrong or you
back in the slammer.

Your criminal life is always there
to turn to. There is a tendency
to do something that's wrong, even
when you thought you had changed
it all around.

It was consistently evident throughout the interviews that consciousness of the stigma of a criminal record was a major factor in the careers of the respondents. The reentry situation further illustrates this fact. In reentry, the label symbolized a general expectation by others that the ex-convict would recidivate.

³Irwin (1970:117) has published similar findings concerning the felon's inability to develop a pragmatic plan for reentry.

You don't do your time and forget it, it don't work like that. The rules they put you on in the street, if you stump your toe and don't warn them, they lock you up for it. Take you right back for almost any little thing you do. You got a record.

This reentry situation, distinguished by the general disorientation of the individual's perspective on both others and self, places the individual in the social position of a "homecomer" (Schutz, 1964). The "homecomer" is one who returns home after a prolonged absence to discover that home has changed in a manner unlike one's self.

To the homecomer, home shows-- at least in the beginning--an unaccustomed face. He believes himself to be ... a stranger among strangers (Schutz, 1964:106).

The strangeness of the conventional world as perceived by the respondents was largely due to the passage of time and their loss of place within that world. They expected to return to a place and a routine similar to the one they had left several years earlier. They hoped to easily resume old relationships and behaviors. However, during their absence, both home and they themselves changed. The respondent was now a known deviant with a criminal record and he felt that he was no longer welcome at many places within his "home." Further, habits, beliefs, and other taken-for-granted aspects of everyday conventional life had varied with the passage of time. Consequently, due

to stigma and the passage of time, the respondents experienced home as disorganized, lonely, and confusingly strange. In short, home had become an alien world for many, indeed most, of the respondents. They had lost their place in everyday life; they now lived outside the boundaries of the shared natural attitude of most conventional actors. Common anticipations and taken-for-granted expectancies could no longer be easily assumed by these men. Primary groups had often dissolved, or more often, had been reorganized without their membership.

It does change. A whole lot of it is you. You really don't know what to expect when you get out. It's like people kind of, people almost forget about you.

You really don't know what to expect, how to act. You don't know how to go about things anymore and you end up messing up.

The securing comforts of we-relations and a reciprocity of meanings that are characteristic of everyday life were not readily available upon release from prison. A simple uncomplicated return home is probably impossible because home itself must be reconstructed by the individual. Relations with new and former significant others must be formed anew, and the ex-convict must also strive to reformulate a place in the conventional world as a whole.

... it really wasn't comfortable.
It was like moving back into a

new neighborhood. You know how everybody is, but when you leave for a certain amount of time, you don't know how much they've changed. You have to start over, find out where you stand and where you stand with them (emphasis mine).

The passage of time on the outside and its recognition by the respondents advanced their disorganization and further called into question their normality. "Home" and self had been altered by experiences through time. Things that normal others were at ease with had become ripe with disorder for the respondents. Fields of meaning had changed with the passage of time, and like time itself, these changes were fundamentally irreversible.

You first get out, you feel that, I felt that I was alone. Everything seemed strange to me. Always felt that something was missing. It's the time that you've been away.

Time had been lost on the outside and during that period conventional life had changed. The ex-convict had been excluded from these changes, and consequently, the normal world into which he reentered lacked recurrent meaning for him. Thus, he remained isolated and alienated from a conventional social order that he had never been able to really master.

Therefore, even when released from prison, the respondents struggled to attain a natural perspective within the conventional world. They were forced to work

determinedly to attain the sense of belonging that is easily assumed by most other social actors.

I didn't have a sense of belonging.
I didn't feel, or know, where I belonged
in life or anything like that. I
didn't have any place in society and
as far as it goes I don't belong out
there in some respects. I wanna be
out there, but I got no voice in it.

The Mood of Reentry

The social difficulties of reentry were intensified by the general mood that pervaded the reentry period. The ex-convict NPO typically was troubled by the peculiar emotional temper of his return to the outside. This mood is understandable yet unusual. The respondents returned to society wishing to "make up for lost time." This catch-up mood seems to have derived from their realization that their time in prison was not experienced in a normal manner. As a result of incarceration, these men felt that they had lost time on the outside. They often developed a feeling that they owed it to themselves to perform activities oriented toward catching up with the flow of time.⁴ The catch-up mood that encompassed much of the reentry situation was founded on this desire to retrieve the time that

⁴In The Felon, Irwin (1970:144) makes reference to the convict's "catch-up ethic." Although I generally concur with Irwin's description of this phenomena, I feel that "mood" is a more descriptive term than "ethic."

had been "stolen" from the individual. At the very least, the respondents considered gaining some form of revenge on those who took their time on the outside.

So you get to thinking about it, and you gonna get some kind of revenge. I done lost a whole heap by getting this time, my family, my home. You want to get back on society. When he get out then, try to get even, catch-up on the world. That's the attitude.

The data reveal that the most frequent manner in which the respondents repaid society and regained some of their lost time and experiences on the outside was simply to "live life fully." That is, the actor strove to fill free hours with sensual enjoyment and emotionally vital activities. Since in our culture time is money, these men felt that they could make up lost time by spending money in extremes. Consequently, a cycle was begun. More money than normally was available was often necessary in order to enjoy "life fully." Thus, the respondents needed to steal in order to have enough money to symbolically retrieve lost time:

They put you out there and you look around you, say: "Man, I ain't got to stay right here, I can do what I wanna do." And then you start remembering all them nights you missed in all them night clubs, all the fun you had. You try to make up, you don't realize you can't go back (emphasis mine).

I felt like, I was afraid I would be tempted to steal some-

something simply because I feel
like, that they owe it to me
(emphasis mine).

This mood added to the perceived disorganization of the reentry situation by raising to self-consciousness, once again, the issue of the actor's unorthodox style of life.

In sum, for the typical NPO, the long-awaited return home to conventional life is highly disorganized and somewhat unrewarding. As we will see, the social and psychological products of this initial insecurity may lead the actor to return to the relative comfort of the "old habits" and old friends acquired while in prison. It is during reentry that the released offender begins to seriously reflect upon the social reality imposed upon him in prison and the processes of societal reaction that function to keep him within that reality. His past may become more inviting than his future. Some of the respondents went no further into the conventional world.

Becoming a Semiprofessional

Irwin (1970) has proposed that the first months of the felon's post-imprisonment life constitute a crucial period for this successful reintegration into the conventional world. The findings of this study support this contention. The previous section has described some of the major difficulties encountered by the respondents during the reentry period. Sometimes, the actor cannot

withstand these initial difficulties. Consequently, he adapts to life outside the prison by relying on the life-world and perspective acquired while in prison. This procedure allows the individual to evade the very real anxieties of the "homecomer."

In these cases, the respondent actually was not able to develop a strong project for "going straight;" rather, he met the anticipated disorientations of reentry by psychologically never leaving the criminal world. In doing so, the actor's investment in, and commitment to, deviance increased.

Simply stated, the contingencies that led to further criminal behavior as a career choice were largely a result of the stigmatizing reactions of others experienced by the returning ex-convict. Societal reactions initially induced imprisonment of the individual and thereby formally introduced him to a fundamentally unorthodox world-view. This unorthodox perspective further loosened his already weak bond to the conventional social order. Now, the expectations acquired through hearing about the reentry trials of others while in prison, and the perception of the stigmatizing attitudes and actions of conventional actors to the ex-convict merely added to the individual's isolation from a normal round of life. In short, the respondents stated that they were left with an increased involvement in deviance and the life-world of the criminal largely

because other alternatives were closed to them. Rather than deterring or curing these men, the formal and informal means of social control actually increased their criminality by forcing them into the life-world of the semiprofessional.

The Pull of Predictability

Rather than confront the social and personal consequences of fighting back in opposition to one's social identity as a criminal, a few of the respondents decided to take the route of least resistance by remaining in the place that society had so clearly assigned them. The life-world aligned around this identity had been previously constructed while in prison. Compared with the unknown and strange world of conventional life "on the streets," the life-world of continuation was relatively secure and organized. Thus, in effect, these respondents chose not to move outside of the life-world of the criminal, but to progress within the predictable round of life and social circles acquired in their recent pasts.

Then I lost the fear, the being afraid of doing a crime. It's just an everyday thing. You don't care about getting back into it. Just that you don't feel like going through the hassles no more. It's an easier way of life.

The stock of knowledge and recipes constructed and acquired in prison provide a stable world for the continuation of

property offenses. The individual had developed some primary group ties with like-minded associates and contacts that also made the road further into crime easier to travel than conventional alternatives. These few men experienced the forceful pull of the social group and a predictable round of life that is frequently acknowledged by the sociologist.

... the subjective meaning the group has for its members consists in their knowledge of a common situation, and with it a common system of typifications and relevancies. This situation ... forms a common relative natural conception of the world. Here the individual members are "at home," (Schutz, 1962:251).

These three respondents who adapted to reentry in this manner stated that they began to accept various forms of theft and related deviance as part of everyday life. In Lemert's (1951:97) terms, they were becoming "adjusted deviants" who were adapting to their negative social identities by rationalizations and through the solidarity and in-group cohesion of a more or less deviant social circle. These respondents related that they experienced this period of career-transformation as a process of learning to become a more committed and a more efficient theft. In short, they graduated into the career-line of the semi-professional property offender. These men altered their involvement in criminal activities.

Don Gibbons (1965:104-106) has described the common characteristics of the semiprofessional property offender (SPO).⁵ Briefly, this category of criminal behavior is similar in terms of type of offense to the NPO. However, the offenses of the SPO are more frequent and tend to be performed with less equivocation and more skill. Psychologically, the SPO:

... sees himself as an individual who has few alternatives to criminal behavior and as a victim of a corrupt society (Gibbons, 1965:104).

At this point, the respondent had become a neophyte member of the criminal subculture in his local area, and he was increasingly aware of his behavioral and emotional investments in the deviant world. The life-world of the SPO included meaning and activities that differed from both the disorganized perspective of the NPO and the conventional social order. The SPO differentially associated with other semiprofessional criminals and these affiliations provided him with ideological protections from negative societal reactions. Criminal associates also introduced the individual to skills and attitudes required of men who wish to make a living at theft.⁶ As Gibbons (1965:106) has noted:

⁵Throughout the remainder of the text, the abbreviation "SPO" is used to indicate the typical semiprofessional property offender.

⁶For the classic description of the learning of criminal behavior and deviant attitudes through differential association see Sutherland and Cressey (1966).

... semi-professionals associate differentially with other criminals One factor in this differential interaction stems from the pariah status accorded "ex-convicts" in American society. Interaction with other criminals has important consequences for the offender, for such associations provide him with a supportive social system in which shared rationalizations for crime are found and in which shared "anti-social" attitudes are communicated.

The import of differential association is evident in the remarks of the three SPO's interviewed in this research.

Come to think of it, I started running around with a crowd who were always doing a job. I learned how to do, they told me how to do it and I started from there.

I started really hanging out with friends that was doing a lot of jobs. It didn't seem wrong to me then, they were a better class of people anyhow. My kind of people.

The findings indicate that these groups were usually small and existed only temporarily. However, within them, members shared an intersubjective world characterized by an instrumentally motivated form of trust.

I found some good dudes, that I consider good people, somebody you can trust. When you are in it, you get to know people. You can take a look at him, be talking and the more they talk the more you are finding out about them. You learn to spot who can be trusted, who can't, by the way they act, the way they talk. I've found me some good partners.

The life-world of the SPO's interviewed was also marked by the approval of the use of illegal means for the acquisition of goals. The life-world of the SPO was referred to by the men themselves as "the life."

"The Life"

The respondents characterized "the life" as being organized around fast living, "kicks," the potentials of crime for both rewards and punishments, and a strong mood of personal alienation from the wider society.⁷ Theft was chosen by these men for two significant reasons. The most frequently mentioned "because motive" for the individual's increased involvement with crime was the belief that most legitimate alternatives for goal achievement were painful in that they required the respondent to contend with the stigmatizing effects of having a criminal record. These respondents believed strongly that they were doomed to failure in most conventional routes for behavior. Secondly, their crimes were purposive in that they were performed in order to acquire some form of meaningful, often pleasurable, consequence. They defined theft as a fairly reasonable gamble. In "the life," the individual gained psychological

⁷The SPO's alienation is revealed by his conception of conventional life as fundamentally corrupt ("Everyone has a racket, stealing mine"). He defines himself as a "solid character," or a "right guy." For further discussions, see Jackson (1972).

and material rewards by theft. These respondents achieved thrills, excitement, and social status among their peers. As successful thieves, they possessed self-respect and self-esteem as individuals who were skilled at theft. Status rewards and reactions upon which self-esteem could rest were sought from both peers and the conventional public.

When I got out I wanted everybody to think, "Look, he's tough." So I went right back to the same things I did before I went in the joint.

Some dudes, it make them feel superior. They like to have the money and, I guess, it's their thing to be able to get your money.

There is some real pleasure in knowing you can do something good, that not many other guys can.

Beyond the rewards of status and self-esteem, the respondents stated that they were rewarded by the intrinsic pleasures and excitement of committing a criminal act (see also Lofland, 1969:104-110). For instance, fear was defined as pleasurable. It was functional in keeping the working thief careful while he was "on the job."

I enjoy beating the cops. I felt pretty good about it. It's the best job you can have in the world as long as you don't get caught.

After a while you lose the fear, being afraid. Or it's just you become to like it. It's just an everyday thing. You can be too afraid; if I think too much about

it, it would totally mess me up. But I would always think of it, to be careful. And too, I tried not to be too careful. I guess its sort of like being a mountain climber (emphasis mine).

As an extreme example of the significance of the psychological rewards of "the life," one SPO-respondent told me that he sometimes entered dwellings for the pure enjoyment of deviating and the resulting sense of skill and power.

Sometimes I'd go into a house and wouldn't take nothing out. I just go in to be walking around in the house. Now I have gone inside a house sometime and wouldn't touch a thing, except for the front door. I'd go in it, go out of it.

There were also real economic rewards in this career-line. The "big score," or the dream of acquiring large sums of money by theft, was quite significant to these men.⁸ However, frequently, they sought more realistic sums only slightly larger than those provided by conventional occupations that were closed to them as ex-convicts. These respondents believed that theft was an easier, simpler, and less degrading means to economic ends than the conventional occupations open to them.

That life gave me plenty of money in my pockets. I just wanted to make me some money.

I just figured it was a good way to make some money and I

⁸Irwin (1970:8) has published similar research findings on this point.

really didn't figure I would get caught.

I stole for the 'bread." That's the reason I would steal, if I needed the money. So I picked places where I figure the money will be.

The psychological and economic goals that these respondents mentioned as the reason for continuing to commit crimes were reinforced within the noncriminal routines of "the life." The leisure activities of the SPO and his associates centered around seeking excitement and "kicks." The most frequently mentioned avenues for the achievement of these desires for adventure were marginally deviant. They included gambling, drinking, some use of drugs, extra-marital sex, and general "hell raising" during repeated nights "on the town." These activities reinforced the individual's desires for excitement and increased his needs for relatively large sums of money. Just living "the life" became an important reason for theft.

I got used to spending twenty-five to thirty dollars a night in night clubs because I had been out stealing it, see. And blowing it just as fast as you can get it. Well, you start going to these night clubs and pull out some paycheck, "ninety-five dollars payable to" You cash that, its gone because you pay your rent, you bought your gas for your car, you buy a little bit of groceries, you eat a good meal. Boom! You broke. And you still waiting to have that fun you want, so you rely on your old trade and you steal some money.

I got into checks, I was married and for awhile I was doing pretty good. Well, I started messing around with another woman. I got pretty involved and I needed a lot of dough.⁹

The respondents indicated that they could obtain more money from less real work through theft than through conventional forms of employment. They also perceived very little actual risk involved in theft. While aware of the legal sanctions applicable to their "trade," these men were not usually deterred by them. They reasoned that the chances of avoiding apprehension and conviction were good. Further commitment to "the life" tended to lower the deterrent power of criminal sanctions (Chambliss, 1967). Since they had already adjusted to their identities as criminals, these men had little to lose by further exclusion from the conventional world. The stigma of conviction was a relatively ineffectual factor in their deliberations and anticipations. One reason for this reaction was that the SPO's had learned to "build time" easily by organizing prison life according to the convict code and the thief's subculture (Irwin and Cressey, 1962).

When I do a crime, I know to
look for, I know the consequences
if I get caught, knowing if I
get caught I'm coming back to

⁹This excerpt indicates that, as previously noted, the marginal deviance of the activities of "the life" creates needs that may be satiable only by criminal or equally deviant means. For a related description see Jackson (1972).

prison. So really, I just exclude the fact about coming back to prison because if I do, I know what to look for. It seems to make it easier to come back because you know how to do time.

I never worried about getting caught, not in the least, these people done all to me they can. There's nothing else they can do.

For these reasons, the men came to define crime as a reasonable type of action given the limited available paths for the achievement of subjectively meaningful goals.

I can do 20 or so before I will get caught. So it becomes easier and easier. Your actual count of any crime you ever do it may be half of what you get known for. Maybe one out of ten you get caught on. And I figured out, try to figure out, the best way I could do it, get the most before I get caught. So I can come out and have all the money still. I had it planned so I knew what I was gonna do.

"The life" of increased commitment to crime was augmented by moods and beliefs constructed from real and imagined encounters with conventional others. The world of the SPO was imbued with a general mood of apathy and alienation concerning the conventional world. He protected himself from judgmental stereotypes by an attitude of fatalism concerning conventional reactions. One respondent told me, "... they all expect me to be worse, so I say "why not?" Involved in "the life," alienated

from the wider social order, and apathetic towards conventional standards, these men found no meaningful reason to abstain from stealing.

Fuck it, whatever happens just happens. I had that kind of attitude too. I just kept on doing what I was doing until I got some time. Fuck it!

If you get that old bitter attitude, well you don't give a damn, that's it. What can you do but go on stealing.?

What these findings indicate is that, as implied earlier, the perceived reactions of others had increased the individual's commitment to his criminal actions (Stebbins, 1971).¹⁰ Further, "the life" defensively protected the actor from the potential deterrence of stigmatization. Or put differently, "the life" justified his continuation in a criminal career. In the end, the actor progressed further into patterns of criminality.

The life-world of the SPO included a cognitive style that transformed the mundane environment into places riddled with openings and opportunities for crime. These men defined the world through a perspective directed toward discovering potential sites for the commission of theft. This process of interpretation was often described as primarily intuitive.

¹⁰ Thus in Merton's (1948) terminology, the conventional reactions to the individual initiate a "self-fulfilling prophecy."

I can sense it, that there's money in a house for the taking. It's just something that I've got or know about. I know if there's anything in there or not. If I do and wanna go in there, I'm gonna go into it. They way I live you really don't give a heck. You just get a feeling. I usually follow my senses.

This heightened sensitivity to the criminal aspects of the everyday world¹¹ often coincided with a respondent's conscious reformulation of his personal identity around a definition of himself as fundamentally a thief. At the completion of the graduation process, the actor had accepted the label of being a criminal.¹²

At this stage, these respondents had rejected conventional verbalizations (Cressey, 1955) and accounts and had defined themselves as thieves in a positive ideological fashion.

I began to put it in my head that I'm the best. If you're doing anything, that's the way to look at it. Think that you are the best for the job.

I guess I considered myself a thief. At first I'd feel like I was sort of borrowing it, at first. Then I had to

¹¹This is of course similar to the process by which sociologists tend to see "roles" where others merely see behaviors. Much of what is seen depends on the identity and position of the seer.

¹²As David Matza (1969:173) has observed: "... the appearance of his theft becomes reality in the profound sense of indicating or revealing his true being or identity "

turn out, I knew after a while
that I was stealing the stuff.
I won't return it no way. So
automatically I started knowing
I was a thief anyway.

These findings indicate that, as Lemert (1951:76) has stated, the "adjusted criminal" bases his actions on his personal identity as a criminal rather than around a social image of his deviance. As they did so, the SP0's in this study also rejected conventional interpretations of their behavior and redefined theft as either a common or a positive form of behavior.

I'm not completely wrong in what
I'm doing. The free man steals
at the job, businesses, steal from
their insurance. I don't feel bad
about it at all. What the hell
has society got, I mean, what is
there to conform to?

Summary

We have seen that three of the respondents in this study reacted to the reentry situation by consciously increasing their commitment to the criminal world. These men I have called semiprofessional property offenders. They define themselves as criminals and construct "the life," or a deviant social reality, that both assists and supports their criminal activities. The findings of this research agree with Clinard's (1974:326-327) analysis of the effects of labeling.

For those offenders who pursue criminal activities sporadically there is vacillation in self-conception: but for those who regularly commit offenses and who are continually isolated from law-abiding segments of society, a criminal self-conception is almost inescapable.

Contrary to the case of the simple NPO, here the effects of societal reaction were to alter the individual's personal identity by consistent labeling and a perceived exclusion from the conventional world. Differential association with criminals was a natural consequence that further induced criminal behavior. Therefore, it seems that the career transformation, or graduation, that is evident in the histories of these men is best explained by the factors of labeling and differential association.

Yet even these more committed criminal actors related that they had experienced desires to abandon their criminal careers. They were most often influenced by a revitalized fear of imprisonment and injury or merely tiring of the hectic pace of "the life." Regardless, all but one of the SPO's interviewed seriously attempted to "go straight" at least once. They seemed to do so less often and later than the NPO's interviewed. They also followed the zig-zag path between deviance and conformity typical of NPO's (Glaser, 1964:85). The next chapter will consider the respondents' experiences while attempting to exit from their careers in crime.

CHAPTER 7

"GOING STRAIGHT:" SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Introduction

This chapter describes the exiting stage of the criminal career of the typical NPO. Exiting refers to the abandonment of a subjectively recognized pattern of criminal behavior. Here, we are primarily concerned with answering two basic questions surrounding this stage in criminal careers. First, what are the contingencies that lead the NPO to attempt to disengage from deviance and crime? Second, what conditions influence the successful accomplishment of exiting by the NPO?

Traditionally, this area of analysis has been neglected by criminological theory. However, each theoretical position implies certain propositions concerning the issue of exiting. For instance, deterministic theories imply that since deviance is the result of some internalized compulsion to deviate, the offender must be resocialized in order to successfully abandon patterned criminality. More specifically, these theories propose that exiting requires that the actor first unlearn deviant values and self-conceptions and then internalize conventional

normative standards (see, for example, Cressey, 1955). On the other hand, the voluntaristic approach, by explaining crime as a process of reasonable choice, implies that exiting is likely to be the result of changing conditions external to the actor which lead to the decision to abandon criminal behaviors. For the control theorist, disengagement from a criminal career does not require resocialization or the therapeutic reconstruction of the offender's identity. Rather, it is suggested that exiting may result from the actor's acquisition of new commitments to conformity (Frazier, 1976).

The findings presented in this chapter concerning exiting from criminal careers specify the motivations and situations that affect the NPO's attempt to abandon criminal behavior. A unique finding of this research concerning the contingencies within both attempted and actual abandonment of criminal careers in that to be successful, exiting must be formally concluded through a process of social certification.

These data support the voluntaristic explanation of the exiting stage of criminal careers. As will be demonstrated, the NPO's interviewed for this study abandoned their patterned criminal behaviors for meaningful and goal-directed reasons.

Attempts at Exiting

The final stage of the deviant career cycle of the NPO is exiting, or the abandonment of a pattern of criminal behavior. As mentioned earlier, the biography of the typical NPO is often cyclical in that it runs back and forth, in and out of deviance. This chapter will focus on the contingencies that surround the stage of exiting within the career of the typical NPO.

All but one of the interviewed in this research had attempted, at least once, to disengage from criminal activity. Many had done so several times and some considered themselves to have successfully accomplished an exit from crime. Others, in fact most, were less successful. In total, at least 30 attempts at exiting were encountered in this research.

Of these 30 attempts, less than eight were considered even partially successful by the respondents and only two are clearly examples of real success in the abandonment of crime. The high frequency of these attempts at exiting is an increasingly common finding of recent criminological research. Indeed, it is no longer correct to picture criminal careers as narrow and conclusive (see, for example, Glaser, 1964; Irwin, 1970; Stebbins, 1971). Rather, most criminals seem to spiral through periods of both conformity and deviance. For example, Glaser

(1964:475) has found that " ... at least 90 percent of American prison releases seek legitimate careers for a month or so after they have been in prison." The careers of the respondents in this study reflect a similar tendency towards attempts at leaving crime. The most obvious question is: what conditions influence the result of attempted abandonment of criminal behavior?

Success in abandoning patterned criminality is here given a subjective referent; that is, successful exiting is achieved when: (1) the individual becomes relatively aware that he has disengaged from a previously patterned form of criminal activity, and (2) the individual has had that disengagement certified by conventional others.¹ Failure refers to the actor's subjective awareness that he has attempted to exit from crime, but has failed to do so. The findings of this study indicate that the contingencies that influence successes and failures at exiting by the NPO are best explained by an amalgamation of the arguments of control theory and societal reactionism.²

¹The second part of this definition of successful exiting is derived from the study's findings. It will, therefore, be more closely described later in this chapter.

²As will become clear below, here again I have found no significant support for the more deterministic forms of sociological criminology.

In particular, these data reveal that successful exiting is dependent upon the acquisition of ties to the conventional social order that in turn protect, support, and certify the NPO's exit from crime. On the other hand, failure in exiting is produced by continued labeling and the resultant isolation of the actor from the conventional world.

Motivation for Exiting

A great deal of motivation is required in order for the NPO to decide to try to abandon crime. The desire to leave a career in crime must be strong enough to consciously challenge the same difficulties and penalties that led some of the respondents to increase their commitments to deviance. The individual must be willing to confront his social identity as a criminal; he must struggle to construct a new life-world and leave the world of his recent past.

As Schutz (1962:69-72) has outlined, motivation is a two-fold concept. It refers to goals, or the end results toward which conduct is directed (or, "in-order-to motives"). It also includes "because motives," or the objectified reasons and accounts for behavioral events. A comprehension of deliberate social action is best provided through the actor's "in-order-to-motives" because they are the meaningful reasons for behavior that are present to the

acting individual in-situation.³

... the in-order-to motive refers to the attitude of the actor living in the process of his ongoing action. It is, therefore, an essential subjective category and is revealed to the observer only if he asks what meaning the actor bestows upon his action (Schutz, 1962:71).

Therefore, it follows that to consider fully the processes of successful and unsuccessful exiting one must first grasp the respondents' motivations for attempting to abandon their careers in crime. The findings of this research clearly demonstrate that the NPO is motivated to abandon his criminal career in order to avoid reincarceration and in order to regain the rewards of normality. He is pushed by the deterring threat of more prison "time" and pulled by the rewards of a normal life.

The threat of punishment. The primary motive for attempts at exiting among the men interviewed was the deterrent impact of criminal sanctions; that is, the respondents were moved by the fear of "doing more time" in prison (see also Glaser, 1964; 1973; Zimring and Hawkins, 1973). These men decided to "go straight" in order to avoid the possible consequences of future convictions.

³Lest we be confused by common grammar, Schutz (1962:70) reminds us that in-order-to motives are often described in "because phrases."

I broke down because I know
I've done time in prison be-
fore, if they catch me again
they gonna send me back because
I'm an ex-felon.

Unlike the SPO's described earlier, these men did not seem to have grown accustomed to doing time in prison; so the threat of imprisonment still had a deterrent effect on them.

The differential impact of periods of imprisonment on these two groups of respondents is best explained by the fact that those who chose to attempt exiting held some remaining stake in conformity. The respondents who attempted exiting possessed a weak but salient bond to conventional society. This bond was usually the result of the inclusion of the individual in a new family or the possession of some form of meaningful psychological attachment to a conventional significant other.

Another element that influenced attempts at exiting by these respondents was that their social identity as ex-convicts led them to anticipate frequent surveillance from the police and to expect harsh treatment if rearrested. Consequently, these individuals became more certain⁴ that if they returned to crime and theft, they

⁴ Interestingly, theoreticians of deterrence have consistently emphasized certainty as the most important element of the threat of sanctioning (see Beccaria, 1963; Tittle and Logan, 1972; Andenaes, 1966; Zimring and Hawkins, 1973). Unfortunately, I am unable to provide more information as to why some individuals defined their situation as relatively safe and others not; this should clearly be a focus of future research.

would be apprehended, convicted, and punished severely (see also Stebbins, 1971:77). As one respondent described the situation:

I just didn't wanna get no more time or anything. I seen what was gonna happen if I get caught again and I said "This ain't worth it." I just didn't wanna come back to do more time.

The fear of imprisonment also seemed to become stronger as the individual aged and began to tire of the harsh requirements of the prison world.

I realized that soon I had to start to try to get it together, because I know that I wasn't getting any younger, getting older. If I keep on, I'll be doing time for the rest of my life. I just sort of had it in my mind that I didn't want to come to the chain gang no more.

I just was tired of doing time, I just got tired of doing time in the joints.

The threat of "doing more time" was made real to the respondents by two psychological elements of the prison world. These elements were: (1) the individual's symbolic use of older inmates as a sign of his own deteriorating situation, and (2) the presence of time for reflection. In considering the first element it should be remembered that these men spent most of their leisure time within the prison as members of small cliques or primary

groups which in turn introduced them to the world-view of the convict. In these interactions, many of the respondents participated in close face-to-face relations with older, more experienced convicts. It is a commonplace characteristic of "I-thou" relationships that the participants share a reciprocity of perspectives and develop the ability for empathetic communication (Cooley, 1909; Schutz, 1962; Buber, 1970). That is, one individual symbolically "takes the role of the other" during these ongoing interactions (Mead, 1934). One member,

... participates in the conscious
 life of another self ... in a
 concrete we-relation, face to face
 with a fellow man (Schutz, 1962:25-26).

When perspectives are shared, the individual is able to "see" through the eyes of the other. Within these relationships, the respondents vicariously experienced or perceived a potential future of their own acted out by older inmates whom they knew well. This future was perceived as a constant sequence of imprisonments for larger and longer periods of time. This symbolic transcendence into the individual's own future often created a desire to alter his behavior in order to avoid the future symbolized by the actor's associates in prison.

In the joint, you get a chance
 to meet different people. And
 in a lot of people you see your-
 self, in a lot of other people.
 There's a lot of things you can
 learn from friends and stuff.

My point of view changed about things, you don't want to end up like some of these old timers, been cons all their life.

They showed me what would happen if I didn't straighten out, you see what you will miss. I thought about it, "Wow, I could spend the rest of my life in prison if I don't straighten up. There's some guys here that do life on the installment plan and I could be one of them. Not me, this is my last time."

Secondly, the respondents considered the penalizing impact of imprisonment as they reflected on their biographies while they were in prison.⁵ As convicts, they spend many hours lying on their bunks and reflectively considering the past and the future. They symbolically projected themselves into several anticipated future life-contexts. For many of them, one very probable future led them to a reconsideration of crime as a recurrent form of behavior. As a result of these reflections and projections, most of the respondents at one time or another decided to alter their probable futures by choosing a more conventional style of behavior.

After doing so, many of the respondents prepared for this plan of action by "gleaning" (Irwin, 1970:76-79) while incarcerated. In "gleaning," the individual tries

⁵Perhaps some aspects of the Quaker notion of "meditation" is not as outmoded as many contemporary criminologists have concluded.

to improve his chances for conventional success by learning a trade, educating himself, or otherwise bettering his condition. As one respondent stated:

I thought about it and well,
I wanna make a little some-
thing of my life anyhow. I
set goals and one was to learn
a trade.

The pull of normality. An additional category of motives for the decision to "go straight" centered around the respondent's subjective wish to lead a normal life. Many of these men desired to abandon crime in order to escape the hassles and disorientations of their unorthodox style of living. They had also become envious of conventional comforts and wished to "settle down"⁶ into a slower paced existence. Gradually, they began to define the security and anonymity of conventional life as highly desirable.

You stop when you get ready,
just like I say, you rehabilitates
yourself. You think about what it
used to be, what you are used to,
You don't forget what it was like,
you don't forget the way you was
living out there in the world.
An naturally you gonna like that
world better than this inside here.

I just decided I wanted to be
like any other person, settle

⁶As we will see shortly, "settling down" is also a significant factor in the success of the NPO's exiting project.

down, have me an old lady, a place to stay at, a good job. I was just tired of it. I really wanted a chance to live a normal, straight life (emphasis mine).

The findings further imply that this desire to "settle down" was often a result of the maturation of the individual; as he aged, he began to tire of the rapid pace and the frequent "troubles" of continued criminal activities. He tired of "being on the run." Having some remaining interest in conformity, at least in the form of these new or renewed desires for a normal life, the individual often sees exiting as a release from a troublesome past as well as an unrewarding future.

The way I look at it right now, just like if you get tired of running, it gets old. I really don't wanna go back to it. I look at it this way, I've had enough of it. I'm fed up with it.

I just didn't wanna, didn't feel like going through the hassles no more. I just, its like sort of growing out of things. I just growed out of it. The life don't appeal to me as much as it did before.

Overview. All attempts at exiting must include the formation of intention. Exiting requires a strong, non-deceptive, and meaningful decision by the NPO to abandon his criminal behavior. Without this initial intention, the actor's own defeatism and desparation combined with the

perceived reactions of conventional others to his initial reentry movements often result in the creation of a project that includes an increased commitment to deviance. In other words, the individual never truly begins the exiting journey:

Most guys plan to go straight, or they say they do, but somehow they just don't grasp it. They promise themselves, they promise their family and the officials. They got to realize its now or never.

The system can't do it, man has to make up his own mind, decide to do right. If they don't have it in their mind to do right before they hit the streets, they gonna get another case.

The findings of this research demonstrate that the intention to abandon crime is a result of the deterrent force of the imprisonment and the NPO's desire to "settle down." The choice of an action project that includes exiting is only the first step in the process of "going straight." Importantly, the project of the actor must not be self-deceptive; that is, the intention must be honest. This initial step can be made only by the individual. In this case, as the respondents themselves clearly realized, the individual rehabilitates himself.⁷ The actor must

⁷As Schutz (1962:84) has stated, "Projecting, however, is of my own making and in this sense within my control."

engage himself in an existential leap of faith in order to attempt exiting.

Majority of men they be saying they gonna get out, get a job, go straight. They don't really intend to though. You gotta impress yourself, not the other man, that you gonna do right. You got to be sincere with yourself.

Failure at Exiting

Failure at exiting has been defined as occurring when the individual becomes aware that his project to abandon patterned criminal behavior has been unsuccessful. Assuming the existence of intent, failure was most often contingent upon the inability of the respondent to feel accepted within conventional social circles. This inability was due largely to the effects of labeling and stigmatization. Consequently, unrestrained by and isolated from any meaningful ties to conventionality, it was all too easy for the NPO to slip into his "old habits."

The implementation of exiting is an extremely difficult task. The findings to be presented here support Irwin's (1970:204) description emphasizing that the ex-convict must:

... travel the difficult route away from prison without guidance or assistance; in fact, with considerable hindrance

The difficulties of the initial stages of reentry were described in Chapter 6. These difficulties were also part of the NPO's exiting project. They involve wrestling with early insecurities, overcoming personal alienation, and denying negative expectations. To do so, the individual must be able to rely on a revitalized sense of self as a normal actor. In short, the actor must achieve the natural attitude of everyday life in the conventional world. To accomplish this change of perspective, the respondents had to reacquaint themselves with much of what conventional actors simply take for granted.

In addition, the ex-convict had to deal with his belief that everyone--including himself--was anticipating his failure. These aspects of the respondents' first several months on the "outside" made the conventional reality that most people accept so comfortably an insecure world for the respondents' attempted solidification of their disorganized identities. The initially disruptive nature of the respondents' entry into conventional circles often shook the foundations of their projects for the abandonment of crime. The men often began to doubt even themselves.

The social and psychological difficulties within the early stages of exiting were experienced by all the respondents, both those who succeeded and those who did not. However, problems were more uncompromising for some

of the respondents due to the effective and isolating impact of perceived societal reactions. Those who failed chose to face these exigencies by returning to the security provided by "old habits" and the familiar world of the convict.

Failure and social isolation. The isolation of those who failed was a result of the labeling process. These respondents felt that they were excluded from normal opportunities within social, economic, and legal circles of action. Socially, the stigma of a criminal record prevented the forming of interpersonal relationships. Thus by depriving these men of opportunities for a normal social life, labeling was perceived as driving them away from many conventional paths of action. Often these excluding reactions from others were communicated to the respondents by an overly long and objectifying "stare." Due to this "look," conventional others were defined as labeling these men as less than normal, and criminal.⁸ Extraordinarily long and intense glances at the individual deprived him of normal degrees of "civil inattention" (Goffman, 1963b). Such looks were intensely felt by the respondents and were defined as indicating continued rejection by conventional actors. These men felt that conventional others continued to see them as pervasively different and essentially deviant.

⁸The stigma of being different is often applied to individuals through degrading "looks." Thus, the already discomforting effects of the stare (Sartre, 1953) are doubly important and discomforting for the respondents.

They look at you like you
ain't no good and you are
like shit. Treat you like
you are worser than you are.

I tried, but they didn't
let me change my ways.
People on the street treat
you like you was low-down.
Condemn you right off.⁹

The social identity as an outcast and a criminal was most directly experienced by the respondents within emerging interpersonal relationships. When trying to establish normal heterosexual relations, the respondents often underwent extremely degrading reactions from conventional individuals. Generally, it was not those with whom the emerging relationship was directly established who labeled the individual; rather, the labeling was performed by once-removed friends of a friend. These individuals often warned new friends about the contaminating ramifications of continued interactions with a known criminal. Consequently, it became clear to the ex-convict that his status as a deviant was still the major identifying social position that he possessed.

The destructive impact of perceived interpersonal labeling was a consistent factor in the failure of the respondents. It was continually mentioned as a major hurdle

⁹Similar findings have been published by Stebbins (1971: 127): "Curiosity and recognition stares at the nonprofessional criminal by nondeviant members of the community are odious to him."

in the attempt to enter into normal social relations with conventional males and, especially, females. The following two excerpts illustrate this situation:

My brother was dating this girl and he wasn't, he had a perfect record, nothing wrong so she dated him. And I went up and got a date and then, "I don't want no ex-con going with my daughter." We still went together though, without her parents knowing it ... but she acted like her daughter was so high and mighty. She was lower than anyone else could be. Only thing she was doing was condemning before you even judge.

This girl I was going out with. I liked the girl a lot, I wanted to marry her. I bought her a bracelet for Christmas. Her mother asked her where she got it and she told her me. "Well, you shouldn't take anything from him, he isn't nothing but a goddamn thief." This lady, she's supposed to be good people. I wouldn't put no shit like that on anybody. I never stole anything from this lady, never done anything to her. I never done anything but show her respect, and still she say that.

This inability to transcend past histories was also, although less often, evident in the respondents' attempts to establish male friendships.

I had a lot of friends, I thought were friends, but who turned out not to be friends. If they knew my record, they didn't stick by me.

The stigma of being a known criminal, like other deviant social identities (Goffman, 1963a:73-91), can be partially avoided by "passing."¹⁰ However, the data indicate that the use of this technique of impression-management brings the actor great anxiety concerning matters such as potential discovery of one's stigmatized status by conventional others. The new meaning-world remains uncomfortable and the individual is overly self-conscious (Matza, 1969: 150-155). The respondents who tried to pass soon came to realize that they still had not achieved the social position of the conventional actor.

Those fellows I could hang with now, I finally stopped associating with them. It was not a thing where I thought they were better than me, just I knew the position I was in, they didn't.

Now, I kind of looked at people at a different angle, "Do you know or don't you?" It was kind of touch and go in certain ways, it was really uncomfortable.

Thus, even in passing, the label remained a destructive element by forcing the actor into a double life that was anything but conventional.

The social effects of labeling denied these men the acquisition of strong interpersonal relations with

¹⁰Briefly defined, "passing" refers to attempts by the deviant to conceal the facts of his social identity from some groups of conventional others (Goffman, 1963a).

conventional others. Without the security of the emotional supports normally provided through ties with others, the respondents often experienced the conventional world as anxiety-ridden and uninviting (see also Matza, 1969:151). For instance, even the actions of agencies designed to aid the returning felon were perceived as stigmatizing. The respondents defined these offers of aid and assistance as an indication that their social identities were discredited and different from those of other, more normal individuals.

Most of these people knew I was an ex-convict, some of them tried to, every way they could, help me. I didn't feel accepted. I wouldn't accept the help that was offered me because I thought it was an offer, just for the sake of somebody saying, "Look what I did, pin a ribbon on my chest." The people didn't really care about me or even like me.

The most destructive effects of the actor's criminal social identity were on his attempts at resuming a conventional economic life. The respondents wanted "good jobs;" that is, ones that met certain subjectively meaningful standards of prestige and income.

A good job is not making no 50 to 100 dollars a week. A job making 150 and 200 dollars a week. A trade that you don't mind doing.

Often these types of employment were not open to the respondents due mainly to their stigmatized social identity. Irwin (1970) and others (Glaser, 1964; Stebbins, 1971) have

also stressed the significance of employment in postrelease adjustment.

In most conventional schemes of doing good, a "good" job is an absolute necessity It is still fairly accurate to say that jobs with large private corporations and jobs with government agencies are almost closed to the ex-convict. These classes of jobs constitute the great majority of "good" jobs (Irwin, 1970:135-136).¹¹

Here again, the respondents felt forced to enter the anxious circumstances of passing or either be severely disappointed in their occupational aspirations. Those who chose to conceal their criminal record from employers had to confront the ever-present threat of sudden exposure and consequent loss of their jobs:

I might work maybe a short time, finally somebody find out I was a con, that I was arrested. It'd get around the factory and I'd either quit or get fired. See you can only keep a record quiet so long.

If you register it, they they're not going to hire you. If you don't register it they're going to fire you when they find out. There ain't no way to get by it.

If the respondent acknowledged his criminal past, he was often unable to find suitable employment. In fact, the

¹¹To this listing of Irwin's the respondents also indicated that self-employment was considered a "good job."

factor mentioned most often as a major part of the failure of an exiting project was the respondent's inability to secure a "good job."

I went to the employment center to get a job. At the first one, clothes salesman, I rapped to the dude and he says, "Fill out the application, and I'll show you around." I got to the section on being busted and I figured I'll tell the truth, instead of him finding out later. Maybe they'll have a little more faith in me. Forget it! Same thing happened everywhere. Bullshit! Just because I been busted, they can go to hell.

The respondents indicated that, in effect, the occupational opportunities of the known criminal are limited to low-paying and personally demeaning jobs. Obviously, these positions do not fulfill the requirements of the exiting project in terms of income and prestige, and they are totally unacceptable as long-term occupational careers.¹² Lacking emotional resources in the conventional world, the actor's inability to locate acceptable economic rewards may defeat his project to abandon crime.

Finally, the labeling process continued to be implemented by the agents of the criminal justice community. The respondents' social identities and their criminal records destroy their anonymity with the police. They felt that

¹²Additional pressure, both economic and psychological, is applied by the NPO's catch-up aspirations. He may hold higher goals at his release than he did before he was incarcerated.

they were formally defined as persons not to be trusted, and the police were perceived as being continually suspicious of them. They felt that they were treated as people from whom the policeman could reasonably expect criminal behavior. In other words, they felt known to the police as criminals. Consequently, the abnormal tension of their presence in the conventional world was made even more pervasive, and the respondents became increasingly insecure. They stated that they were abnormally apprehensive around the police and became less sure of their ability to be successfully conventional. These men were clearly aware of their vulnerability to rearrest by the police because of their past criminal records.

All the cops do is aggravate you,
because they want you to do some-
thing so they can jump on you.
It's ridiculous.

Even if it try, automatically,
I know they gonna bust me, just
by my past record.

The individual reacted to the situation produced by these factors by becoming less committed to the exiting project, and his anxiety over his reentry into the conventional world was increased (Stebbins, 1971:150).

The respondents felt that others defined them as pervasively deviant and that this definition was augmented and sometimes initiated by the perceived actions of the police. Either by reconviction, or by merely announcing

their pasts, the police threatened to destroy the respondent's projects.

You try to straighten out, go for maybe a year. Then something happens around you, the law knows or finds out you're a convicted felon and go for you. They bring up your record, past, and people start learning about you again. Everywhere you go, you lose.

Once they find out you got a record, they'll get you. You never stop being a convict.

The use of the actor's identity as criminal as a basis for police investigation and patrol work functioned to deny the individual normal relations with the legal segments of the conventional world.

Overview. The ex-convict NPO is socially, economically, and officially handicapped by the presence of the label of being a criminal. Because of his past record of offenses, the NPO has great difficulty in escaping his social identity as a known criminal. Although he may try to pass, or conceal this social definition of himself from new acquaintances, such action is merely a tentative solution. In passing, the normal world remains anxious and insecure for the NPO. Further, passing requires that the actor subjectively accept the label as a criminal and then deny that portion of his self. He passes as normal, but he is subjectively aware that passing is not itself normal. He feels as if he has secretly crept into conventional

circles and begins to define himself as an unexposed deviant.

The real effect of the perceived continued labeling of the NPO is to defeat his project of exiting from crime. In fact, as shown in the previous chapter, it often results in an increased involvement in a criminal career. At the least, the NPO feels excluded from conventional groups and normal paths of action. Formally and informally rejected by others, and increasingly uncertain of himself, the NPO is ill-prepared to survive the initial disappointments that arise from his project. He fails to abandon crime, and he constructs an account for his failure around the realization that the conventional world has denied him any real opportunity for exiting.

They were always pushing me to go back. I didn't get any credit for trying.

I tried to go straight, the people didn't give me half a chance and if they are not willing to go half-way there's no need of me trying. If they are not willing, hell with it all.

The nonacceptance received from conventional others is perceived to be based on the NPO's past biography. The perceived reactions of others isolate him from a supporting bond to normal rounds of life that could provide resources for the easing of this period of career transition. Alone, the NPO remains unorthodox. He does not acquire strong

ties to conventional beliefs or activities. He feels no stake in conformity; consequently, the NPO has no meaningful reason to strive to be defined and accepted as normal and noncriminal. Failure becomes the most probable result of the exiting project.

I hadn't really got anything left to do out there. My wife left, my kids were in foster homes, and I wasn't getting nowhere. To me, I didn't know what I was trying to go back to.

Finally, the project collapses,¹³ and NPO turns to the relative security of his old world as a means for re-ordering his place in social reality. Within this perspective, the individual knows what things mean and where they are. He knows how to behave and what can be expected as a consequence of his behavior. Further here the NPO has old contacts to rely on for assistance. Although unorthodox, this social reality is ordered and comfortably predictable.

My time come, I went back where it was easy, old ideas and habits. I went home. First job I was a little nervous, I knew I could do it, then I just kept on it.

I had a record and its hard getting started and settled down couldn't get no honest job so I went right

¹³These findings are strongly supportive of the theoretical work of Matza (1969:159).

back to the same old deal, back to burglary again.

I lost that job, I had to go back to my own trade, the one that I know best of all. I just went back to my own trade where I knew what I was doing.

Success in Exiting

Earlier, I defined successful exiting as the abandonment of a pattern of criminal behavior for a subjectively significant period of time. The data indicate that the factors which were most influential in successful exiting include social, psychological, and economic variables. Most of these conditions of success are simple parallels to the conditions that were not achieved by those respondents who failed in their exiting projects. They generally are indicative of the acquisition of a bond to the conventional social order. That is, the successful project includes the development of attachments, commitments, involvements, and to a lesser degree, beliefs that tie the individual to conformity and provide him with meaningful reasons not to deviate.

Although these elements of the controlling bond objectively may not arrest all the stigmatizing effects of having a criminal social identity, they do provide the NPO with the resources needed to maintain a stable sense of personal normality. The NPO's developing bond to society protects him from the effects of labeling by

supplying him with support for the construction of a conventional life-world.¹⁴ In other words, the resource and restraining qualities of conventional attachments may protect the actor from the deviance-producing effects of negative societal reactions by providing some support for his exiting project.

Acquisition of the bond. The data indicate that successful exits involved the practical recognition of the irreversibility of time, and consequently a personal decision by the actor to "start anew." Success in exiting seems to have resulted from projects that provided pragmatic direction for the intentions of the respondents. That is, the project of action of the successful individual was more limited and more realistic than that of individuals who failed at exiting. It gave practical direction to the energies of the individual. In particular, successful exiting was most often the result of a project that avoided the augmentation of the respondent's desire to catch-up with lost time. These men did not concern themselves with revenge, but rather they planned not to use their prison experiences as a constant reference point during the trials of reentry.

¹⁴For a similar form of control theory that stresses the importance of positive self-concepts in protecting the actor from pressures to deviate, see Reckless (1964).

You can't go back. You got to start at the beginning. And this is what I think happened to me, I realized, that its now that you have to do it (emphasis mine).

You can't start over from where you left five years ago, you gotta go out there, make a new life for yourself.

The success of a project that planned to "start anew" was greatly contingent upon the early acquisition of some type of stake in conformity. Most often this early investment in being conventional was actualized when, and if, the respondent obtained a "good job." Again it is important to note the adjective "good." A commitment to conventional action did not result from the acquisition of any and all forms of employment. In fact, demeaning and low-paying work was usually defined as stigmatizing by the respondents. They desired a position that was subjectively enjoyable, economically rewarding, and indicative of some career-line potential. For many of the respondents, the operationalization of these job aspirations was tied to a trade learned while incarcerated.¹⁵

I took up butchering in prison, got out on parole and got that particular job. Had money, a car, I was getting along pretty good.

¹⁵Both Glaser (1964) and Stebbins (1971) have also found that vocational goals and vocational skills are important for the ex-convicts postrelease adjustment.

The realization of a "good job" provided these men with important economic and social resources. It also provided them with a basis for the construction of a social identity as normal and noncriminal. A job is a behavioral, psychological, and economic investment in conformity. Through his job, an individual becomes instrumentally committed to conventional lines of activity (Toby, 1957; Hirschi, 1969). The restraining force of conventional work was often mentioned by the respondents.

I was working, leading a good life. There was no reason for me to steal (emphasis mine).

The economic and social resources gained through meaningful conventional employment also protected the respondents from complete collapse in the face of the frustration and disappointments inherent in the reentry situation. In times of difficulty, they had a source of perceived support within the conventional world to which they could turn. With the job, the individual had acquired an instrumental resource for use in overcoming the trials that arose from his project to enter a new social world.

My behavior got much better then, I felt like I had something to look forward to because of my job. Had some real responsibility and some money for myself and my family.

Equally significant was the job's position as a potential loss if the respondent returned to crime. In other words, it was a rational investment in conformity.

The successfully exiting respondents most often were able to form social relationships with conventional others. Like a "good job," strong primary group relations with others who espoused conventional ideals was a fundamental part of the emerging bond to the social order.

. . .the bond of affection for conventional persons is a major deterrent to crime. The stronger this bond, the more likely the person is to take it into account when and if he contemplates a criminal act (Hirschi, 1969:83).

The emotionally attached ex-convict developed expressive investments in the conventional world as he increased his involvement in normal social relationships. The formation of these relationships was referred to by the respondents as "settling down." "Settling down" usually involved the acquisition, or reacquisition, of a wife, other family ties, and peer relationships with conventional others. The family, as the major source of these attachments, became a secure place for the respondent within the conventional world. As with the more instrumental bond of work, these expressive ties provided the respondents with both a resource for use when confronting problems and a stake in conformity that they expected to lose if they returned to crime.

The most frequent mentioned attachment in the exiting projects that were successful was the creation of a new family network. The family became a place within the

conventional world from which the individual felt he could draw understanding and meaningful support throughout his exiting project. By "settling down" within this intimate group, the respondents began to successfully reorient themselves to everyday life. The family seemed to regenerate their determination to abandon criminal activities. It also became a meaningful reason to "stay clean." The respondents who "settled down" acquired both a sense of belonging and emotional support for their attempts at exiting.

It's less hassle with people that's got relatives out there. They got relatives and a place to stay.¹⁶

If he has a strong family it give a person the opportunity to get out and cope with a lot of things out there, that if he were along, he wouldn't know how to cope with.

The presence of the family and other conventional affiliations and investments also provided the respondents with long-term conventional goals and responsibilities. The actor began to be constrained by his emotional ties to conventional others. These attachments were defined by the men as subjectively rewarding, and they did not want to lose these relationships by returning to prison.

Being with my wife and son, doing the things that normal people do, actually, seriously, has (sic)

¹⁶The "place" provided by the family is both material and psychological.

been the most important months in my life. I did, learned what to do, I did it as anybody else does. I got a job, I settled down, went to work. I played with my kid.

Within these relationships, the respondents felt they had someone to care about and someone who cared for them.

Symbolically, this feeling indicated the "psychological presence" of conventional others in the deliberations of the actor (Hirschi, 1969). Thus "settling down" dissuaded the respondents from the choice of criminal actions.

I think that my wife had a lot to do with it, because I never cared for a person before, like I cared for her. I didn't want to lose her respect for me.

If you can get a good job, good woman to care about. Usually a man from prison, he don't have nobody for to care about him, or no one to care for, unless he gets somebody he ain't got nothing to lose no way.

Nonfamilial conventional associates also assisted in successful exiting and presented the respondents with additional resources and secondary investments in remaining noncriminal. The social environment created by these conventional attachments protected the respondents from the stigma of their criminal records by indirectly removing them from interpersonal labeling. Moreover, if the actor began to feel accepted within some normal social circles,

the determination to exit from a criminal career was strengthened, as was his personal identity as a non-criminal.¹⁷

Everytime I got involved with these people, man, I felt like I was accepted. I felt like they were really friends. Any my attitudes continued to change, gradually.

The restraining factors of family, friends, homes, and jobs, all assisted the exiting projects of these men.

I decided before I even hit the street to go straight. And I mingled away from the crowd, changed my ways, got a job, a family. Things like that.

They were the conventional investments and goals that led the respondents to "stay clean." The actor's controlling bond to the conventional moral order was tied by meaningful elements that included these emotional attachments and instrumental commitments. Conformity, like deviance, was chosen reasonably. The bond also created a protective shield against the destructive force of the labeling experienced during exiting projects. Further, it was a source of social and emotional support for the conquering of disappointments. Finally, the bond was defined as a source of goals and "in-order-to motives" that lie within the conventional world. For the respondents who were successful,

¹⁷ Interestingly, here we can see that the self-fulfilling prophecy can be positive in its effects. That is, acceptance increases the NPO's determination to further distance himself from his criminal past.

these ties were the major reason that they were able to "go straight."

You feel like you have something to look forward to because of your job or your family. You have some responsibility. Mainly, that's it.

An additional element in all the cases of successful exiting encountered in the study was simply "good luck."¹⁸ Chance conditions and events did affect the gradual transition from unorthodoxy to conventionality. To be successful, at least a belief in the probability of positive happenstance seemed to be necessary.

The Process of Certification. The completion of a successful exiting project required a purely formal symbolic component. This final contingency was required in order for the respondent to fully achieve a social identity as a normal actor. It is called certification and, to my knowledge, it has not been specifically mentioned in previous studies.¹⁹ The process of social certification is essentially a verification of the individual's "reform." Some recognized member(s) of the conventional community must publicly announce and certify that the ex-convict has changed and

¹⁸Luck, here, refers to small chance happenings that may ease the transition into conventional life. It includes such elements as a tolerant parole officer (see, for example, Irwin, 1970:149-174) and an understanding employer.

¹⁹Lofland (1969) discusses a notion similar to this one, but he implies that it is the individual's personal identity that changes in the "assumption of normal identity."

that he is now to be considered a normal being. It is interesting to note that, paradoxically, the single element that the NPO never defined as needing alteration--his identity--is that which must be publicly announced as having changed.

The data show that the process of certification can be performed by official agencies or by conventional others. It cannot be done by the actor himself. Certification must be performed by others in order that it not be seen as deceptive. Deviance is considered to be persistent; therefore, proof of nondeviance must come from another person.

In order to impress the conventional public with their success at exiting and achieve certification, the respondents employed some adept forms of impression-management. For although they believed that the project of exiting is conceived and achieved by the individual, they were well aware that it must be verified through the testimony of others. The presence of agencies and environments specially designed to indicate the "reform" of deviants provided the respondents with legitimate means of verifying their change to general publics (Lofland, 1969: 212-217, 239-242). Unlike vocational training, which most respondents believed could actually improve one's chances for conventional success, the identity-programs of social service agencies were used by the respondents as symbolic means of self-presentation.

For some, religion became a route to the transformation of their social identity.

I had to find someone to change me, I started to go to church and it made me look good. I'm not really religious, but I was gonna try it out.

Certification was achieved more often through the respondents' consistent appearance within normal surroundings. In the public eye, it seems that criminal places and criminal associates lead to the imputation of criminality, and normal places and normal associates indicate a normal being.

I just tried not to hang around bad crowds that I thought could get me into something. I was straight for three years. My job had one thing to do with it, and the people that I hung around with, that helped. People didn't look at me so hard (emphasis mine).

Having a family often aided the men by certifying that they were fundamentally conventional.²⁰

Specially if you been in prison it helps society stop looking down on you so hard to be in a family. If you married and got kids and new friends, they say, "Well, he's married and settled down: he's been rehabilitated, he not wild no more."

²⁰ Obviously any of these sources of certification can be used by the committed criminal to "cover" his deviations from the eyes of the law. This establishment of a "front" by the felon is a common practice of professional thieves (see Sutherland, 1937).

In any of these ways, successful exit from a criminal career can be certified by other, more conventional, actors and groups.

Overview. As a summary of these findings concerning successful exiting projects, it can be stated that success revolves around the establishment of a bond to the conventional world (see also Lofland, 1969:292-293). The subjective penalties of deviations were gradually increased as the actor acquired conventional associates, loved ones, and employment. In other words, the bond provided the individual with a rational reason to "go straight." Lofland (1969:293) has theorized in a manner that is supported by the findings of this research. He has written that society creates conformity by:

. . .burdening them (people) with prestige, possessions, and power to which they become attached and which give them something to lose if they engage in significant deviance. It is the compromising entanglements of prestige, possessions, and power that serve to keep people more or less in line.

The bond to the conventional social order that results from personal attachments and behavioral investments protects the NPO from deviance-producing societal reactions to his criminal record. It allows him to transcend his past and construct a conventional future. The social bond is both a restraining force and a protective resource for the exiting NPO. If his intentions are supplemented by these ties and

his early success is certified by conventional others, he may be able to successfully disengage himself from criminal behavior.

Summary

These data support the theoretical arguments of control theory and societal reactionism concerning exiting from a criminal career. The resocialization position of the deterministic criminologist is not upheld by these findings. Motivation for exiting is best described by the deterrence argument in that it is the threat of "doing more time" that most regularly leads to attempts at abandoning criminal behavior by the typical NPO. Societal reaction theory correctly stresses the force of stigma and labeling as causes of failures in these attempts. A criminal record continues to isolate the ex-convict from normality, thus blocking the construction of a bond to the conventional social order. More dramatically, labeling may lead the NPO to increase his involvement in crime.

On the other hand, the NPO who is able to find a "good job," to be accepted into relationships with normal others, to experience continued family support, and thus to acquire attachments, investments, and commitments in the conventional world, may succeed in his project of action. The establishment of the social bond to the moral order of society aids the NPO's return to normality in three general

ways. First, it provides reasons and resources for persisting in one's project. Secondly, the bond may protect the individual from the negative effects of labeling. And finally, it certifies that an exit has taken place. Through the establishment of the social bond and certification by conventional others, the NPO is considered to be a normal being.

CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The goals of this study were both descriptive and theoretical. First, the study provided a phenomenological description of the criminal career of the typical nonprofessional property offender. Secondly, this description was used to explore the relative worth of two conflicting schools of thought--determinism and voluntarism--in current criminological theory. A third concern of the research was to examine exiting as a stage in the criminal career of the NPO.

The data for this study were collected through unstructured interviews with 20 prison inmates. These respondents who participated in the study were all non-professional property offenders. Basically, the interviews provided a limited or topical life-history of each respondent. During the interviewing, extra emphasis was placed on the exiting stage of the respondents' criminal careers.

The interviews were completely tape-recorded and then were transcribed for further analysis according to the techniques of phenomenological sociology. These

techniques reduced the data to a phenomenologically constructed description of the criminal career of the typical NPO. This typification includes the primary intersubjective contingencies that influence the development of the offenders' careers in crime. The phenomenologically constructed typification of careers in nonprofessional property crime was used to evaluate the relative utility of the explanations offered by deterministic and voluntaristic theories of criminal behavior.

Descriptive Findings

The reporting of the findings of this study is organized around the analytical stages of a deviant career adapted from Frazier (1973). Within each stage there occurs an important transition in the life-world of the actor which any full theory of crime must be able to explain. A useful theory in criminology should be able to identify the significant contingencies that affect the development of the career of the criminal offender. The descriptive findings that resulted from this research concerning the criminal career of the NPO will be reviewed below. They are also presented schematically in Figure 1 on page 212.

Entry

The primary contingencies of entry for the men interviewed were: (1) the absence of a strong bond to the

conventional social order, and (2) the presence of meaningful reasons for engaging in crime.

As a youth, the typical NPO is not meaningfully tied to the conventional world. He is not strongly attached or committed to conventional others or goals such as those usually provided through family, school, and other conventional contexts. Unrestrained by social bonds, the NPO entered a life-world characterized by his freedom from ties to any set of normative standards. Within this world of "drift," the respondents defined crime as available and a reasonable route for the achievement of meaningful goals such as economic rewards, adventure, and self-esteem. With no stake, or only weak stakes, in conformity, criminal behavior became a reasonable form of action for the NPO. In a context augmented by similarly situated others and peers, crime became justifiable and probable for the respondents.

At the entry stage, the typical NPO inhabits a life-world that contains few meaningful reasons not to commit a crime. The actor possesses no strong controlling relations with conventional significant others. Conventional circles were relatively meaningless as compared to some unconventional alternatives. At entry, the typical NPO did not consider himself to be a criminal. He was merely "one who tended to get into trouble now and then."

Continuation

The patterning of criminal behaviors of a given type forms the second stage of career development. For the respondents continuation was contingent upon the enduring presence of the factors of entry, and the negative effects of being labeled a criminal.

Continuation was produced by the social, rather than the psychological, effects of labeling. The situation of imprisonment highlights the isolating and deviance-producing effects of negative societal reactions. Perceptions of prison and labeling as excluding forces induce the actor to avoid conventional groups and create an awareness of his social identity as a criminal.

Typically, the NPO struggles to repudiate the label attached to him through incarceration and other forms of negative societal reaction. His life-world is characterized by the insecurity and disorganization created by the split between his social and his personal identity. The respondents described the prison world as confused, insecure, and demeaning. In prison and during continuation, the typical NPO clearly recognizes the unorthodoxy of his life-world and his self. In order to make the prison experience more comfortable, the NPO may use the intersubjective order of the convict world view to adapt to his social situation. The most significant effect of labeling for the respondents was that their perception of it

operated to further exclude them from the conventional world. The actor's personal identity as normal is thereby weakened and he is pulled farther into the world of crime. Some respondents reacted to this situation by joining other inmates in a marginally deviate associational network.

Continuation in the careers of the men interviewed was not the result of internalized roles and criminal self-conceptions. Rather, it was the result of the perceived exclusion and stigmatization which came with their official designation as a criminal. Feeling isolated from, and rejected by, conventional society, the NPO's life-world came to be confused and disorganized. Within this context, criminal acts were easily justified and defined as rewarding. At the same time, the NPO felt that conventional alternatives were likely to be penalizing and unrewarding.

Graduation

An additional finding of this study is that some NPO's leave their specific career-lines by increasing their involvement in criminal activities. This process is referred to as graduation. That is, the NPO advances further into crime by becoming a semiprofessional property offender. The process of graduation was shown to be most contingent upon the mood and expectations of the actor, the perception of continued labeling, and the initial strangeness of the conventional world. These respondents adjusted to their anticipations of, and experiences with, these factors by

deciding not to leave the subjective context of imprisonment and continuation. They choose to enter "the life" of semiprofessional theft. Criminal activity was then pursued by these actors in order to acquire the tangible and psychic rewards of "the life."

Exiting

The abandonment of criminal behavior is the final stage in the career of the NPO. Here the issues are two: (1) what contingencies influence attempts at exiting from a criminal career, and (2) what contingencies condition the outcome of these attempts.

The most significant motive behind the formulation of the intention to abandon crime for the respondents in this study was the threat of "doing more time." Exiting was planned in order to avoid future convictions and incarcerations. It was typically the result of a reasonable choice made by the actor.

Upon reentering the conventional world, the NPO tried to construct a conventional life-world around his personal identity as normal. He formulated a project of action that would lead to successful exiting. Three factors emerged from the interviews that influenced the success of exiting projects: (1) the strength and direction of the NPO's intent, (2) the acquisition of a stake in conformity, and (3) the related possession of emotional

and instrumental resources for the defense of oneself against the isolating effects of continued labeling. For example, if a "good job" was found, if the individual received social support for his project from family and other conventional actors, if he could present a formal certification of his new status and social identity, and if his intent remained strong, success was probable for the NPO attempting to exit. On the other hand, if these factors were not present in the NPO's situation and experience, the isolating effects of perceiving negative reactions from others defeated their exiting projects.

Theoretical Findings

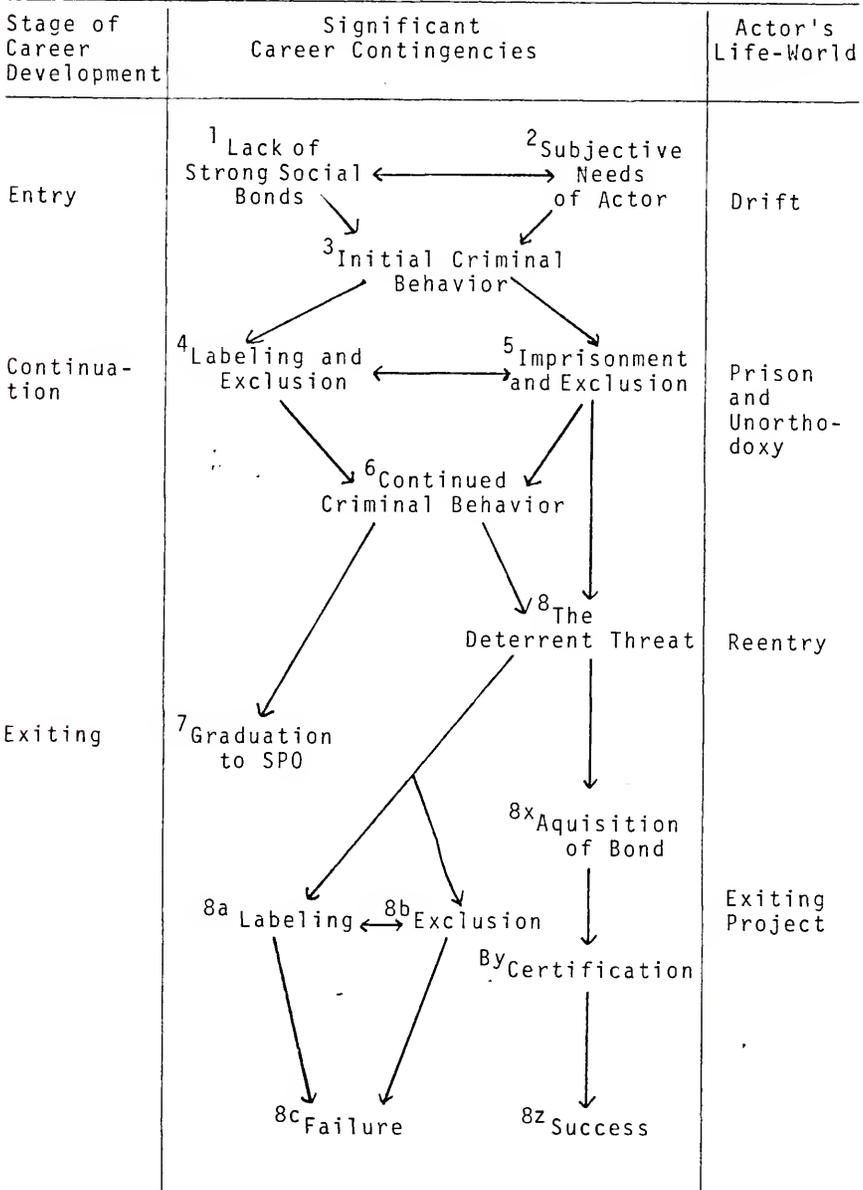
Within sociological research, the evidence produced by phenomenological analysis is an excellent resource for the performance of empirical comparisons of alternative theoretical approaches. Phenomenological descriptions and typifications should be in line with formal theoretical explanations. As Weber (1947) argued, adequate explanation requires both a comprehension of the meaning of action and an ability to specify key relationships. Phenomenological data are quite suitable for the determination of the degree of understanding and explanatory power contained in theoretical approaches.

Entry, Continuation and Graduation

Deterministic criminology explains the initial emergence and recurrent performance of criminal behavior by reference to the socialization process and the internalization of deviant standards and expectation. The actor is described as having internalized a set of deviant norms that compel him to commit infractions of the law. There is little support for the deterministic position on exiting and continuation in the findings of this study. On the other hand, the findings are strongly supportive of the voluntaristic position.

Concerning entry, the findings reviewed above are strongly supportive of rationalistic control theory (Hirschi, 1969). The etiological question is best answered by reference to the absence of strong ties to conformity and the presence of reasonable motives for the commission of crimes. Continuation and graduation within the careers of the respondents are best explained by the voluntaristic school in general and societal reactionism in particular. These stages in the NPO's career are largely contingent upon the deviance-producing effects and social isolation of perceiving that one is labeled a criminal. Continued criminal behavior, whether as a nonprofessional or as a semiprofessional, is most directly the result of perceived negative societal reactions.

FIGURE 1: THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF THE NONPROFESSIONAL PROPERTY OFFENDER



Exiting

A special focus of this study was on the career stage termed exiting. Its importance for the study is derived from the general theoretical neglect of exiting in current criminology. A glance at the content of most criminological theory shows that the issue of career abandonment too often is neglected. Primary concern seems to be the etiological question, while exiting is almost always overlooked.

The literature on exiting in criminal careers is largely policy-oriented. That is, it is directed to the study of the effects of correctional programs on the development of criminal careers. In contemporary times, this literature has been concerned most often with the issues surrounding the punishment and treatment models for the sanctioning of criminal behavior.

One of the major theories within this area has been the deterrence theory of punishment. Simply stated, the deterrence position is based on the notion of threat, and the rational model of man proposed by Bentham and Beccaria. Gerber (1972:93) defines the idea as follows:

Deterrence can be defined as the restraint which fear of criminal punishment imposes on those likely to commit crime.

Deterrence theory posits that the attaching of a punishment to an act threatens and deters those who contemplate that

act.¹ The deterrence position proposes that imprisonment, as a modern version of criminal punishment, can effectively deter individuals from illegal activity. Thus, to a limited extent, the deterrence position is derived from the model of man shared within voluntaristic criminology. Modern voluntaristic criminology has, however, proposed a more sophisticated notion of the effects of punishment than is proposed by classical deterrence theory. Significant to this new view has been the societal reactionists' discovery of the negative effects of punishment as a means of social control. Since the development of societal reactionism, exiting has been seen as only one of the many possible results of legal sanctions for criminal behavior.²

Deterministic criminologists have never considered punishment to be truly deterrent. Exiting requires the reconstitution of the actor, and this is not accomplished by the attaching of a punishment to a behavior. Rather, the determinists have argued that sanctions should re-socialize the individual. Cressey (1955; 1963), for example, has argued that guided group interaction may lead to the exiting of an individual from a career in crime.

¹For a generally well-received definition of punishment, see Flew (1954).

²For an excellent discussion of the complexities of the deterrence issue, see Zimring and Hawkins (1973).

Other determinists have proposed the use of other forms of therapy and treatment as a proper sanction for crime (see, for example, Zimberoff, 1968; Menninger, 1966). These arguments share a belief in the appropriateness of a quasi-medical model of social deviance.

Criminal corrections systems and their agents are seen as necessary forms of intervention. They are necessary to resocialize the offender and remake his internal being. Resocialization is the process whereby normals organize an intervention into the life-process of the individual in order to make some modification of that individual's self, and thus to forestall any future misconduct by that actor. As Street (1966:20) has described the deterministic position:

Previous socialization is seen. . .
as deviant, the deviance is thought
to be deep-seated. . .Rehabilitation
is to take place through extensive
changes of character and personality.

This resocialization position on the application of legal sanctions is supported by the proposals of contemporary deterministic criminology. In particular, the sociological determinists who explain the emergence of criminal behavior through the process of socialization and group pressures have also stressed the effectiveness of group therapy as an agent for the resocialization of the criminal actor.

Indeed, most of the sociological literature on exiting from criminal careers has tended to be applied and

to support the position of the determinists. Only recently has this position been effectively challenged. Recent research in applied criminology has produced new demands for the reassessment of the whole area of exiting as a stage in criminal careers. Many criminologists and students of deviant behavior have presented a new perspective that:

. . . assume(s) that normals are less normal than typically portrayed and a disposition to assume that deviants are considerably more normal than is commonly thought (Lofland, 1969:8).

Criminal careers are now studied as merely functional careers and not as evidence of fundamental personal maladjustment. Thus, exiting as a normal career stage may occur without the direct manipulation of the individual by either the state or the therapist. For instance, Glaser (1964:85) has completed research that clearly indicates the complexity and normality of a career in crime:

What becomes increasingly clear from all the case studies and statistics on criminal careers presented so far, or to be cited later, is that almost all criminals follow a zig-zag path. They go from non-crime to crime and to non-crime again.

John Irwin (1970) has also produced data that underscore the emerging conception of exiting as a normal career stage for criminals. Like Glaser (1964:475-481), Irwin demonstrates that most criminals at least attempt to exit from their criminal career many times; change is not unusual,

but usual and ordinary behavior. It was in the light of this emerging debate that the research reported here placed special emphasis on exiting from criminal careers.

The findings of this study concerning exiting support the voluntaristic position. Exiting is motivated by the threat of punishment. Successful exiting is contingent upon the actor's ability to achieve a restraining or controlling stake in the conventional social order. If a bond to society is not acquired, the processes of labeling and perceptions of labeling, may defeat the actor's project to disengage from crime. The findings also indicate that exiting is a relatively common stage in the careers of the respondents. Exiting is not the result of therapy and resocialization. Rather, it is the consequence of the deliberations of a reasonable social actor. The abandonment of crime by the typical NPO is best explained by the voluntaristic approach in criminological theory.

Voluntaristic Criminology as a General Theory of Criminal Careers

The data collected and analyzed in this study are in general most supportive of voluntaristic criminology. Only two small modifications in the approach were indicated by the present data. The first modification emphasizes that, for this sample, the role of labeling in the production of secondary deviance is social psychological. The perception of labeling induces the actor to avoid

conventional circles and alternatives, but it does not automatically or primarily affect the personal identity of the individual. It is crucial to understand that negative societal reaction may completely alter the actor's social identity but it only threatens his personal identity.

Cohen (1966:98-99) has made the same observation in reference to career deviation in general:

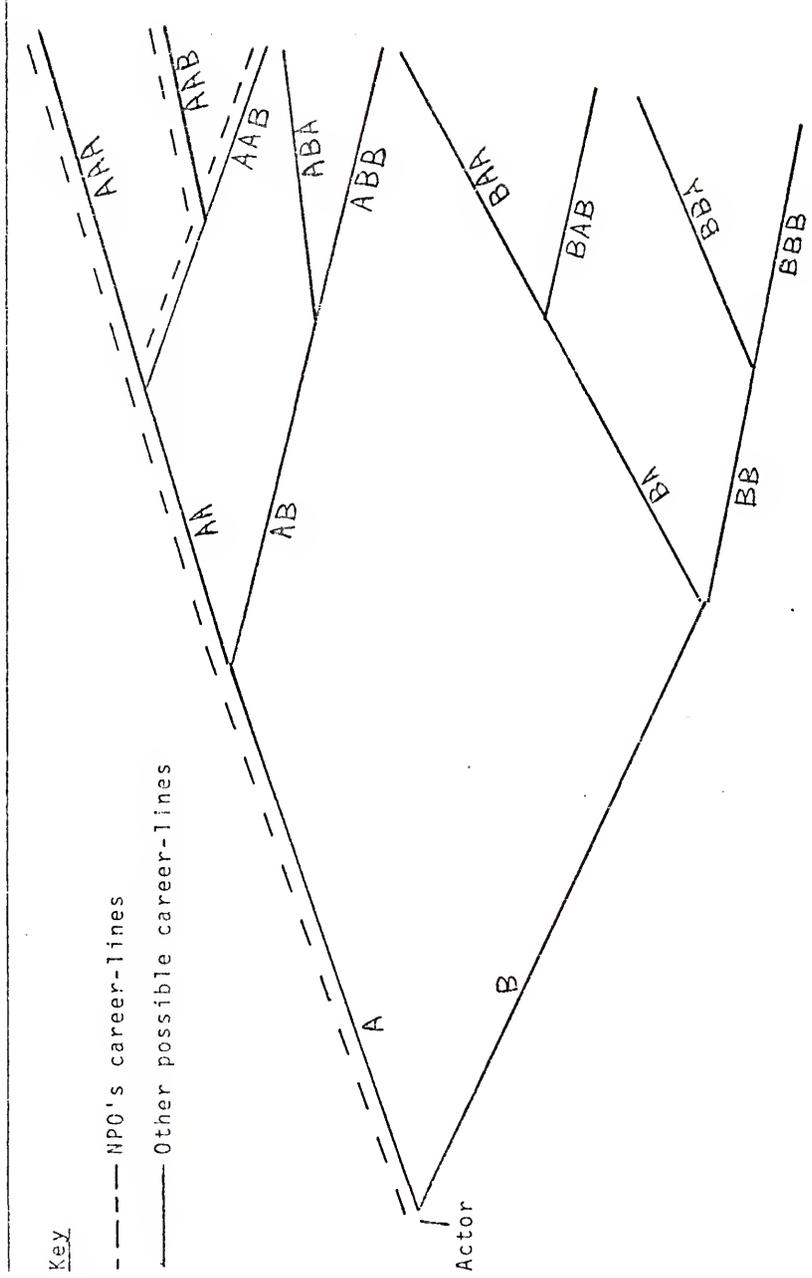
Typically, however, when we cannot escape public identification with such roles and are invested with such "deviant characters," we still engage in various manuevers to avoid subjective identification with the role as an expression of our "real selves;"
³

Secondly, the voluntarists have been insufficiently aware of the import of deviant associates within the developing career of the offender. These groupings provide the disorganized and confused NPO with an alternative world that offers security and some justification for his own criminality (Sutherland and Cressey, 1966). With these small adjustments, voluntaristic criminology is a convincing model for the explanation of criminal behavior. As applied to career development, the model may be illustrated according to the outline in Figure 2.⁴

³See also Goffman (1961b) and Rogers and Buffalo (1974).

⁴This diagram is derived from Cohen's (1966:43) schematic model of interaction process theories of deviant behavior.

FIGURE 2: VOLUNTARISTIC CRIMINOLOGY AS A GENERAL MODEL OF CRIMINAL CAREERS



Key

- - - NPO's career-lines

— Other possible career-lines

Actor

Figure 2 should be read according to the description that follows. "A" paths and situations lead toward criminal behavior and "B" paths lead toward conformity. For example, paths "A, AA, and AAA" represent the consistently increasing criminal career, while "B, BB, and BBB" are the paths of pure conformity. In a similar manner, the chart illustrates the developing stages of other types of careers by the number of letters and the left to right progression of the diagram. Thus, in the purely deviant paths, "A" refers to entry, "AA" to continuation, and "AAA" to graduation to a more committed type of deviance. The career development uncovered in this study reads as follows: The individual enters line "A" contingent primarily upon being uncontrolled and upon defining crime as a reasonable route to the acquisition of subjectively meaningful goals. Stage "A" is entry. Stage "AA" results from the isolating consequences of perceived societal reactions to path "A." Now the NPO has patterned his criminal behavior and is at the continuation level of career development. "AAA" is the pathway of the NPO who graduates into the career-line of the semi-professional, and is due primarily to the continued labeling of the individual. Paths "AAB" and "AAB*" indicate the exiting stage of the NPO's career. "AAB" is the path of failure and more criminal behavior, while "AAB*" refers to successful exiting. Here, the significant variable is the acquisition of a stake in conformity. The specific

career-paths of the NPO, as found through this research, are reproduced in Figure 3. Included in Figure 3 are indications of the primary contingencies that inform each stage transition.

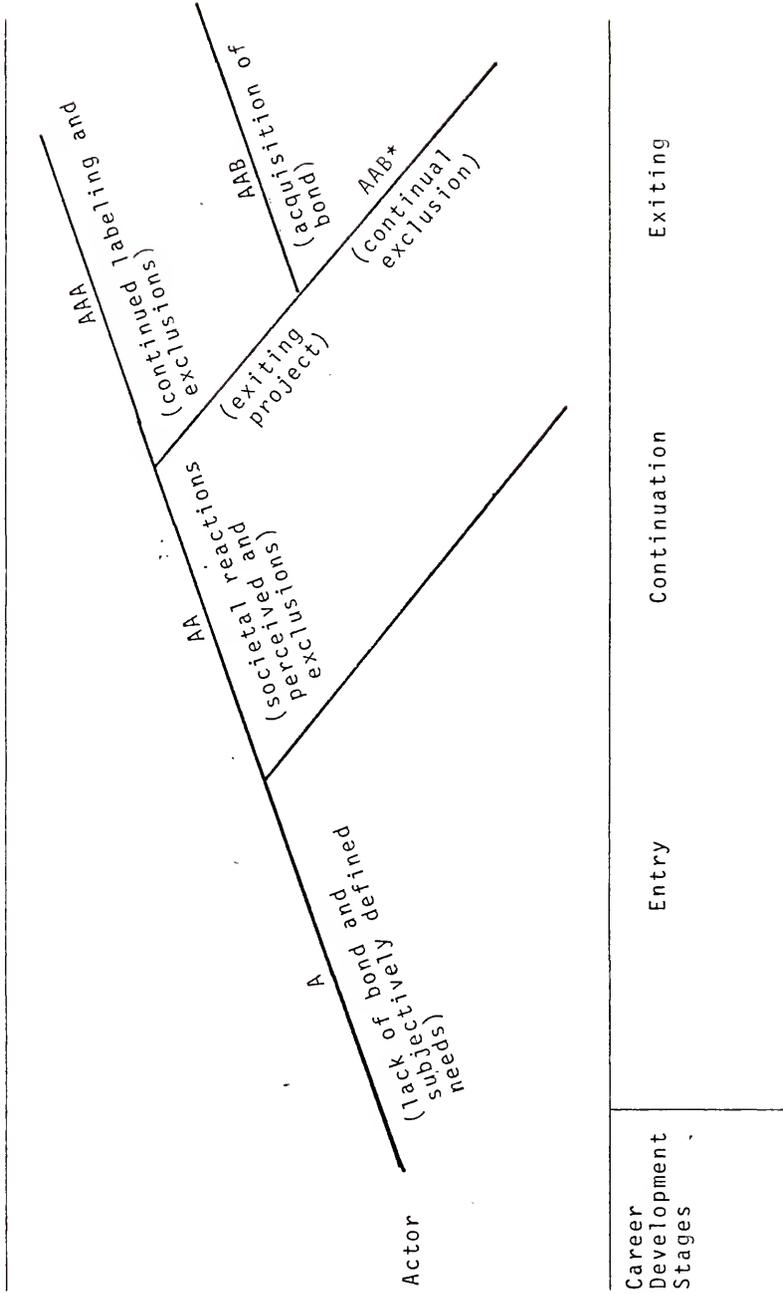
This schematic model also contains the potential for the tracing of other career-lines. For instance, "A, AB, ABB" might illustrate the maturational reform characteristic of the delinquent drifter (Matza, 1964). Further line "B, BA, BAA" could describe the "late-blooming criminal."

Consideration of this diagram requires strict awareness of the fundamental notion that choice is the final factor in social action. At each fork in the career development lines, a new life-world accent and social context faces the individual, and he must decide how to best confront each new situation. Although identifiable contingencies influence his decision, they do not determine it. For example, in the reentry situation, the actor may elect to graduate or exit; and further his attempts at exiting may be defined as successful or unsuccessful.

Implications

The findings of this study point to an important argument concerning the sociological study of deviance and crime. Considered generally, this argument derives from consideration of the model of man that underlies

FIGURE 3: CAREER-PATHS OF THE NONPROFESSIONAL PROPERTY OFFENDER



voluntaristic criminology and calls for the further study of exiting as a stage in criminal careers.

The Study of Exiting

One of the major findings of this research is that the abandonment of criminal behavior is a result of the reasonable decision of the social actor. The motivational impact of the threat of imprisonment was found to influence decisions on exiting. Acquisition of a social bond to conventional society was found to be a primary contingency influencing the success of exiting projects. However, at its foundations, exiting was seen to be voluntary. If exiting is essentially voluntary, then a misdirection of most of the criminological literature on the subject is indicated.

As reviewed earlier in this chapter, the deterministic argument that resocialization is the cause of disengagement from crime has been widely accepted in modern criminology (see, for example, Barnes and Teeters, 1959; Cressey, 1955 and 1963; McCorckle, et al., 1958; and Adams, 1962). This trend holds true even in the face of recent work that indicates the general failure of resocialization as a change agent (Bailey, 1966; Hood and Sparks, 1970; Kittrie, 1971), and that demonstrates the worth of classical explanations of exiting (Glaser, 1964; Irwin, 1970). The results of this study and the

aforementioned research strongly suggest that criminologists should reconsider the exiting stage in criminal careers. It may be that exiting, like entry, is a pragmatically constructed project of action voluntarily created by the individual. Prison, and other crisis events, may push the offender into a social context where exiting is reasonable and rewarding or unreasonable and unrewarding. The direction of individual projects--toward or away from exiting--is found in the conscious deliberations of the actor within the crisis situation.⁵ Jobs, relationships, and other contingencies relevant to the actors themselves lead to the successful abandonment of criminal patterns of behavior.

Resocialization and therapy, in this light, may be superfluous or even harmful. Resocialization efforts may do more to label and solidify criminal behavior than to replace deviance with more conventional activities.

This implication reveals several directions for future research. Sociology might reconsider its acceptance of the resocialization position. Studies of exiting and graduation within criminal careers might be conducted in order to better identify the contingencies that influence the deliberations of the individual. Further, labeling

⁵See Dewey (1922) for a classic description of the role of conflict and crisis in the processes of human choice and social conduct.

theory should be broadened in order to include the consideration of multiple responses to being labeled, including the formation of exiting projects.⁶

Voluntaristic Criminology and Humanism

As previously noted, the present findings strongly support the voluntaristic approach in criminology, particularly as specified in control theory and societal reactionism. For the typical NPO, entry into a criminal career is a result of a situation of nonrestraint and the subjective needs of the individual. Continuation is contingent upon the excluding effects of perceived societal reactions to criminal behavior. Exiting projects are motivated by the threat of imprisonment and the success of such projects is influenced by the acquisition of conventional investments and by the isolating effects which result from the perception of continued labeling.

These conclusions indicate the need to reconsider the traditional approach of most sociological studies of criminal careers. Particularly questionable is the premise that the selves of criminals and noncriminals are fundamentally different. This study describes the real self of the criminal as possessing noncriminal characteristics. It

⁶For impressive starts in this direction see Rogers and Buffalo (1974) and Hawkins and Tiedeman (1975).

suggests that the major contingencies that lead to criminal behavior are primarily external to the self and lie within the social context and life-world of the actor. The active rationality of the criminals described in this research and the work of others (Lofland, 1969; Matza, 1969; Irwin, 1970) is most telling for the future of criminology.

The findings of the present research indicate the need for a humanistic approach to the study of crime. Deterministic theories that rely on types of people explanations tend to deny the rational quality of most social action among criminal offenders. This denial is clearly stated in deterministic criminology. Voluntaristic criminology, on the other hand, expresses the rationality of social conduct and strives to uncover the situational contingencies that inform paths of action. Further, a humanistic and voluntaristic criminology seeks to understand how reactions to different paths of actions result in the social typification of actors as essentially deviant or conventional.

Methodologically, humanistic criminology differentiates between the social sciences and the natural sciences. In short, sociology and criminology are considered to be closer to the traditional humanities than to physics and chemistry. Data on the meanings of social life may be gleaned from many potential sources--literature, philosophy, interviews, observations, experience,

imagination, and introspection. The primary goals of analysis are understanding, explanation, and appreciation (Matza, 1969). Clearly aware of the human condition and capability, the humanistic criminologist is directed toward understanding the performance of crime. Berger's (1961:176) argument concerning general sociology is equally relevant to criminology:

We see puppets dancing on their miniature stage, moving up and down as the strings pull them around, following the prescribed course of their various little parts. We learn to understand the logic of this theatre and we find ourselves in its motions. We locate ourselves in society and recognize our own position as we hang from its subtle strings. For a moment we see ourselves as puppets indeed. But then we grasp a decisive difference between the puppet theatre and our own drama. Unlike the puppets, we have the possibility of stopping in our movements, looking up and perceiving the machinery by which we have been moved. In this act lies the first step towards freedom.

It is the quest of humanistic criminology to depict and appreciate the performance of criminal behavior and to understand the "stage" of criminal actions. This study is one such step towards a humanistic criminology.

Epilogue

The voluntaristic model of man is founded upon a conception of the human self that has great potential for the development of sociology. This short epilogue presents

my conception of this notion of the self and its potential impact on the study of social action in sociology.

As we have seen, voluntarism in sociology argues that social action is reasonable in that it is chosen and performed in order to achieve meaningful purposes. The notion that all behavior is meaningful and intentional underlies the theoretical position of the voluntarists. However, theoretical positions that rely upon a deterministic model of man rule modern sociology. Consequently, much of sociological theory and research has attempted to account for behavior by proposing mechanistic relationships between social characteristics, types of people, and social actions. The voluntarist denies the validity of this form of explanation by rejecting its foundations in the deterministic conception of man.

The voluntaristic alternative to this premise requires that sociologists challenge their traditional acceptance of the deterministic model of the self of their subjects. The actor must be de-objectified. So far, this goal has been best achieved by the existential phenomenologists. The classic work in the voluntaristic conception of the self is Sartre's (1953) Being and Nothingness. The rejection of our traditional presumptions concerning the self may begin with a reflective reconsideration of consciousness of self. Upon reflection on one's own condition, one is immediately cognizant of the limits of

sociology's partial use of the Meadian model of the self.⁷ The self is not complete in the "I" and the "me," and indeed the self's significance is in its lack of completion. "Nothingness" is the fundamental characteristic of the human self. Consciousness of self is founded in transcendence of self. It involves a social identity ("being-for-others"), a biographical identity ("being-in-itself"), and most importantly a lack of self ("being-for-itself"). "Being-for-itself" indicates the fundamental incompleteness of all reflective consciousness. For, although the reflecting consciousness attempts to construct a stable self-image within the past and near-present, this construction never completely encloses its subject. The incompleteness of reflection upon the self stems from the for-itself's presence in the future as a possibility. Thus, the variability of the self is a result of its transcendence into the future. As time passes and concerns change, consciousness projects itself into the future and alters itself. And it is this transcendent nature of the self that creates purposive quality of social action. Social behavior is directed toward the future in order to

⁷The argument here is not that Mead himself was wrong, but that sociology has failed to fully consider and build upon Mead's work. For indications of the full Meadian position on the self see The Philosophy of the Act (1938) and The Philosophy of the Present (1932).

actualize the self-as-projected into that future. This freedom to choose one's self through projects of action is a shared characteristic of all human actors.⁸ This study has indicated that deviance, like more conventional behavior, is existentially chosen by the individual.

In sum, the voluntaristic view and the phenomenological conception of the self may provide sociology with a model of man closer to what exists in the phenomenal world of social actors. This model is potentially useful in the explanation of social action. Social action is grounded in the actor's ability to transcend both the past and the present. He can symbolically project himself into the future and thus can intentionally create personally meaningful projects of action. The individual acts in order to become what he will have been in the future (Schutz, 1962). For example, the consumer in a store may buy a magazine so that, in the future, he will have read that magazine. Likewise, the thief in the store may steal some money so that in the future he will have been able to afford some desired possession. Since both actions were chosen in order to attain some future state, it is necessary to assume that the self of either actor is fundamentally deviant?

⁸This perspective also provides some insight into the negative effects of labeling. Labeling is essentially an attempt to completely define the offender by his past; in other words, it attempts to deny him his future.

Both conventional and deviant behaviors are chosen on the basis of the project of the actor. Actors construct life-worlds around self-as-projected and select behaviors intended to achieve that self within the temporal world of the future. The phenomenological conception of the self is able to describe both types of action--deviant and conventional--without assuming fundamental differences in individuals. This model demands further exploration within sociology.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE INTERVIEW

Notes on Presentation

In the following pages, a sample interview is reprinted as an example of the data collected for this study. The interview has been edited slightly in order to make it more readable. For instance, utterances such as "uh" have been omitted from the transcript. Any proper names or place names that might identify the respondent have been removed from the dialogue.

The reader should also note that brackets are used sparingly to indicate interpretive comments injected by the investigator during transcription. Also, in the following transcript, the investigator and the respondent are indicated by "I" and "R" respectively. Otherwise, the interview is just as it was received during a two hour session with the respondent.

Interview #2

I: How old are you?

R: 25.

I: And you are from?

R: _____ town.

I: Has that always been your home?

R: Yes, in that area.

I: What type of place is that?

R: Just a small town, nothing special.

I: Did you live with your parents as a child?

R: Yes, and my grandmother. She lived right near-by.

I: Are you married?

R: No. Never.

I: Did you have good relationships with the people in your family?

R: Not too good. Well, me and my father never got along. If I was late from school or something. . .well. . . I got a beating. Then one time he pulled, pushed a little too far. . .beating me with a limb about the size of a baseball bat end, where you grab it. [The respondent is highly angry and depressed when he is talking, the emotional content of the sequence is very strong.] He wore that on me. That was the end. After that I started fighting back and all. . .Then he started calling the law. . .have me arrested. I turned against everybody then. . .after that happened. Now a beating is a beating, but when you come up, give a guy a beating [like that one]. . .a whipping, that's two different things. . .even a kid [knows the difference]

I: What did you father do for a living?

R: He drove a truck, farmed a little.

I: How old were you at the time of the beating you just told me about.

R: 13 or 14.

I: How long did you stay in school?

R: In the seventh. . .I was in the eighth grade when I went to serve the first time [in reform school].

I: How about other relations in your family?

R: Well, my grandma. . .she was always good to me ever since I was a little kid. She'd give me money and things when my parents wouldn't. . . .

I: What sticks out in you mind about your childhood?

R: Nothing, except my father and me fighting.

I: What did you enjoy. . . ?

R: I liked to go hunting and fishing with some friends of mine and me and my brother.

I: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

R: Just one. . . .

I: How did you get along with him?

R: OK, nothing special. But he didn't stick by me when I got in trouble. . .nobody did.

I: How did you get along in the community?

R: OK before I got into trouble, and [even after that] . . .really the people generally were nice to me.

I: Did you like school?

R: It was OK. . . .No, not really, 'cause I never did very well there [in academics in school]. And I couldn't stay after to play or anything. My father wouldn't let me. . . .

I: Is there anything else that you think I should know about your early childhood and your family. . . ?

R: No not really. Me and my father that is the big thing to my thinking.

I: When you think of that time, how do you remember yourself?

R: Me?

I: Right.

R: Nothing special [pause for thought]. . . .I was always real spiteful towards my father for beating me. He was pushing me real hard. . . .But I had some friends and I guess other than that it was a normal life.

I: Your closest relationship was with your grandmother?

R: As it turned out. . . , Yes. She was the only one who really cared.

I: OK. . . .Can you remember the first time you broke the law?

- R: Yes, 1965.
- I: How old were you at the time?
- R: 15, I think it was.
- I: Were you living at home?
- R: Yes.
- I: In school?
- R: Yes.
- I: What was it?
- R: Burglary, breaking and entering.
- I: House?
- R: No, business. . . , I think.
- I: Did you get caught for that one?
- R: No, sir.
- I: What did your friends think about this?
- R: They didn't know. . .at first.
- I: No one knew. . .family?
- R: I usually did them alone. Except for these last few years. . .I done them with different people. And I think it was better to just do it alone. . . , if you're going to do a job.
- I: So neither your friends nor your family knew you were into burglaries?
- R: Nobody knew.
- I: Did you do any more?
- R: Yes.
- I: Did you get arrested for the second one or when?
- R: Well, it wasn't the second one. It was quite a few jobs later. I did plenty before I was arrested.

- I: Can you tell me your pattern of operation. . .before, during, and after a job?
- R: I'd just snoop around, found somebody that accidentally let the word slip or something else that they had money or something other that I could get rid of real easy. . . .I just wait around, listen, find out where they lived, . . .hit it the time they was gone.
- I: Was this in your hometown?
- R: Some of them was. . . .
- I: Were the others in the local area. . .within 30 miles?
- R: Within thirty miles.
- I: When you were "snooping around" did you. . .before you actually did the job, did you think about getting caught?
- R: Not at the time.
- I: Later?
- R: No, after I did several [burglaries], it became easier and easier to do.
- I: What do you "see" of your self at that time?
- R: [pause for thought]. . .I guess I thought I just needed the money. You might say i was borrowing it. . .with-
out asking [laughter].
- I: And you were still going to school?
- R: When I started out I was still in school, until I got busted.
- I: How many times did you go to prison.
- R: Including this time here. . .now [his present sentence].
- I: Yes.
- R: Four, counting the boy's school.
- I: How many times did you get sent to the boy's school?
- R: Once, the first time I served was at _____ boy's school.

I: Did you ever receive probation?

R: Once. . . , five years, I think.

I: On these jobs, what did you do with what you got?

R: Well, I. . . if I had any merchandise, I took it and sold it. . . and the money I got, I put away. . . some of it. Hid it at different places, matter of fact, I got some hidden out right now, but I'll be damned if I can find where it's at. . . .The same scene has changed since I put it up there. . . couldn't never. . . you could tell me. . . ask me where it was, . . . I couldn't tell you right now, that's the trouble. Places change. [Laughter].

I: You hid it and can't find it?

R: That's right. . . at least I don't think I could without a whole lot of looking [He knows this isn't really believable].

I: Were all you jobs pretty rationally planned out?

R: I always had it planned so that I knew what I was gonna do.

I: Did any of your relationships within your family change?

R: No, nobody knew about my burglaries except for me. I really couldn't stand my father after that beating, and I was planning on moving out. . . [of his home].

I: Can you tell me about the first time you were arrested?

R: Let's see. . . [thinking]. The sheriff came to the house to pick me up, took me out to some guy's auto sales, the place of the burglary. . . .I went into it, I went into it, and got out [he defines it as a success]. . . going out I thought that there was somebody in there, and they got me on my footprint size. The place is not too far from my folks' house.

I: How old were you?

R: 16 or 17.

I: What happened?

R: I was sent to _____ boy's school. So I went ahead and got it out of the way. . .served the time on it. Got out and never went back to school. But I had that record, it's kinda hard getting a job [highly emotional content now, seemingly anger and resentment]. . .honest job 'cause they held it against me so I went right back to the same old deal.

I: Back to burglary?

R: Burglaries, again.

I: What was the reaction of the community when they found out that you were arrested, was there any change?

R: Well, their reaction to me after it was. . .was as though he [I] was the black sheep of the family.

I: What was _____ boy's school like. . .your impressions?

R: It was. . .[thought] OK, but you had to still fight for your way through there anyway. . . .

I: Fight who?

R: The inmates. You had to try and fight the system to keep out of trouble, you had to fight the inmates to keep yourself from getting yourself into trouble with them. They find out if you're big enough to take care of yourself or not. . . .I had enough of them on me, I took a. . .when I was in there [anger is building] I bucked [fought through] two cottages. . . .These cottages they had there, I bucked the first cottage . . .no one. . .I was gonna let nobody push me around, there was no one but one little old man there. . .[he was] the onliest one that I really would ever listen to. Then they put me in the second cottage, same stuff again, so I didn't fight at first. I was trying, going to try and let it go by. . . .They won't let it go by, so I started fighting back again. Still got out in one year served time.

I: What was everyday routine like?

R: You lived in a cottage with a adult and a group of inmates. In the day, you went to trades school. At night, you'd watch TV, or shoot pool or something else. Some time was pretty hard, but it wasn't that bad, really.

- I: Were there any programs or anything that you think was important to you?
- R: Onliest thing they had there was training for different jobs. . .I did electrical trades. I took, let's see, nine months there plus I took two and one half years all together [in different institutions], . . .and all . . .I decided not to take anymore because I didn't want any more [anger], I had enough training to get me anything [job] I wanted or needed. The reason I changed my mind was I went to this job once and this one dude don't have a year experience in electrical and I had two and one half years at it. The dude with not a year training got the job. . . .He didn't have a record on him.
- I: What did you do when you got out?
- R: Went back home, then. Then. . .[thought] let's see I had. . .1968 when I got in my next trouble. I was at a job in town and I. . .didn't get away with it, cause I didn't figure a patrol [police car]. He was only about a second behind me when I hit it, so he caught me on that.
- I: When you left boy's school at _____, did you live at home again?
- R: Yeah, just until I could get started for myself.
- I: What image do you have of yourself at this time in your life. . .after boy's school?
- R: Well, before I got started on to it [crime], I started reading a few books on crime and all. Started learning me a little more, you find out your actual count of any crime you ever do is maybe one half of what you get known for, maybe one of ten you ever get caught on. . . And I figured out, try to figure out, the best way I could do it, get the most raised [money] before I get caught. So I figure if I can do quite a few jobs at a time before I ever get caught I might serve a year or maybe two years and all. . .I can come out and have all the money still.
- I: And your image of yourself as a person?
- R: Well. . .[thought]. I was sort of down [depressed] . . .I mean what with being in prison and all. I don't know. . . .

I: What did these early offenses, b and e's, mean to you then?

R: Well, it was both the money and for the fun of it. Really, I needed the money for things my parents. . .I couldn't tell my parents about. They wouldn't give me the money anyway, if they knew. Plus I enjoyed knowing I could get away with it over the system. And beating it. . .at the time.

I: What sort of things did you need?

R: You know cash to spend, guns, stereo's for my car. Stuff like that.

I: Was it really exciting to pull a burglary?

R: No, . . .I just got a little nervous, when I started pulling them.

I: What was the satisfying part of it then?

R: Knowing I got away with it. . .without being caught.

I: OK, so you got out and continued to pull jobs?

R: Yes, sir.

I: Were you still having a rough time with your father?

R: Yes, but see I was too big then for him to beat me. We just sort of went our separate ways. . .I guess we ignored each other most of the time.

I: What did you get for this last bust? The second time.

R: I was in adult court, got five years on probation I believe.

I: How was serving probation?

R: Just sort of a hassle. . .making reports and seeing your officer. I was still pulling jobs while I was on probation.

I: Really? Five years probation and you were still doing jobs?

R: They [Probation Office] didn't know. . .until I got busted in November of 1969 [pause for thought]. Because I always kept my record of what I was doing, working. . .whatever. So I kept it pretty clean for

them. They didn't know about it. . .until I got arrested.

I: Were you working and doing burglaries?

R: Some, but really I had trouble holding down a job. What with my record. . . .

I: Were you still living at home?

R: Not at the last part. . . .I moved out to this trailer. I was living with this girl when I got busted again.

I: How long had you been doing that. . .living out of your home?

R: Couple of months or more, I think.

I: OK, this time, the third, where did you go? That's not the charge you're on now is it?

R: No, I went to _____ state prison to serve my time.

I: What was that like?

R: Still had to fight to make it through, I met some guys, some of the dudes I knew in the boy's school. . . .So, I had a hassle there. So as soon as I got out of there I was sent to a road camp at _____. I made it through two road camps in about a year. . . .kept my nose clean, mind my business. Reported out to a parole officer, I reported to him. It was the same guy I had before I think. I found me a job and was doing good. Worked for a while, keeping it clean for a while, then all. . .something happened, popped again. . . .I, and I had to go back to burglary again.

I: What was the routine at _____.

R: You get woke up in the morning for chow, spend some time in a day room. Some work, some go to school. Eat and sleep. The guards really don't hassle you there over any little thing. It's hard time, I was glad to get out.

I: How about _____ road camp?

R: That was good time to serve. I worked, and the inmates were less hard and didn't bother you like they could at _____ prison. It was much better there. I kept out of trouble and went to the [parole] board pretty fast.

I: Did you take part in any rehabilitation programs?

R: They had none at all there. Onliest thing you seen was a parole and probation man once for six months time, then he'll say he see you next time he comes around. . .if you're still here. If you ain't here . . .you done made your time, that's it.

I: What were these meetings like? What went on?

R: He'd. . .[thought] just ask you questions. 'Where you'd go to, where would you live after you go out?'

I: When you think about that time, what do you think of your self?

R: I had pretty well decided to stay clean. Try it anyway. I had done enough time.

I: Did you family relations improve?

R: Not really. I never saw my father. My mother come to visit me some. . .but I wouldn't say she came often, as often as she should of. . . .[emotions are high, seems like grief and regret].

I: You said that you planned to go straight?

R: I tried to. . .when I got out, I got a job, moved away from home again. I was doing pretty good. But it seemed like nobody around would give me a chance, except my first boss. He was a pretty good man. It was sort of lonely, no family or no real friends. Then like I say something popped and I went back to my crimes.

I: How did people outside of you family react to you then?

R: Well not very good. Their reaction to me after. . . [that prison term], just to use an example, there was a friend of the family. . . .My brother was dating her, their daughter, and he wasn't, he had a perfect record, nothing wrong so she dated him. [emotions of anger rising]. And after I got out, I went up and got a date and then, 'I don't want no ex-con and everything dating my daughter. . . .' We still went together though without her parents knowing about it. And after a while I got tired of it. . .I went right into her at church, in her church [mean laughter]. I told her everything. . .but she acted like her daughter was so high and mighty. . . .She was lower than anyone else could be. Only thing she was doing was condemning

before you even judge. . . Just like any court does just about. Because her daughter didn't condemn so I don't know why she should. . . It's up to the daughter to go out or not.

I: So you went back home and people reacted to your presence poorly?

R: Yes, I went back home, then. Then. . . let's see. I got probation, 5 years. Then I got busted in the fall and went to _____ state prison. Yeah, I got out and went back to my hometown.

I: You said that you were doing good and then something happened, what happened?

R: I think I was laid off of the job, or something or other.

I: You're not sure?

R: See, they said they called me back. . . [anger]. My parents didn't tell me they called back or nothing so I didn't know nothing about it. So I lost my job so automatically, I went back to pulling my jobs again [burglaries].

I: How long were you working and out of crime?

R: I would say at least two years, off and on. If I lost a job I would, might do a job [burglary], but I was keeping it pretty clean.

I: You went straight?

R: I tried. . . when I went out. . . but after all, I lost that job, I had to go back to my own trade, the one that I knew best of all. So when my parents. . . didn't tell me nothing about the job. . . I asked them about it, I asked and they said they didn't know nothing about it. I ran across one of the foremans there, and he told me he called, tried to get me back to work. . . nobody knew nothing. So automatically I knew something or somebody was pulling some strings around there. . . I just went back to my own trade where I knew what was doing.

I: Why?

R: It was more comfortable. I knew I had money coming in. . . when I would be needing it.

I: Did you consistently commit crimes now?

R: Well, sort of off and on. Right about then, I was pretty good because I knew I could do so many jobs without being busted. I even had a lucky number that I kept myself to, [laughter]. But sometimes, if I could, I would try to keep an honest job. But. . . I could never hold it down. I once held a job down for almost a full year at _____ factory. But usually I only work for three, about three months at a time.

I: What reason did these places give you for laying you off?

R: At _____ factory for that year I had a pretty good boss. He knew I had a record. But finally someone accused me of stealing freight and I heard they were going to fire me. . . due to my record. The next day [anger in his voice] I carried a pistol to work. I was gonna show him something and he was going to really see. He came up. . . he didn't say nothing about it. Then I told him ain't no son of a bitch here going to fire me for no bullshit reason. So I said that I was quitting. Everybody in that place knew I was carrying a gun on me. . . I guess they were glad to see me go. .

I: Other than at work, did people react differently to you when you came out of _____ prison?

R: Some of them really didn't like me because of what I was. . . I had a lot of friends, I thought were friends, that turned out not to be friends. The onliest one that you might say really stuck by me was maybe a cousin of mine that had a. . . what they call a "first marriage miss-up." We would sort of talk over things together now and then. Plus my grandmother treated me more like a mother than my mother did. . . . So between them I had some good times, had it pretty good. I got caught for a speeding ticket, I didn't have the money at the time. So anyway the cop knew my father, he wanted to know if I could get the money back to him tomorrow. So he gave me the ticket, I had to go home and get the money somewhere. . . [emotions rising]. First, I went to my job, where I was working at the time, to see if I could get a loan ahead of my pay. The dude told me no. So I went on home mad as hell. Grandma was there and wanted to know what was wrong, so I told her. She went and got the money I needed from her savings and gave it to me, I left to go pay it. Now I quit that job I was working at, told the man he could keep it because I ain't working for no

dude that's gonna do anybody dirty that way. She [grandmother] was the onliest one that stuck by me like that.

- I: During this time, what did you think of yourself?
- R: That I wasn't really bad. Just bad times. . . , how people felt about me, that's the way I was going. I might work for a short while, finally somebody find out I was a con, that I was arrested or somebody'd come along that knew me, They'd get around the factory, then I'd have to quit from that factory. I was working at _____ plant and being clean or trying to. Then a couple of fellows that knew me started hassling me so I had a few fights with them. I end up quitting there, I left. So everywhere I went somebody's always found out about my record. . .see, you can keep a record quiet so long then everybody finds out.
- I: If you are an ex-con, what's the best way to get a job?
- R: If you register it on the form [your criminal record], they're not going to hire you, if you don't register they're going to fire you when they find out. So there ain't no way really you can get by. Some jobs I don't register because I don't figure the guy is going to let you work very long anyway, I'm gonna not register it there. Several times I've filed that I ain't never been convicted of a felony and that I've never been refused bond and really didn't have no trouble about it.
- I: Were your opinions of yourself changing due to people's reactions?
- R: Yes it just made me worsen. Because. . .at the time really, anybody needs help when they are young and trying to clean up. It helps to change them. And if you get people turned against you right off the bat, onliest thing that you're gonna do is keep going and going and going [further into crime].
- I: OK, you got out of _____ state prison and went pretty clean for nearly a year or more, right?
- R: Yes, like I say I had a pretty good job there, and was going pretty good until things popped and I went back to my crimes.
- I: What happened, you lost the job right?
- R: Yes, sir. That was mostly it. Plus a couple of real small charges.

I: What?

R: Destruction of private property.

I: What exactly was that. . .what did it involve?

R: I started copping copper, redbirds. . .and the cop came out to my place and picked me up. [Laughter]. They asked me how could. . .how did I bend a twenty foot pipe down to the ground? I told them by my hands. They didn't believe it, thought I used a tool or something. I just bent them down by hand and took the redbirds off when I was drunk one night. The judge told me to make it good [pay restitution] to the man and he didn't make me do the time for it. I paid some bond and went home.

I: Any other minor charges before this sentence here?

R: Yes, well. . . .After that redbirds case. I was working at _____ farm and I was coming along the highway, I had just come back from target practice with my .22 and these people had this dog. Well, he was legally supposed to be tied up, and this was the second time he tried to come at me. First time he bit me. This time he came out to bite me again [slight anger in his voice] and I killed him. I just got tired of him coming after me.

I: How'd you kill him?

R: With that .22, pearl-handled pistol that I had. Shot him one time in the head as he was running up to me. I just went off, left him there. I got caught for that about a week later, but they weren't sure about it and everything so I made a deal for the time pending on the sprinkler head deal [redbirds], and they dropped the other charges. They run concurrent sort of. . . .So I served about one year at _____ institution for that.

I: Tell me about that year you served?

R: Wasn't much I did it real easy and clean. No trouble.

I: What did you think of yourself now?

R: I still wanted to go straight when I got out. That dog should have been tied up, it wasn't nothing that I could do. Them people were breaking the law just like I did.

- I: So you got out and came back to your home after that sentence?
- R: Yes, got out in around 1972 or so and I started back working in a plant near home. It didn't work out so good, I was let go and right then I couldn't find me a job anywhere.
- I: You couldn't find any jobs?
- R: None that I really liked, none that would keep me out of the joint. So I went back to my old job. . .burglaries and all.
- I: What was your life like now that you were out and trying to go straight again, at least at first. . . ?
- R: Hard. I really didn't have no friends or nothing, and no real job. Only when I went back to my crimes did I have money and things to do again.
- I: OK, now we are up to the charge that you are in for now, right?
- R: Yes.
- I: When you think of the years before that, does anything special come to mind?
- R: Well. . .[thought]. Yes, I guess you could say that I was becoming worsen. I think a good job would have helped me, but I couldn't find anything that I liked to do or that gave me enough money. I always went back to pulling my jobs for the money that I needed. I was a loner most of the time, except right near the end. I met a woman and lived with her and I think I was happy then, but I was still stealing, only she was trying to make me quit. I was thinking of going straight again. . . .
- I: You mentioned that you made a deal with the court in the sprinklers case, was that sort of plea-bargaining?
- R: Yes. . .my lawyer. . . .
- I: Did you have a public defender?
- R: Right.
- I: What do you think of making deals in court?

R: It helps say the guys but, like I say, they're not allowed to make deals. They do make them, just like anything else. . .like on this deal when you're convicted. . .the judge automatically says by your past record I can't give you probation, I'm going to have to give you some time. And by the law, he's not supposed to mention my past record unless I take the stand. So every time you go to court, you're being tried by the past record anyway. . . .It's not the record you're getting then [the present charge], it's the past record you get tried on. . .so automatically, it makes you madder and madder at the state, the judges and everything else.

I: Because they judge you by your past?

R: Yeah, it's your past. So automatically you're gonna get mad at all of them for it.

I: What's the charge you are here for at present?

R: Possession of burglary tools.

I: What happened in this case?

R: I was stopped one night and they found a hammer, a few screwdrivers, vice grips, a pair of pliers, . . . plus I had a collection of keys that I used to collect up that I used to find just for a habit [hobby]. They got them. They said I used them on jobs, as for possession of burglary tools.

I: Did you ever use them in burglary. . .any of the tools?

R: I never did use them, I just had them. The keys I just collected them. . .I just put them on a ring and threw them in the trunk.

I: Never used them?

R: Not really. . . .I was living with this girl, and like I say, I was straightening out.

I: Is this place here any different than those you were in before?

R: No, I just hope I can get sent to _____ road camp for my time.

I: Here, have you taken part in any type of rehabilitation program or group? Other than vocational training?

- R: The onliest thing I ever went to was the health center. I went down there, they tried to find out what was wrong with me. The last time I went down there I told them that it wasn't doing no good.
- I: What do you think was the problem. . .if any?
- R: My father and I are still having our disagreements. There wasn't no use for me going down there, so I just got up out of my seat and walked out. . .because it wasn't doing no good, really.
- I: What were these meetings like?
- R: Oh, we'd discuss the whole family thing you know, me and another guy. They discussed problems and all. End up with me and my father never did, still don't today, get along together.
- I: You don't think that was helping?
- R: No, it was just something to try and find a key to what my trouble was and I knew what the key was. They didn't want to listen what the key was so I got tired of it.
- I: What was it?
- R: It was a disagreement between my father. . .and it was spite fighting back. . .I know what it was but. . . after a while it was just a habit I couldn't never really break. At first, well, if they had caught me before I got too far, before I got started too far, they might have got help before I done anymore, but I just do them and it's a good habit now.
- I: So your behavior started out being this thing with your father, then after a while people let it build up?
- R: It just built up, more so automatically, you just turn against everybody, both sides. And you can't get a job or nothing.
- I: All the institutions you've been in, here in particular, what does it mean to you when you think about it?
- R: Well, the effect really it had on me. . .[thought]. I was just hoping to be getting out of there, so I could get out away from it again. Course, I didn't like being around, under the gun, or being forced or told what to do. Because I'd rather to have a man come up

and ask me to do something than to go. . .tell me to do something or other. So I was finding how to go ahead and get out of the places, because it's just a . . .might say, like a hell-hole.

I: Anything else?

R: It's really little things, all of it. Sometimes the guards hassle you just to be hassling you, sometimes the inmates do. You don't have no freedom.

I: What type of places did you hit when you were pulling jobs?

R: Just according to what had the best buy at the time. If I need hard money up real bad, usually I hit a store I knew where money was at. Or if I didn't need the money very bad just. . .say I needed it but not that bad I'd maybe hit a house.

I: The first arrest or so, you didn't mention going straight, why?

R: I didn't want to try. I planned to go right back to do more.

I: What changed?

R: I don't know [long pause for thought]. . . I just didn't really like doing wrong. I wanted to stop and all. The time wasn't too bad, but this here is the worst. I had a woman on the outside.

I: Are you going to try to go straight when you get out this time?

R: I'll try it again. . .because I know I most likely make parole in maybe a year. They throwed me on a two year deal. . .so I'll go out there, I'll try to make it again. Automatically, I know they gonna bust me. . .it might be a month, might be two months. . . This time they messed me up real good. I had a, my lawyer, he. . .first I went in there he was gonna assign me a public defender, the judge said you gotta get you a street lawyer we're not gonna furnish you a public defender again. So I went out and hired me a attorney. He said I guarantee you probation, . . . I said, 'No you ain't gonna guarantee me nothing because I know you ain't gonna offer no probation.' Because I knew they gonna try me by my past record. So I went up there, just like I said, gonna get time . . . Judged by my past record. I owe the attorney

money, he ain't gonna get the fee though. . .the rest of it, I paid him some of the amount, true. But I figured well the money for his. . .fee to hold him there an all. My girlfriend offered, says she'll pay him off for me and everything. I told her no, if anybody pays him off I'll pay him. Because he didn't really work for his fee that he asked for.

I: What do you think of public defenders?

R: Well, they got a few good public defenders in there that will fight for you. Then once they started getting a reputation, so they get an outside street job. . . .They get a feeling their gonna sell you down the river [as a public defender]. 'Well, I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll make a deal for one year . . .if you plead guilty for this charge.' It sounds pretty good, you know you're gonna get more time than that if you don't, so most likely you gonna jump at it.

I: Have you ever pled guilty when you thought you might be able to beat the charge?

R: Several times. . .I had to plead guilty because I knew if I had a good lawyer I could beat it but the public defenders never. . .they give you the 'I couldn't never beat it,' . . .so I had to plead guilty to it.

I: For a lighter sentence?

R: Unually, onliest time. . .because the judge will tell you, 'If you go to jury trial, I am gonna give you maximum sentence.' And he said he'll give me max if I went to trial this time anyway. So I could go between. . .automatically, I had to drop down. I could go between guilty and not guilty and everything. So I went out and pled that way, went to trial, got my time and everything. I turn around and give my attorney a look and I let him know that I knew that he really didn't fight for that case like he was supposed to. . . .If you gonna pay for an attorney, you're gonna pay at least \$1,000.00 for a good attorney. So. . .I. . .had a. . .payed money out, I couldn't afford it, to pay it out. Some people can't afford it. The money I paid to him could have been. . .gone to something else that needed help, and allEnd up, that's where. . .I might of done a job for money and everything, I might say, end up, like you was needing money, I'd given it to you. I'd still wouldn't have it, then I'd got to go out and do another job for the

money that I need. End up doing. . .half the money I got, over half of it's gone to other people than myself.

I: Were these loans?

R: Helping them out. . .say, this. . .before I got in here. . .this woman and I and two kids of hers, now I was working then. . .I caught me about two grand to get her out of some trouble, some other guy that she didn't wanna see again. . .so I got her out. She didn't know about it until I got. . .served my time last time and I wrote her and told her about. . .the jobs I done on it. So I told her. . .every penny I made was going to her and her kids and everything and I really didn't keep nothing for myself.

I: Back when you were regularly pulling burglaries, what was your life like?

R: I was living fairly well. . .I'd say I wasn't starving [laughter]. I had food in my belly, money in my pocket, all the time. . .and I didn't have to work, I could lay around and relax. . . .

I: Is it a good life then?

R: It's a hassle. . .because, really, the. . .put it this way: I have a conscious in a way. . .well, sometimes I don't. Like after I do a job, it might get to me and it might not. If it gets to me, bug me too much, I might lay off, get me a honest job, try and straighten out again. Then if something happens, then I go back to the same jobs again.

I: What makes the difference. . .to your conscious?

R: It might be a house, say if I went to your house, done it. . .I might get a conscious, a feeling about I shouldn't of done it and all. Automatically, I try to straighten up, do right again, and I. . .might work maybe three or four months, maybe longer before I go back to my jobs again.

I: When you think about yourself, lately, what do you come up with? Who are you?

R: I'm a night burglar, . . .that's what it would be considered I was [by other people].

I: What do you consider yourself to be?

- R: I consider myself a thief, because I'd be a jack-of-anything I could get a hold of. . .really.
- I: Are you convinced of this identity?
- R: That's about the strongest. . .of anything. You strip a car, you're a thief, if you steal a ten cent piece of candy, you're a thief. You still gonna be a thief.
- I: Did you always feel that way. . .about yourself?
- R: At first I thought I was due a few of them, you know . . .get the money I need and all. I'd feel like I was. . .sort of. . .feel like I was borrowing it, at first. So I went for a while, then I had to turn out, I knew after a while that I was stealing the stuff, I wasn't gon to return it no way, anyway. So automatically, I start knowing I was a thief anyway. First time, you. . .stealing anything, you consider that you're gonna borrow it. So you might go in a store, you pick up something. . .you need it, but you ain't got enough to pay for it or nothing, you just considering that you gonna borrow it. Instead of stealing it like. . . .
- I: Do you try to go straight because you know stealing isn't right. . .or what?
- R: A little bit of that really, I knew it wasn't right doing the job. . .plus I know I don't want to go back to pulling time. But I know, usually, that, turns out, I know that when I do another job, in a way, I know I was gonna have to serve time. So I knew really I couldn't straighten up if I wanted to because people wouldn't let you, out in the streets.
- I: Is that the hardest thing about going straight. . . other people's reactions to you?
- R: You might move to a new area where you try to straighten out, nobody knows you, you don't file that you're a convict working at that job there, . . . don't file a federal record. So you get to work maybe three months, might last a year. . .the law finds out you're a convicted felon, go for you, they bring up your past record. People start learning about you again. . .[this happens] everywhere you go.
- I: Why do you think that you steal? Do you know?
- R: Well. . .I knew. . .mine was sort of. . .you might say, it was spite at first. Then it turned out it had to

be, it's a habit. Just like smoking, you couldn't stop doing it. I know that if I try hard enough I might beat it one time, thought I'd beat it that one time, I had that year 'till I had to kill that dog and also I had another case and some time. I was doing pretty good before this one, got into something I loved to do, staying out of trouble. I thought I had it beat 'till then. After that, I started going back down hill, I stayed out from. . .after I got out that time, I stayed out for I think three months. . .because I couldn't find a job I like again. So automatically . . .really, see, might say your job and [what is] surrounding you. . .[these are the most important things].

I: What does serving time mean to you?

R: What it really means to be on the inside locked up, knowing you ain't got no freedom, society still looking down their nose at you. . .and they, just. . .a different way of, say, hassling you. Say, on the streets, they can hassle you in here and all. It's just a feeling you get. . .might be the way the guard looks at you. . .like you're lower than a human you ever wanna meet. Onliest thing he's doing is making everybody hate him and all. Just like in _____ state prison, now they look down their nose. . .some of the guards up there look at you, look down their nose at you. One night one of the guards got an axe-handle used on him. All it is, you gonna make the guys finally mean enough and hard enough that he's not gonna go no burglary, and I know one of these times, if they keep pushing like they doing now all the time [anger and fear]. . .onliest thing that gonna end up is I'm gonna do a harder job next time and I might carry a gun. Somebody might get killed. And I know it. . .that's all it does to you, that's what the inside does to you, feels [like] to you. Just a way of hassling you, make you meaner.

I: What do your behaviors mean to you. . .your past, and future?

R: Well, I think of my past, I think of the things I've done, things I've messed up, people I've hurt. And I think of the ones I've helped out. . .and hurt in a way. This time I was thinking about the woman I was helping out and living with, the woman and the two girls. . .I said, I figured, well. . .in a way, the one's I stole from, I helped the one that was poor enough that they couldn't do nothing else, no other way. So I helped in a way and I hurt people, and

everything. Then I look ahead, knowing what's gonna come. Automatically, most likely, they'll send me to a road camp, and I'll make parole out of it. Knowing I won't get a work release. But just lucky that I'll . . . I don't know if I got a good job or not now, the boss that I had said I have a job when I get out, but they won't. That's just the way you think of things, you know [very sad].

I: What are the chances of you going straight again?

R: I know on this parole ain't no need to try and figure how to stay clean, . . . because I know if I get just on suspicion I'm gonna get violated. So I figure I'll be lucky if I stay out a month till they've got me on something. . . [some kind of bum rap], violate parole anyway [even though I did nothing]. I might not of done it or nothing, but I try to keep clean. Just the way. I know, they're gonna do anyway. The way it turns out.

I: Is there anything else that you feel like you want to tell me?

R: . . . [thought]. The guards at _____ state prison don't hassle you like they do here. They hassle you here on just any little thing. Over there the onliest time they mess with you is when they had you on something. . . that is something that's wrong. They used to pass you through in say four weeks to a month [before formal classification]. Now they pushing things down, crowding things up. . . make it look like there is so many criminals. They might be, might not be and all. But they done the same. . . tests as they run here on you. The run over in _____ state prison, but they don't take that [this] long to run no test on no guy. They. . . I've. . . like I said, this week I might be called out twice maybe three times. Well. You had a call every day [before formal classification], you got your tests over with that you supposed to have and you can close it down.

I: What's the routine here?

R: Well, say if you got call-outs. . . you might be called out in the morning, might take, say, a test. Might have last a couple of hours. The rest of the time you walking around the compound waiting. . . see if you gonna be on call-out again or not. You never know. You might not [be called] you never no. . . Say if I got to _____ like I figure they gonna do with me, instead of work release. Well, I get there, might

be sitting around there trying to figure out what to do. Onliest thing its doing, is just make you pull harder time. You're not learning nothing, except harder ways round about. How they gonna mess you up, do you here and do you there. You might make. . .say you're on a work release and they put you in a road camp, you might stay six months. OK, you gonna be up for parole maybe next six months. So what's the work release gonna do you any good? So automatically its doing no good really.

I: OK, that's a fine interview. Thanks for your help.

Interview Notes and Observations

This individual seemed to be highly truthful in his conversation with me. The only real questions I have about the validity of the interview concern his enumeration of the number of burglaries that he could successfully commit and his statements concerning the "take" that he received from some of these burglaries. It did not seem to me that the respondent was trying to con me or to shock me. Rather, I feel that he was trying to tell his story honestly and simply; perhaps, too simply.

The emotional content of this interview was varied, and was especially strong in several places. It was apparent to me that his quarrels with his father were of extraordinary importance to this respondent. Also he was emotionally moved by reflecting on the reactions of others, especially females and employers, to his criminal history. In a more positive sense, the respondent seems strongly concerned with the woman that he lived with immediately prior to this sentence.

The respondent is somewhat disorganized psychologically and he seems to be beginning to accept the identity of being a criminal. He continues to express guilt over his past crimes. He also was sometimes confused over the chronological order of past events. However a check with information from his "rap sheet" does reveal that most often his recollection was quite correct.

In total, I consider this a good interview. I am confident that the information received is valid.

APPENDIX B
ORIGINAL INTERVIEWING FRAME

1. The respondent's criminal history, and his reactions to that portion of his biography.
 - a. the subjective meanings attached to the reactions of significant others to the respondent's criminal biography.
 - b. the subjective meanings of the criminal biography as perceived by the respondent.
2. The respondent's self-concept.
 - a. the degree to which the respondent sees himself as responsible, or not responsible, for his actions.
 - b. significant changes in self-concept during respondent's life-history (or moral career).
 - c. the effects of criminal behavior on the respondent's self-concept.
 - d. the effects of treatment or punishment by official agencies on the respondent's self-concept.
3. The respondent's prison experience, with special reference to officially-applied punishment and treatment.
 - a. without reference to treatment programs.
 - b. with reference to treatment programs.
 - c. the subjective meanings attached to the respondent's experience of officially-applied punishment and treatment.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

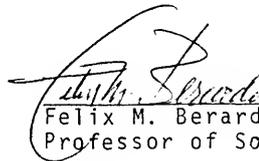
Thomas Matthew Meisenhelder was born on July 24, 1946 in Stockton, California. He is the son of Robert Meisenhelder and Esther Craver Meisenhelder of York, Pennsylvania. In 1964, Meisenhelder graduated from Wake Forest University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology. Following a tour of duty with the United States Navy, Meisenhelder enrolled in graduate school at the University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. He received the Master of Arts degree in Sociology in December of 1972, and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Sociology in August, 1975.

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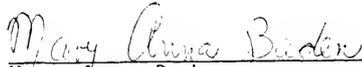
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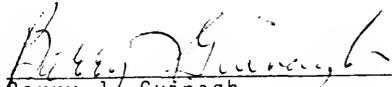

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