SOCIAL GROUP WORK WITH ACTING OUT
ADOLESCENTS IN THE SCHOOL SETTING:
A CRITIQUE OF TWO RESEARCH STUDIES.

by

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard

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December 1967
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Date **December 15, 1967**
ABSTRACT

The first purpose of this paper is to analyze two evaluative studies of social group work. The second purpose is the formulation of a researchable question derived from this analysis in relation to the current professional experience of two graduate social work students doing field work in a Burnaby Junior High School.

A brief overall description of Girls at Vocational High and Seattle Atlantic Street Center is presented. A summary of Elizabeth Herzog's Some Guidelines for Evaluative Research follows and serves as a base for the analysis of these studies. Herzog's analysis and emphasis of the early phase of problem formulation is selected for study, and additional research references on the topic are reviewed. The two evaluative studies are then examined in relation to problem formulation, and the definition of terms utilized in both studies are scrutinized. One study failed to be explicit in problem formulation. The other, while more explicit, required further pre-evaluative work especially in the integration of the terminology with theory, and in the correlation of the use of terminology by field workers and research raters. The research project presents conclusions and a researchable question which is formulated on the basis of the analysis of the studies under investigation.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study has been made possible through the cooperation and suggestions of a number of people. We wish to express our appreciation particularly to the following:

Miss M. Montgomery, School of Social Work, University of British Columbia, for her encouragement and guidance;

Mr. Tsuguo Ikeda, Project Director, Seattle Atlantic Street Center Project, for his information and keen interest in our project;

Dr. Dennis Shulman, Psychologist, Burnaby Mental Health Center, for his comments and observations.
INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1967 two group work students were assigned to a Junior High School in Burnaby to provide group work services to adolescent boys and girls ranging in age from thirteen to sixteen. The general focus of the groups is one of healthy personality development in order to counteract the influence of delinquent association. Selection was based on school records of the student's inadequacies in school, home, and/or peer functioning and with his subsequent acting out behavior in one or more of these interrelated areas. The group workers assumed that the basic functions of any small group, that is "providing an arena for testing out and re­hearsinging relationship skills; laying the foundation for a reference system of norms and values; and enhancing a social matrix of belonging," (23, pp. 29-30) would meet the needs of the individuals chosen for the group experience.

The medium through which problems are resolved, compromised or "worked through" is not always via a group discussion technique. Other modes of communication such as group activities and outings are essential in bringing problems to the foreground and these are utilized in this program. The role of the group worker is epitomized in a generic "grass roots" approach, i.e., as group trust emerges gradually,
group controls and aims evolve on a meaningful level in relation to 'where the client is' and 'where he wants to go.'

In this particular group focus, the following questions warrant discussion and examination: How valid are the assumptions and theoretical bases that the group workers are utilizing in the school setting? How are these related to the practical implementation of the program? If the changes occur, to what variables can we attribute them? How can we be assured of consistency of data and measurement of the same variable between teachers, researchers and significant others engaged in the project?

PURPOSE

The foregoing group analysis was by way of introduction to the focus of this paper. The present school group project reveals the possible distortions, misinterpretations and inconsistencies in trying to measure the effectiveness of change through the group approach. In evaluating any program of group or individual psychotherapy, there are a multitude of interrelated factors which one must consider when trying to draw out causal relationships or correlational trends in the before-after change aspect.

In this particular project there is a long range goal and an intermediate goal. Looking first at the long range perspective the project is setting the beginning stages of a program to examine the effectiveness of various techniques and interventive strategies involved in setting up group work services in the schools. The long term project will attempt to
find out what forms of intervention are effective in terms of specific criteria, how they are best utilized and with what population.

The intermediate goal, which is the goal of this paper, is to draw out a researchable question which will prescribe the baseline for its continuance in the field next year. The study of two research projects, *Girls at Vocational High* and *Seattle Atlantic Street Center* will enable us to benefit from their experience. Based on an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the two studies, implications will be drawn for the evaluation of group work services in the Junior High School.
CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND OF THE TWO STUDIES

A descriptive precis of both projects will be undertaken in this section. The emphasis will be on the research design, measures and results as pertinent to the original problem formulation. The definition of terms used in the problem formulation will be examined closely in Chapter IV.

1. GIRLS AT VOCATIONAL HIGH

(A) Research Design

The research design was set up to study "the effectiveness of social work for interrupting potential deviant careers" (24, p. 18). This problem formulation was tested by a control group - experimental group design. The design thus involved an experimental group who received treatment and a control group who did not receive treatment. The results of the control group as compared to the experimental group were assumed to predict a difference in outcome which could ultimately be attributed to the treatment services and interventive techniques.

The project lasted five years and attempted to analyze the total high school experience of four cohorts of girls. However, the last cohort had only completed their junior year when the project was terminated.

Within the treatment versus no treatment design there were two approaches to client service in the experimental group.
The first cohort received individual casework contact. The second cohort received a form of group work approach but the membership was large, unselective, and poorly related to a defined purpose. The third cohort received the benefit of a revised group program aimed at matching individual need with group orientation.

(B) Instruments of Data Collection

Measurement for selection purposes or effectiveness of outcome was defined by two distinct types: objective and clinical. The objective measurement devices included such items as questionnaires (sociometric) and school evidence. Initially a personality inventory was administered to all girls in order to justify their selection of problem and non-problem groups. The clinical measures included attitude questionnaires, self report items and personality tests. The social worker's assessment of the personality change can be seen as a combination of the two measures as it is an objective format based on their clinical intuitions as to where the girl is on the Hunt-Kogan Movement Scale at the end of her treatment program (one year at a time plus an overall evaluation if and when they completed school).

(C) Results and their Interpretations

In her article in Social Service Review Macdonald points to the fact that the attitudinal questionnaire "failed to discriminate between these large groups (i.e. problems and
non-problem) and its power to discriminate between the smaller experimental and control groups is dubious even if treatment results were substantial" (19, p. 183).

The school criteria of behavior and academic achievement as applied to both experimental and control groups revealed that there were no significant differences between the two in the final outcome, e.g., "similar proportions of experimental and control groups graduated from school, were still in school or had dropped out of school" (19, p. 179).

2. SEATTLE ATLANTIC STREET CENTER

(A) Research Design

Their problem formulation of measuring the effectiveness of social work with acting out youth was inherent in a three phase research design: pre-test, test and evaluation. The project took five years to complete, (beginning October 1962) and is at present in the last stages of final integration and evaluation of results. The pre-test phase was set out as a time for a 'pilot study-exploratory' approach in that their basic theoretical assumptions underlying selection, recording service and evaluation procedures were to be analyzed on a miniature scale before implementing them fully in the test phase.

This project also involved an experimental-control group focus (treatment versus no treatment). Within the experimental group the boys were randomly assigned into three case-
loads of eighteen boys each: "Thus each caseload had represented in it an array of acting out performance from slight to quite intense" (28, ASC 87 6/67, pp. 7-8).

The treatment focus seemed to be group-work, although it was emphasized that the worker's approach was generic. The worker was not tied to any one method and theoretically he engaged in the total approach when intervening in the client system. The worker then gave indirect service to the client by contacting parents, employers, school, specifically when the 'community' brought the client to the attention of the agency.

(B) Instruments of Data Collection

Although we cannot relate the effectiveness of treatment outcome (the final results are still being processed), it is possible to look at the instruments that were utilized in the pre-test period and discover which were carried over or eliminated in the test phase.

Originally a multiple regression prediction technique was to be operational in the selecting procedure, i.e., it gathered data from all relevant 'systems' in the client's life and attempted to predict delinquent behavior according to the all encompassing index or score of variables. However, it was discarded because of time and cost factors, and because its efficiency and accuracy as a better predictive tool over and above a random selection was not warranted.
Other important measuring devices which were not analyzed until later in the program - The Parent - Home Interview Schedule and The Student Opinion Survey - reflected the testing of the theoretical concepts of their five basic theories. It also tapped attitudinal responses and self report items.

To maintain consistency in data from one worker to another, and to avoid the discrepancies of misinterpretation of data, a complex recording system was developed. The numerical assignment to categories of interventive techniques, individual assessment, and various definitions of norm violative behavior, made it possible to program the basic treatment strategy.

(C) Results and their Interpretation

The pre-test phase being only a five month orientation nonetheless revealed some pertinent results.

An interesting result of the pre-test phase was the inadequacy of the five theories to fully explain delinquent acting out behavior in the research population. However, this result was not forthcoming until Gould's analysis in 1966 of the Student Opinion Survey - some two and a half years later. Thus, at the time of the pre-test of Parent Interview Schedule and the Student Opinion Survey (1963-1964) the "real" pre-test phase had past and the test section was in progress.

The recording system technique allowed the incongruity between avowed theoretical orientation and actual
practice to be pointed up: "In fact most of the worker's time was spent directly with the client first and with his mother second, but was diminished or nil in other parts of the client system" (28, September 64 to August 65, p. 5).

In comparing the experimental and control groups: "It can be seen that the experimental group initially was performing in school at a poorer level than the control group, that with service, the experimental group performed at a better level; and, with termination of service, the group reverted back toward the same relative level of performance" (2, p. 423). Clearly, not enough time was given to analyze the pre-test data to make important revisions.
CHAPTER III

GUIDE LINES FOR EVALUATIVE RESEARCH
AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

THE BASIS OF OUR ANALYSIS

The two studies summarized in the previous chapter will be analyzed on the basis of criteria specified by Herzog in Some Guide Lines for Evaluative Research. These guide lines, compiled by Herzog after an extensive review of relevant research literatures, stem from questions which experts agree should be answered in any effort designed to determine the effects of social work intervention. The guide lines may be grouped under five major headings: (1) what is the purpose of the evaluation? (2) what kind of change is desired? (3) by what means is change to be brought about? (4) what methods are used for assessing change? (5) what is the meaning of the changes found? The following will be a summary of these guide lines.\(^{12}\), p. 2

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION?

The formulation of the purpose should begin with a discussion of the reasons for contemplating an evaluation and not with how it is to be done. This insures that all involved in setting up the study are concerned about the same problem and that the findings will be pertinent. A careful analysis of the purpose will help to determine if the pertinent informa-
tion desired can be obtained by research. Research procedures vary with the nature of the purpose to be served, and the specific question asked. The research procedures will call for certain available resources in terms of staff, time and funds. A clear purpose will insure proper consideration of the availability of these resources. (12, pp. 5-8)

WHAT KIND OF CHANGE IS DESIRED?

Determining the kind of change required involves defining what is to be changed and the desired change to be attained. Change from what consists of a diagnostic statement of the specific conditions to be altered and the specific goals to be achieved. Change to what, the goal of treatment, is implicit in the diagnosis but not fully defined by it. To determine that the desired change has occurred necessitates the development of criteria. These criteria are the standards against which observed behavior is evaluated. This calls for operationally defined diagnostic categories and treatment goals. Herzog notes that contemporary diagnostic categories in social work are not readily amenable to operational definitions, because they are highly abstract concepts. Pre-evaluative research is involved with defining these diagnostic categories in terms of concrete behavioral referents. Herzog suggests that "the working out of sound, usable categories of diagnosis and treatment goals is a major undertaking prerequisite to definitive evaluation" (12, p. 13).
BY WHAT MEANS IS CHANGE TO BE BROUGHT ABOUT?

The means by which change is to be brought about must be specified. The intervention process must be operationally defined. Defining the method operationally will insure against a division between the avowed work of the practitioner and the practice as actually carried out. This becomes a very difficult task because of the very subtle aspects involved of some techniques. It should be emphasized, though, that before research can realistically test the degree of effectiveness, the method or technique being used must be specifically defined. (12, pp. 30-36)

WHAT METHODS ARE USED FOR ASSESSING CHANGE?

The methods used for assessing change in evaluative research must be reliable. It is necessary to determine to what extent the differences produced by measuring or rating occur from inconsistencies in the device rather than from differences in what is being measured or rated. Reliability by definition focuses on the means and agent of measurement rather than on what is measured. A reliable method of assessing change is repeatable and produces the same results when repeated. (12, p. 37)

The methods used in assessing change must be valid. Validity is concerned with every detail of the evaluative process, especially the selection, definition and application of criteria. Reliability is a prerequisite to validity, but no
amount of reliability replaces the necessity of determining validity. A valid method of assessing change assesses that which it is supposed to assess. (12, p. 48)

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE CHANGES FOUND?

Interpretation of the results produced involves determination of the nature, degree, and stability of the changes manifested. The extent to which the findings of the study can be generalized will depend on the purpose and scope of the study. The extent to which the therapeutic outcome reported can be regarded as gratifying or disappointing is dependent upon the specified treatment goals. The overriding concern in social work research is to determine whether the results were brought about by the method identified or by extraneous on non-accounted for variables. This is a familiar problem to evaluative research and seems to imply the need for control groups and explicitly stating the techniques used to create change. (12, p. 49)

OUR FOCUS OF ANALYSIS

After studying the problem formulation process developed in seventy-five cases, Genevieve W. Carter found that the more time and effort put into the problem statement, the less time and work needed for later adjustments. She found that too often people rush into a study without the problem to be researched properly developed. This process requires time to think through and define the problem and
setting up the questions to be investigated. Also, this initial phase involves reviewing and evaluating related research. Carter concludes "that in planning research in a social work agency, the most important phase of the entire research process is at the crucial point of problem formulation" (7, p. 295).

The research process consists of a number of closely related activities that overlap continuously rather than in a strictly prescribed sequence. So interdependent are these activities that the first step of the research process largely determines the nature of the last. As the research proceeds through the various phases, the focus of attention will shift. This shift though, represents a difference in emphasis, rather than an exclusive concentration on one step. An over simplified model of the research process consists of the following major phases: (1) The statement of purpose is made in the form of formulating the problem. (2) A description of the study design is given. (3) The methods of data collection are specified. (4) The results presented and interpreted. (29, pp. 8-9)

PROBLEM FORMULATION

The process of problem formulation consists of a number of interrelated steps. These are: (1) Narrowing the study (problem) to one than can be handled. (2) Formulation of a hypothesis. (3) Clarification and formal definition of the concepts used in the study. (4) Specification of the kinds of evidence that could serve as indicators of the various
concepts (establishment of working definitions). (5) Consideration of methods of relating this study to others using similar concepts so that it would make the greatest possible contribution to general knowledge. (29, p. 33)

The hypothesis functions so as to direct our search for order among the facts. The hypothesis is a declarative sentence which states the relationship between the variables of concern and carries clear implications for testing the stated relations. The problem of concern cannot be scientifically solved until it is reduced to a hypothesis. The researcher does not test the question posed by the statement of the problem, rather he tests one or more hypotheses implied by the questions. The hypothesis is a statement of relationship between variables. The researcher is attempting to test the relationship expressed by the hypothesis, not the variables used in the hypothesis. A sound hypothesis stems from a theory which attempts to explain the phenomena of concern to the researcher. A theory consists of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena. The hypothesis incorporates the theory or part of it in testable form. The relations encompassed in the hypothesis are deduced from those suggested relations specified in the theory. By testing these suggested relations the researcher is helping to determine the validity of the theory and contri-
The variables specified by the hypothesis are constructs. Operational definitions assign meaning to a construct or variable by specifying the activities or operations necessary to measure the construct or variable. The operational definition gives meaning to the variable by spelling out what the investigator must do to measure the variable. Experimental operational definitions spell out the details of the investigator's manipulations of values of variables. Operational definitions form the direct bridge between theory, construct level, and the level of observation. (17, p. 38)

The final statement of problem formulation should be a precise exposition of the rationale of the study and of what it proposes to investigate. It should describe the situation that gave rise to the study and the practical difficulty or that part of theory to which attention is to be given. It should then state the specific aspect of the situation to be investigated and the reasons for this choice. The ends to be served are implied by these previous statements but anticipated alternative outcomes or targets should be stated separately. The import of the study cannot be clearly understood without these preliminary statements. The balance of the problem formulation covers the specific outline to be followed, that is, the hypothesis, assumptions and concepts are specified. Only on the basis of this kind of a statement can the researcher justifiably decide whether to proceed with the remainder of
the research effort. With the situation analyzed and the approach to it outlined one can specify the knowledge needed and decide as to whether this requisite knowledge is available. (26, p. 46)

PROBLEM FORMULATION IN EVALUATIVE RESEARCH

The criteria specified by Herzog in the guidelines for evaluative research incorporate the characteristics of problem formulation. By defining the purpose, the change to be brought about and the means used to create change the researcher is essentially developing a problem formulation. Evaluative research, like any other research problem, needs to be based on theory; the hypothesis is defined and the variables or concepts of concern are operationally defined. The guidelines as specified by Herzog are applicable to social work research in that they specify particular problem areas in this type of research. Operational definitions are difficult to achieve in social work because of the abstract nature of diagnostic categories and treatment techniques. Herzog states that the evaluation effort can only be meaningful if one knows what is being manipulated, and the nature of the manipulation. The effectiveness of a particular form of intervention can only be determined if the intervention is defined and methods explicated. If the researcher fails to accomplish this in the initial stages of the evaluative research effort very little in the way of conclusions can be drawn from
the research outcome. Lack of clarity, specificity, and consistency in the initial stages of the research project destroys the possibility of determining effectiveness, or of even measuring it. Proper problem formulation forces the researcher to be systematic and empirical. These are basic criteria that must be satisfied in any research endeavour.
CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION OF THE TWO STUDIES

PROBLEM FORMULATION - PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATIVE STUDIES

The social workers at the agency which subsequently provided the service in the Girls at Vocational High experiment found that girls referred to them were extremely difficult to make first contact with, difficult or impossible to involve in casework, and in such a severe stage of maladjustment that very positive or constructive goals could not be set.

"They (the caseworkers) frequently were of the opinion that earlier intervention might have prevented an almost untreatable condition from developing, or at least have permitted restorative treatment to be undertaken with more hope of success" (24, p. 17).

As a result of this concern it was decided to conduct an experiment in social work intervention and:

"a project took shape that was intended to study the effectiveness of social work for interrupting potentially deviant careers" (24, p. 18).

In Seattle a traditional settlement house staffed by a Director and two social workers had developed into an agency specializing in work with hard to engage adolescent boys' groups. Here, as elsewhere, experience showed that:

"delinquent groups might learn to conform within an agency but that this conformity did not 'carry over' to the larger social setting" (28, ASC 23-4/64, p. 7).
Their concern focussed on both the rapid increase of juvenile delinquency in Seattle's central area, and their dilemma to confine their service to group work with the boys only, or to extend appropriate services into the larger social setting such as, the family, school and police court. The decision was made to adopt the latter approach when the agency embarked on a demonstration and evaluative project entitled Effectiveness of Social Work on Acting-Out Youth.

In both cases the absence of explicit results expected by the research consumer require some speculation. Were the financing bodies expecting results on which future policy decisions to finance the agency could be based, or did they anticipate that the results of the projects would only contribute in a small way to satisfying doubts of the effectiveness of social work?

One consequence that both projects share is the dilution of workers' efforts by vastly increased assumption of service responsibilities for intervention and effecting social change. In a review of Girls at Vocational High, Mary E. MacDonald asks if the treatment means can possibly cope with such a "massive attack" (19, p. 181) on the community's needs. We are told in the central Seattle area that 20.9% of the children entering junior high school had their names recorded in the police files, (28, ASC 23-4/64, p.2) and that:

"segmentation of residential areas, along with such characteristics as low income, high unemployment, a sizable percent of substandard
housing and a high percent of broken homes," means that "... Adult surveillance of adolescent behavior vies with others' attention-consuming problems.... The project being executed by the Seattle Atlantic Street Center is not proposed as an answer to these problems" (28, ASC 78-7/66, p. 16).

and yet into the second year of the Seattle Atlantic Street Center project the agency was thinking of helping "in the construction of community programs designed to meet client needs" (28, ASC 23-4/64, p. 9) and focussing on the entire client system "as capable of modification and improvement" (28, ASC 23-4/64, p. 9). Maurice B. Hamovitch's comments in a review of Girls at Vocational High cannot but apply to the Seattle Atlantic Street Center:

"The major defect would seem that the basic research question was oversimplified.... As Dr. Cottrell states in the Foreword, the authors did not ask openly: 'Is social work on the wrong tract?' But the net effect of their approach was to raise this as the central question" (11, p. 464).

In the case of both projects the service agency had much less grandiose plans initially. The Girls at Vocational High experiment wished to compare the results of earlier and later casework intervention. The Seattle Atlantic Street Center wished to examine the effect of social group work on Anti-Social Youth. Admittedly these projects are still of giant proportions but at least they are more in line with the service means of the agency. Some of the consequences of assuming projects of such global proportions will become evident with the examination of the
project's definitions of the terms used in the basic research questions.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Effectiveness. We found it very hard to find explicit definitions of terms used in the basic research question formulated in Girls at Vocational High. While not experiencing this problem with Seattle Atlantic Street Center, we are in the unfortunate position of commenting before the project is complete and the writings consolidated. But we will attempt to draw out in both cases what the various participants mean by "effectiveness."

The Girls at Vocational High research staff write that "clients should show 'improvement' by being more 'normal' more like those who do not appear to have problems" (24, p. 20). The ultimate criteria of effectiveness, which include a reduction of truancy, improved school grades and conduct and the prevention of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, may however, write the research staff "be considered secondary in the sense that the treatment program was only indirectly focused upon them" (24, p. 181). The social workers describe their objectives in such terms as "to increase self-understanding, to develop more adequate psychological and social functioning, to facilitate maturation, to supplement emotional resources inadequate for the ordinary and extraordinary stresses of adolescence" (24, p. 181). The girl who calmly drops out of school because it does not meet her needs might be making a mature decision, but for the purposes of research
the "lack of educational success may be expected to have serious consequences for later life" (24, p. 43). Is social work to encourage individual conformity to institutional expectations when individual need is not met by the institution? Is it realistic to expect a girl to carry out homework when her home is noisy, upset and preoccupied in the difficulties of making ends meet in an unhealthy and overcrowded apartment? Conspicuous by its absence is the school's definition of what would be effective intervention by the social work agency. We know what they mean by failure in grades and conduct etc., but we do not know what a particular girl must do to meet the school's expectations. It may be as necessary for academic achievement to alleviate learning problems as it is to alleviate social malfunctioning.

The criteria established as indicators of effectiveness in the pre-test period of social work intervention by the Seattle Atlantic Street Center project were processed and weighed separately in recognition of the data being the product of different institutional and referral systems.

However, "the ultimate evaluation of success or failure of the project will be whether the acting out behavior of the experimental group is significantly less than that of the control group as determined by school, police and juvenile court records" (28, ASC 29-6/64 p. 4-5). Other methods of evaluation included worker evaluations, client questionnaire responses, psycho-social inventories, and a unique recording system utilized by the workers. It is
perhaps the latter dimension in evaluation of the project that offers the possibility that the results, unlike those of the Girls at Vocational High experiment, could make a valuable contribution to further research. Here, instead of evaluating progress made by a boy with respect to his acting out behavior, his progress will be evaluated with respect to certain variables derived from five widely held theories of causation of acting out behavior. An attempt is made to meet Mary E. MacDonald's major criticism of Girls at Vocational High through "the conceptualization of practice goals in terms amenable to measurement" (19, p. 188). Changes as a result of the pre-test experience were made in the recording system (28, ASC 53-4/65, pp.11-12) but basically it remained the same in the service period. A theoretical combine of the etiology of delinquent behavior was made up of anomie theory, differential association theory, community disorganization theory, family disorganization theory and self concept theory. The works of Emile Durkheim and Robert Merton; Edwin Sutherland; Shaw, McKay and Thrasher; Sheldon and Eleanor Gleuck, and Ivan Ney and James Short; and finally Walter C. Reckless, formed respectively the authorities for the theories. From these theoretical orientations seventy-nine diagnostic categories are developed and supplemented by seven categories developed from traditional social work personality theory. In the Recording Manual (28, ASC 43-11/64) opposite each diagnostic category examples of its manifestation in behavior are given. For example, category
101 is derived from anomie theory. Under a sub-heading of goal orientation, Category 101 is: Illegitimate occupational goals as defined by the law; examples:- bookie, numbers man, pimp, gambler, dope pusher, confidence man. Similarly, Category 107: Does not expect to reach occupational goal due to lack of opportunity; example:- "I'd like to be a plumber, but you can't get in the union without experience; and you can't get experience (a job) without a union card" (28, ASC 43-11/64, pp.9-10). The observable applicability of these diagnostic categories theoretically predispose the individual to acting out behavior, therefore, the reversal of their applicability implies social work effectiveness.

The integration of treatment goals through an explicit theoretical base with research criteria of effectiveness would appear as a major accomplishment of the Seattle Atlantic Street Center.

Several problems relate the use of this framework and some will become evident as other terms are defined in the basic research question. At the time of the third year analysis of the pre-test phase the results of recording procedure were not available, and reliance was on the evidence of school disciplinary files and police records. (28, ASC 70-2/66, p. 13)

Social Work

This term is perhaps the most ill-defined in the basic research question adopted by the Girls at Vocational High experiment. Generally, its use implied that social
work, agency services and treatment were synonymous. The authors write that "Agency services are identifiably different in some respects from the wide range of experiences of adolescent girls, such as school, religious, recreational and play experiences" (24, p. 21). Referrals for agency services were seen as those for which casework and group therapy are treatment methods of choice "excluding physical disabilities, severe psychological pathology or extreme environmental circumstances" (24, p. 20).

The problem of what criteria would indicate if the appropriate treatment had taken place was circumvented by defining the research concern as "therapeutic outcome rather than therapeutic performance" (24, pp. 156-7). The workers evidently considered a treatment relationship a necessary ingredient (24, p. 19), but the fact that "Social workers judged almost half (47%) of the girls in individual casework treatment to have become 'hardly' or 'not at all' involved in a treatment relationship" (24, pp. 149-50), did not result in the classification of this group as not having received treatment. Further, the caseworker's task of diagnosing "so that appropriate treatment plans could be devised to fit the particular needs of each client" (24, p. 19) was not matched with the opportunity to reject clients for whom casework or group work were not the treatment methods of choice. Could social work possibly be the answer to all ills? Treatment cannot be left so poorly defined, and we need to know what Bernice Boehm asks: "which kind of treatment is most
effective, and for which kind of girl?" (5, p. 480).

The Seattle Atlantic Street Center demonstrates major accomplishments in making their definition of social work explicit, and recording its application during the project. Initially intervention was seen as a "total approach" into the interacting forces including the family, peers and community. (28, ASC 63-01, p. 1) James Seaberg, a field worker, indicated in a recently published analysis that he saw what was being tested was "the value of confrontation with behavior and the impact of persistent, assertive attention, which became inextricably embroiled in crisis support." (28, ASC 87-6/67, pp. 67-68). But whatever actually occurred is explicit through the recording system. The recording system keeps account of persons contacted and the frequency, the setting of the contact, length of time, problems observed and techniques employed in dealing with those problems judged amenable to intervention.

"Although a few of the (sixteen) 'Interventive Techniques' are directly designed to affect a specific 'Diagnostic Category', generally speaking 'Interventive Techniques' are those which the Seattle Atlantic Street Center staff feels are of common use in social work practice" (28, ASC 29-6/64, p. 11).

Not recorded was the nature of the client-worker relationship established. This decision was based on the

"scant evidence that the relationship alone has effectively deterred acting-out or delinquent behavior", and the assumption "that the Center's workers have the requisite skills to form positive relationships with the client population" (28, ASC 33-6/64, p. 21).
Further the recording system does not indicate worker efforts to build on client strengths, his response to intervention, the evaluation of movement, and narrative illustrative material. However, these aspects are considered a part of the agency service, and accounted for by other means.

Basic treatment assumptions follow the sociological tradition that acting out behavior can be explained in large part as being rational, and that the boys are accessible to modification through a conscious response to treatment.

During the first two years of the Seattle Atlantic Street Center project one hundred and seven talks to community groups were given. However, in spite of this reflecting a part of the "total approach" it is not evidently integrated into the recording system.

"Potentially Deviant Careers" and "Acting out Youth." The definition of these terms are closely related to the definitions of effectiveness. The Girls at Vocational High experiment identified their experimental populations through school guidance assessments, and school records from which evidence of earlier norm violative behavior was gathered. The norm of behavior is evidently that ascribed to by the school, and the theoretical base for the prior and identification of girls who if untreated would develop such problems appeared to be that "prior behavior is a good predictor of subsequent behavior" (24, p. 206). The Seattle Atlantic Street Center
defines acting out "simply as the objective evidence of a boy's social misbehavior as reported in police and school disciplinary files" (28, ASC 70-2/66, p. 3). For reasons discussed earlier the multiple regression prediction technique was abandoned and the pretest population was "restricted to those boys who in the past had exhibited antisocial behavior and who were predicted to continue doing so" (28, ASC 36-6/64, p. 11).

The Seattle Atlantic Street Center used Police and Juvenile Court Records in addition to those of the school. Other data on acting out behavior was obtained from Parent Home Interview schedules and Student Opinion Surveys which were designed utilizing the projects five theory orientation. Unfortunately only the Student Opinion Survey has been analyzed to date and neither schedule was used in the selection procedure as was the original intent. The delay in the analysis becoming available is unfortunate for two reasons. First, the following table shows that many of the measures of acting out behavior do not correlate well.
**INTERCORRELATIONS OF DIFFERENT MEASURES OF ACTING-OUT BEHAVIOR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Police Contact</th>
<th>School Misconduct or Rating</th>
<th>Counselor Rating</th>
<th>Teacher Rating</th>
<th>Self Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Court Contact</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Contact</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Misconduct</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor Rating</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Rating</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Gamma has been used as the measure of association (28, ASC 79-8/66, p. 6)*

Either some of the measures are invalid or the different measures are measuring different things.

"Are these indices representative of the true distribution of acting out behavior, or are they subject to the basis inherent in our culture's stereotypes of particular racial and socio-economic groups? These data(from the student opinion survey) would tend to favor the latter conclusion" (28, ASC 78-8/66, p. 14).

The second reason concerns the validity for the test population of the hypotheses underpinning the entire treatment program.

"In general, the conclusion emerges that these hypotheses were completely unsupported and the rest found support only in extremely modified form, and even then, the observed relationships were usually not very strong" (28, ASC 79-8/66, pp. 58-9).
The ultimate evaluation of effectiveness is of course "whether the acting-out behavior of the experimental group is significantly less than that of the control group as determined by school, police and juvenile court records" (28, ASC 43-11/64, p. 5), but there are strong indications that these agencies are expressing themselves according to different definitions of acting out. The second measure of effectiveness by the modification of the theoretically defined variables is of equally questionable validity as a result of the student opinion survey.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCHABLE QUESTION

One basic conclusion that can be drawn from the Seattle Atlantic Street Center project is that the results of the pre-test phase were not utilized to shape an effective research design for the test phase. The problems and misconceptions from the pre-test phase were carried over to the actual test phase because the investigators lacked time to examine the design procedures and results. In both projects the final basic research question called for a massive undertaking which the treatment means could not meet. Neither project enunciated what kind of results were expected, and this is felt to have led to a failure to face up to what might be realistically expected. Tied closely to this point is the project's failure to state how the results will probably be used. As a result the wished for results from the intervention into a large depressed area by a few social workers are far too great and render the actual changes brought about statistically insignificant.

We found that the definition of terms used in the basic problem formulation leads to: (1) the designation and utilization of theory to underpin the research, and (2) the pulling together of treatment and research goals. A failure to do this by Girls at Vocational High renders it of little value to research because essentially it is impossible to repeat from the information given. The great accomplishment
of the Seattle Atlantic Street Center is the extent they have rendered it repeatable by defining what they have done.

Finally, in view of poor correlations of the different measures of acting out behavior in the Seattle Atlantic Street Center, we suspect that some of the raters, particularly those not directly involved in the project, are rating behavior not incorporated into either research or treatment goals. We believe that all involved in the project regardless of their profession or agency affiliation, should participate in the definition of terms utilized in the basic research question. This particular problem of statistically insignificant correlations between teachers and social workers led to the abandonment of an evaluation of a recent Vancouver Y.W.C.A. social group work program. (6, p. 37)

The professional experience of two of the authors of this report indicate that their definitions of acting out behavior are not always shared by their high school colleagues who also disagree with one another. There is a need to determine the criteria and the theoretical base on which adolescents are selected as exhibiting acting out behavior, and to determine if these are valid for the particular client population. This will lead to some distinction between the goals of intervention necessary to enhance social functioning and those necessary to enhance academic performance in the school system. This will in turn lead to a closer integration of treatment and research goals.
With these objectives in mind we can only emphasize again the time which must be allotted to meet these pre-evaluative goals.

We propose the following basic research question for pre-evaluative study: Can multi-disciplinary ratings of acting out behavior be standardized so that positive correlations are achieved? We suggest that the work of the Seattle Atlantic Street Center, particularly that related to the Student Opinion Survey, be utilized to frame the hypotheses to be tested.
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