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THE VICIOUS CIRCLE: DRUG USE, ILLICIT
ACTIVITIES AND VICTIMIZATION

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INTRODUCTION

When investigating the large class of phenomena subsumed broadly under the rubric "deviance" we generally identify sub-classes we suspect are reasonably homogeneous. These may include specific categories of crime, discrete disabilities such as blindness or deafness, or other socially disapproved behavior such as heroin addiction or homosexuality. The advantages to this approach are, of course, apparent and many useful observations have been cumulated. (Clinard, 1967; Glaser, 1971; Lemert, 1967). But the same investigators have also emphasized the way in which specific forms of deviance are integrated into a complex system that includes a variety of group phenomena, a cultural web that sanctions markedly variant value systems and institutional forms that accommodate to the specific requirements of these groups and helps to sustain them.

There is another sense, however, in which we can examine particular forms of deviance as a coherent and organized system. If we examine heroin addicts we also observe that many are also linked, in various ways, to a complex market system where they can dispose of the wares they obtain from boosting through organized channels to the ultimate customer, a process described in some detail by both Tardola and

Cartey (The Needle Scene, and How Black Enterprisers Do Their Thing, in Jacobs, 1970.) But behind this particular economic system there also are people who purchase these stolen goods and, equally, a large number of persons who are victimized in the process, i.e., those whose televisions, cameras, cars and pocket books are stolen.

The sources of deviance, if viewed from an integrative systems context, can be seen to generate more complex systems of deviance that are overlapping and serve some purpose at least sufficient to maintain itself. Thus Albert Cohen (in R.K. Merton, Leonard Broom and Leonard Cottrell, 1959, p. 473) points out that "... the very idea of a system is the fact that whatever is found in it is a function of its total structure." The irony is that this is not simply the exploiter (who steals), the broker who sells, but reaches in to the families where addiction is reported to exist and who are also most often robbed and assaulted and have their purses snatched. We therefore find a web where those families where addiction is prevalent are also more likely to be familiar with the stolen goods market system, and in turn are more often the victims of crime.

We propose to look at the residents in a community

where drug addiction and crime and delinquency are amongst the highest in the City, and where an elaborate market system has evolved for the distribution of stolen goods. (Narcotics Register, 1969; Lukoff, 1972; Cartey in Jacobs, 1970.) We will advance the thesis that drug use, stolen goods and victimization are integrated into a system that is reasonably comprehensible and that it is mediated by networks that relate to all three Phenomena. We will also suggest that the social-cultural systems of different ethnic groups who reside in the same community have different rates of involvement because of their differential involvement with deviant networks, but that the processes of acculturation operate on younger persons resident in the community so that, through time, the impact of the social-cultural variations in the propensity to become involved with deviant groups may disappear.

SAMPLE

The sample area is the Bedford-Stuyvesant/Fort Greene area of Brooklyn, New York, served by the Addiction Research and Treatment Corporation, a multi-modality methadone maintenance program located in the community.* The area is

*This survey is part of the evaluation program of the Addiction Research and Treatment Corporation located in the Bedford-Stuyvesant/Fort Greene area of Brooklyn.

characterized by high rates of addiction. All but one of the health areas in Brooklyn identified as high addiction tracts are within the sample area, with rates in individual tracts ranging from 69.7 to 233 per ten thousand, compared to an overall Brooklyn average of 66.2, reflecting the diversity in contiguous areas within this community (Narcotics Register [1969]).

A quota sample was used to obtain 612 interviews. The specifications called for an equal number of male and female respondents. Further, female respondents were to be evenly split between those who were employed and housewives. Males were to be equally divided between those above and those below 30 years of age. In the final sample 53% were female and 47% male, which conforms with the 1970 Census proportions. Blacks from the British West Indies and Puerto Ricans were over-sampled to ensure sufficient numbers for comparative purposes. The final sample consisted of 275 American blacks, 145 British West Indians, 101 Puerto Ricans and 89 whites.*

British West Indians include persons who were born in the Caribbean Islands formerly under British suzerainty, or are the offspring of West Indian parents. There are

*Ethnic group patterns are examined for all major themes to ensure that they are consistent with aggregative patterns.

important differences in culture between the islands in the West Indies; however, they form a cultural complex with similar patterns of slavery and post-slavery social structure and economy (Rubin [1957]; Lowenthal [1967, 1972])).*

Most come from Barbados, Jamaica, Bermuda and Trinidad, with smaller numbers from Granada, the British Virgin Islands, British Guyana and other islands. They were included because British West Indians, while they are black and many are recent immigrants, have as a group made a very different accommodation to the United States. They tend to pursue home-ownership, stress education, and are disproportionately found in the professional, business and political leadership of the black community (Lowenthal; [1967]; Reid [1939]).

The Vicious Circle: Components and Pattern

The starting point for the analysis is a series of low but significant correlations between three discrete indices: the respondents' acknowledgement that a family member or relative has used heroin; that the household has been victimized in the past 12 months; and that the respondent has been offered stolen goods. Each of these

*According to Lowenthal (1972, p. 12): "Resemblances from island to island are substantial and durable: West Indian social structure and ways of life vary from place to place, but their basic forms persist throughout the Caribbean..."

phenomena has somewhat variant patterns when examined against a variety of social status and demographic variables. But they also share some relationships described in previous papers (Lukoff, [1972]; David and Kleinman, [1972]), that are inconsistent with any explanatory theories that directs attention to the prevalent social and economic structure in any direct way. For example, heroin use is significantly more often found in the top third of the socio-economic structure of the community and the other components are, indeed, not unduly concentrated in the more disorganized and poverty-stricken segments of the community.

When we assemble the three items into a typology-- which we will refer to as the Vicious Circle Typology-- we observe that a large number of indicators show very modest, indeed uniformly insignificant, relationships with the Vicious Circle Typology. For example, if we look at age, both young (18-29) and older (30+) respondents are equally high on the Vicious Circle Typology (23%). Natives of the community are only slightly higher when contrasted with Migrants, and when S.E.S. is examined the spread is 22% high on Vicious Circle for the lowest third and 26% for the top third. Similar rather

modest or nonexistent patterns are present for sex, family structure (intact vs. single parent), education, occupation and even for social origins, as indexed by Father's Education. This may indeed appear to reflect that, despite the correlations between the components, we may have obscured any patterning by the accretion of items with very different underlying processes that are operating in contrary directions.

(Table 1 about here)

But the significant forces that operate in the community under review, at least for the events being examined here, may be a function of rather different classes of events. In Table 1 are presented each of the components of the typology as well as the Vicious Circle Typology for the four major Race-Ethnic groups in the community: British West Indian Blacks, Other Blacks, Puerto Ricans and Whites. Here we find a persistent pattern of differentiation, wherein Puerto Ricans more often report heroin use amongst kin, being victimized and having been offered stolen goods. For example, drug use ranges from 8 and 9% for Whites and British West Indians respectively, to 14% for 'Other Blacks' and 21% for Puerto Ricans. Victimization is less clearly delineated

although the same pattern prevails. Having been offered stolen goods, however ranges from 19% for Whites, and in ascending order, British West Indians (29%), Other Blacks (39%) and Puerto Ricans, where it is 46%.

When we look at those who are multiply involved we find a similar distribution prevails. British West Indians and Whites only 16%, Other Blacks 24% and Puerto Ricans 34%. We find, therefore, that not only specific involvement is variously distributed amongst ethnic groups but that the redundant elements in these activities, as reflected in the Vicious Circle Typology, are also linked to ethnic groups who are resident in the same community.*

(Table 2 about here)

To establish in another way that there is some inherent order in the phenomenon and that it is not any simple function of social disorganization, in Table 2 the number of organizations to which a person belongs is related to the Vicious Circle Typology. As expected, most residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant/Fort Greene do not report any affiliations. If we look at those who belong to ¹⁰ organizations, 43% are altogether unrelated to drugs, victimization or

*Ethnic group differentiation is a major theme in the over-all analysis and deserves more extensive exploration. Here we present it only to illustrate that there is order in these events linked to the cultural patterns of the four groups examined and as we will see, in other processes. In Lukoff, 1972, ethnic patterns overwhelm SES in relation to family drug use.

stolen goods and 20% are in the 'high' category. There is a progression wherein of those with 3 or more affiliations, only 26% report no involvement and 31% are in the highest classification on the Vicious Circle Typology. That is, those persons who are most active in the organizational life of the community are also most often associated with high scores on the Vicious Circle Typology.*

Deviant Networks and Vicious Circle Typology

We observed that the composite index we have labelled the Vicious Circle Typology is inconsistently related to a variety of social and demographic factors that ordinarily help us to comprehend many phenomena. But we did observe ethnic differences as well as a surprising association with organizational membership. The question is: how does this help us to understand the linkage between such seemingly disparate events as family involvement in drugs, stolen goods and being victimized?

Our thesis is that Vicious Circle involvement is a function of contiguity with deviant networks associated with drug use that in turn increase involvement with other forms of deviance and victimization. Deviant networks were

*Also, those with many kin in the area are more likely to be 'high' on the components as well as the typology compared to those with few or none. (Table not presented)

identified from queries on whether (a) the respondent had any acquaintances who used heroin; and (b) whether any of his friends used heroin, so that individuals were scored 0, 1, or 2.

We also suggested that there is a process of acculturation to the community that, especially for younger persons, may contribute to the process of involvement with deviant networks. To illustrate this process we will sort out individuals who are native to New York from Migrants. Since we suggest that the processes disproportionately affect younger persons we sort Migrants into those who arrived prior to the age of 30 and those who were 30 and over.*

(Table 3 about here)

In Table 3 we observe that acquaintance with heroin addicts is concentrated amongst native New Yorkers, followed by those who entered the community prior to age 30, and least of all by those who entered the community after age 30. For those with no acquaintance with heroin addicts the progression is from 43% for Natives, 57% for Young migrants and 70% for those who are older. For those who report both acquaintances and friends the percentage declines from 40% for Natives to 7% for older migrants.

*British West Indians migrants are primarily from the Caribbean; Other Blacks from the border and southern states; all but 7 Puerto Ricans are from the Island; white migrants are mainly European immigrants.

We therefore observe that there is a difference between natives and migrants; however younger migrants are much more likely to be associated with heroin addicts than their older compatriots.

(Table 4 about here)

A similar pattern prevails for the Vicious Circle Typology. In Table 4 we observe that the progression for those with no involvement is from 30% for Natives to 56% for older migrants, with younger migrants in between (37%). For those with multiple involvement, as indicated by the Vicious Circle Typology, the range is from 27% for natives to 15% for older migrants.

(Table 5 about here)

In Table 5 we observe a substantial relationship between Deviant Networks and Vicious Circle involvement. Where there are no acquaintances or friends who are heroin addicts only 13% are 'high' on the Vicious Circle index; for those with 1, it is 31%; for 2 it is 38%.

(Table 6 about here)

If we examine the three variables simultaneously, in Table 6, we observe that for each category - Native, Young and Older Migrants - as there is increasing contact with heroin addicts the proportion who are high on the Vicious

Circle Typology increases. There is one aberrant cell where 'Natives' who report both acquaintances and friends who are heroin addicts are lower than Natives who score only '1' in the Deviant Network index, and are lower, also, than younger migrants who have both acquaintances and friends.* But the overall pattern is, indeed, clear. The differences we have observed for the native and migrant distinction are, at least in part, a function of the differential association with deviant networks of heroin addicts.**

We suggested that differential involvement with heroin addicts may provide the linkage we are seeking. To lend additional credence to the thesis we have substituted into the same format each of the components of the Vicious Circle Typology, plus an item on knowledge of the location of places to purchase stolen goods.***

*No ready explanation occurs for this, except to note it is observed also for victimization and being offered stolen goods. Yet, it is not so for knowing where to buy stolen goods or for reported family member drug use.

**There are other aspects of the table, particularly for the first two rows, that suggest the possibility of other factors associated with migrant status that may be operative. But for this paper, the general trend need only be noted to relate to the thesis under examination.

***British West Indians and 'Other Blacks' are generally much more likely to know such locations than either Puerto Ricans or Whites.

(Table 7 about here)

In Table 7 we observe that increasing acquaintance with heroin addicts is associated with victimization (again with the aberrant cell for natives); i.e., victimization does increase if one has acquaintances or friends who are heroin addicts.

(Table 8 and 9 about here)

When we examine, as in Table 8, 'Having been offered stolen goods,' there is again a similar trend as there is for those who know places to buy stolen goods (Table 9). The patterns are less distinct for older migrants, and other factors are also at work. But the trend we have been observing persists. It is clearest where family involvement with drug use is examined. For Natives with no acquaintances or friends who use heroin, none report kin who have used heroin, but for those highest on the Deviant Network index it is 43% of the families. The same trend exists for younger and older migrants, if somewhat less steeply (1% to 33% for younger age of migration; 0-29% for older age of migration.)

(Table 10 about here)

We therefore observe that the pattern of overlap for victimization, reported family drug use, and stolen

goods is explicable by the linkage of the respondents to heroin users. These networks increase the likelihood of multiple involvement in a complex system that cuts across the stolen goods market, being victimized and drug use in families. Nor is this a simple function of poverty or little education, but is fairly pervasive through all segments of the community, except for the retention of ethnic differences. And among individuals who by most criteria are more integrated into the community we find that there is also a greater likelihood they are familiar with heroin addicts, are more likely to be offered stolen goods, know where to buy it, to have been victimized,* and to report family members are also using (or have used) heroin. (All tables not presented.**)

Other elements are clearly operative but we will only summarize some additional specifications of the findings thus far in the cause of brevity. If chronological age is introduced, as well as length of residence in the community, we find that younger individuals more quickly become acquainted with addicts, although at a lesser rate for migrants than for natives. This also increases as length of stay in the community increases, and occurs for

*See Deborah David and Paula Kleinman, 1972.

**See Lukoff, 1972.

ethnic groups that are less involved in the behaviors under review. That is, through time, the differentiation we have observed for ethnicity may very well disappear as more ethnics (British West Indians, Puerto Ricans, Whites) are born in the community and remain there.*

Ethnic-Race Identification and Deviant Networks

How can we begin to account, then, for differential involvement with deviant networks? Insofar as acquaintance with heroin addicts plays a role in linking the elements we have identified we may get a clue by examining the way respondents identify themselves. If asked to choose from a list respondents could select a racial or ethnic identification, or various commonly used hyphenated identifications. West Indians, although they have been closely identified with current black militant movements as leaders and ideologists, have traditionally eschewed identification with American Blacks (De A. Reid, 1939; Lowenthal, 1967, 1972). We assume that those West Indians who adhere to more traditional values and norms would be less likely to

*See Lukoff, 1972. Also in press is a paper by I. F. Lukoff, D. Quatrone and A. Sardell, Some Aspects of the Epidemiology of Drugs: A Preliminary Report, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, Department of Justice, August, 1972, that deals with drug use only, where these patterns also prevail.

identify themselves as Black, and indeed fewer than one-in-three chose to do so. American Blacks were only slightly more prone to choose Black - most selected American, Negro or Colored. Whites more often selected a racial identification and we assume that this would be important in a predominantly Black community, in contrast to those who chose American or a specific ethnic classification. Puerto Ricans chose 'Puerto Rican' about 2 in 5 times.

Although many elements clearly enter into the choice of identification - age for one - we also suspect that racial choices, particularly for British West Indians, Blacks and Whites, is also associated with a transformation in a broader range of cultural commitments associated with the traditional social-cultural system of these groups. A Jew or Italian who says 'White' when faced with a choice must also be more often among those who have abandoned their traditional modes of accommodation; as is the case with British West Indians who say 'Black' instead of Jamaican or British West Indian, as was likely a few decades ago. The situation is less clear for American Blacks, but certainly those who avoid Black would be among those whose values and perspectives are more traditional.

(Table 11 about here)

In Table 11 we divide each of the four ethnic groups into two categories: British West Indians into those who selected 'Black' or 'Other'; similarly for American Blacks. Puerto Ricans are sorted into those who selected 'Puerto Rican' and 'Other.' Whites are separated into those who selected 'White' and 'Other'. We observe for all groups, those who chose a color designation - Black or White, or for Puerto Ricans, those who chose their homeland designation - there is greater involvement with deviant networks. For British West Indians, 58% of those who say 'Black' are disassociated from heroin addicts, compared to 82% who selected 'Other'. At the other extreme 22% of those who chose 'Black' are high on the Deviant Network index while only 6% of those who eschewed 'Black' are so involved. Among Whites five times as many who chose 'White' have friends and acquaintances who are heroin users than those who chose other classifications to identify themselves (31% vs. 6%). Similar, but less marked, differences are observed for Blacks and Puerto Ricans.

We have presented a mere suggestion of the underlying processes that might explain why some individuals are more

interlocked into deviant networks that in turn lead to a range of consequences. We must seek a stronger indicator or indicators of the way in which one's identification may be reflective of the alterations in traditional cultural patterns that are manifested in different rates of involvement in deviance and in drug use. Ethnic differentiation, while still substantial, declines for younger persons, and especially those who reside in the community for any length of time - although clearly all are not touched by the prevailing pattern.*

SUMMARY

In the beginning of this paper we noted that we would examine some forms of deviance (if we can also classify victimization this way) as a system. It was first observed that the Vicious Circle Typology does not relate to a wide class of social and demographic factors. We noted, then, that the Vicious Circle index and its components, are patterned by ethnic groups - British West Indians and Whites generally low, then Blacks, and at the other end, Puerto Ricans. We then indicated that reported drug use amongst kin, being offered stolen goods and victimization - whether aggregated or looked at separately -

*Additional analysis by age and length of residence in the community indicates that younger persons are more clearly differentiated in the manner of Table 11 than those who are older. These will be presented in the full report.

are associated with increasing familiarity with heroin addicts, i.e., with contact with deviant networks. We also noted that this pattern engages younger migrants in the community more often than those who are older; however, for all - natives, younger migrants and older migrants, if they are familiar with heroin addicts, their own likelihood of (a) being high on the Vicious Circle Typology; (b) reporting family members have used heroin; (c) having been offered stolen goods; and (d) being victimized, are correspondingly increased.

We also summarized additional data that noted this process is more concentrated in younger individuals who are either natives or those who come in to the community when young. Older individuals tend to be less likely to become enmeshed in deviant networks with concomitant encounters with the events we have described.* Further data on ethnic identification, in an effort to locate an indicator that helped account for variable participation in the process we have described, is consistent with the view, albeit tentative, pending further study, that the processes of socialization contribute to a transformation of the identification of the younger members of all ethnic groups. This increases their likelihood of becoming engaged in deviant networks linked to the set of activities

*The exception is the offer of stolen goods and knowing where to buy them for both British West Indians and American Blacks.

we have examined. The traditional controls operative in each of the four groups, British West Indians, American Blacks, Puerto Ricans and Whites, insofar as they have a weakened impact on those who grow up in the community, and reflected in the way they identify themselves, results in an increased association with deviant networks.

TABLE 1

ETHNIC GROUPS AND COMPONENTS OF
VICIOUS CIRCLE TYPOLOGY

	<u>British West Indian</u>	<u>Other Black</u>	<u>Puerto Rican</u>	<u>White</u>
% Family Member Used Heroin*	9	14	21	8
% Recently Victimized**	36	41	44	37
% Offered Stolen Goods	29	39	46	19
% High on Vicious Circle Typology***	16	24	34	16
N	(145)	(275)	(101)	(89)

*Family Member or Relative has used Heroin

**Victimized within 12 months at interview

***Two or more on index

TABLE 2

ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP
AND VICIOUS CIRCLE TYPOLOGY

<u>Vicious Circle Typology</u>	<u>Number of Organizations with which Affiliated</u>			
	<u>None</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3+</u>
Low	43	31	28	26
Moderate	37	42	47	43
High	20	27	25	31
Total: %	100	100	100	100
N	449	88	32	42

TABLE 3

MIGRANT STATUS, AGE OF MIGRATION
AND DEVIANT NETWORK

<u>Deviant Network</u>	<u>Natives</u>	<u>Migrant -30</u>	<u>Migrant 30+</u>
None	43	57	70
1	17	20	23
2	40	23	7
Total: %	100	100	100
N	135	359	98

TABLE 4
MIGRANT STATUS, AGE OF MIGRATION
AND VICIOUS CIRCLE

<u>Vicious Circle Typology</u>	<u>Natives</u>	<u>Migrant -30</u>	<u>Migrant 30+</u>
None	30	37	56
Low	43	39	29
High	27	24	15
Total: %	100	100	100
N	135	359	98

TABLE 5
DEVIANT NETWORK AND VICIOUS
CIRCLE

<u>Vicious Circle Involvement</u>	<u>Deviant Network</u>		
	<u>None</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
None	48	36	20
Low	39	33	42
High	13	31	38
Total: %	100	100	100
N	347	119	146

TABLE 6

MIGRANT STATUS, AGE OF MIGRATION,
DEVIANT NETWORK AND VICIOUS CIRCLE

<u>Deviant Network</u>	Natives	Migrants -30	Migrants 30+
	<u>Percentage High on Vicious Circle Involvement</u>		
None	17 (58)	13 (206)	12 (69)
1	52 (23)	28 (71)	23 (22)
2	28 (54)	45 (82)	[29] (7)

TABLE 7

DEVIANT NETWORK AND RECENT VICTIMIZATION
FOR NATIVES AND MIGRANTS

<u>Deviant Network</u>	Natives	Migrants -30	Migrants 30+
	<u>Percentage High on Recent Victimization</u>		
None	24 (58)	25 (206)	14 (69)
1	42 (23)	25 (71)	18 (22)
2	24 (54)	34 (82)	[14] (7)

TABLE 8

DEVIANT NETWORK AND OFFERED STOLEN
GOODS TO NATIVES AND MIGRANTS

<u>Deviant Network</u>	Natives	Migrants -30	Migrants 30+
	<u>Percentage Offered Stolen Goods</u>		
None	24 (55)	27 (205)	22 (69)
1	55 (22)	37 (71)	27 (22)
2	44 (54)	54 (82)	[43] (7)

TABLE 9

DEVIANT NETWORK AND KNOW PLACE TO BUY
STOLEN GOODS FOR NATIVES AND MIGRANTS

<u>Deviant Network</u>	Natives	Migrants -30	Migrants 30+
	<u>Percentage Know Place to Buy Stolen Goods</u>		
None	5 (57)	4 (206)	3 (69)
1	4 (23)	6 (71)	5 (22)
2	25 (53)	10 (82)	- (7)

TABLE 10

DEVIANT NETWORK AND REPORTED FAMILY MEMBER USE
OF HEROIN FOR NATIVES AND MIGRANTS

<u>Deviant Network</u>	<u>Percentage Report Family Member Use of Heroin</u>		
	Natives	Migrants -30	Migrants 30+
None	0 (56)	1 (206)	0 (69)
1	35 (23)	17 (71)	18 (22)
2	43 (54)	33 (82)	[29] (7)

TABLE 11

ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION AND DEVIANT NETWORK

<u>Deviant Network</u>	<u>Ethnic Group</u>							
	<u>British West Indian</u>		<u>Other Black</u>		<u>Puerto Rican</u>		<u>White</u>	
	<u>Black</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Rican</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Oth</u>
None	58	82	47	59	21	34	60	75
1	20	12	16	21	41	29	9	19
2	22	6	37	20	38	37	31	6
Total: %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	45	100	103	172	39	62	57	32

*"Other" is any other identification chosen from a list presented to each respondent. For British West Indians, 'Other' includes: British West Indies, West Indies, Afro-American, Negro or specific Island references; for Blacks it was primarily Negro, Afro-American, Colored; Puerto Ricans: Americans, black, or white; whites, besides 'American,' a specific ethnic identification was often selected: Italian, Jewish, etc.

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